A COMPARISON OF EXPERT AND NOVICE GOLF INSTRUCTORS FROM A
COMMUNICATION PERSPECTIVE

by

COLLIN ANDREW WEBSTER

(Under the Direction of Paul G. Schempp)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to compare expert and novice golf instructors from a communication perspective. Specifically, expert and novice communication concerns, behaviors, and strategies were investigated, as was the impact of expert and novice instructional communication on student recall and perceptions of learning.

Four experts and four novices were selected for participation based on a theory of expertise in teaching (Berliner, 1986; 1994). Questionnaires were used to solicit the instructors’ communication concerns and to collect background information on the instructors’ teaching experiences and credentials. Data in regard to the instructors’ communication behaviors and strategies were collected by videotaping each instructor teach a golf lesson to a student and, directly afterward, interviewing the instructor through stimulated recall about her communication strategies during the lesson. Telephone interviews were conducted with each instructor to further inquire about her communication behaviors and strategies when teaching. Student perceptions of expert and novice instructional communication were gathered via a telephone interview with each student approximately two weeks following her or his golf lesson. Data were analyzed
using techniques for data management and reduction described by Huberman and Miles (1994). Trustworthiness was addressed through data triangulation, member checks, and an audit trail.

Quantitative and qualitative differences emerged between expert and novice communication concerns, behaviors, and strategies. The experts had more concerns, used more behaviors, and engaged more strategies than the novices as communicators when teaching. In addition, the novices primarily expressed concerns about clearly communicating their understanding of golf to the student, whereas the experts were mostly concerned about being effective listeners when teaching. Similarly, the novices’ communication behaviors and strategies centered on conveying lesson content from the perspective of the teacher, whereas the experts’ behaviors and strategies centered on gathering information from the student and constructing instructional messages based on that information. Support was found for a direct relationship between communication concerns and instructional behaviors of experts and novices. The experts’ students recalled different teacher behaviors than the novices’ students, but both groups of students primarily linked perceptions of learning with behaviors the instructors’ used in relation to the constructs of immediacy and clarity.

INDEX WORDS: Expert teaching, Experts and Novices, Instructional Communication, Sport Instruction, Golf Instructors
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my father, Warren Charles Webster, whose path in life I strive to follow and whose approach to teaching I strive to emulate. He once told me, “People remember kindness and goodwill much longer than they remember great teaching.” His words serve as a powerful presentiment to the insights gained through this dissertation, which suggest that kindness and goodwill are in fact what constitute great teaching.
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This study came to fruition through the guidance and support of Dr. Paul Schempp, to whom I am indebted. I look forward to putting to good use the skill and wisdom he imparted to me and hope he will consider my future efforts as a scholar and an educator worthy reimbursement for the countless hours he dedicated to my education. Dr. Schempp has served as a mentor and an inspiration to me in my journey as a doctoral student.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS....................................................................................................................................................V

LIST OF TABLES..........................................................................................................................................................X

LIST OF FIGURES........................................................................................................................................................XI

CHAPTER

1 INTRODUCTION........................................................................................................................................................1

   Purpose of Study.......................................................................................................................................................8

2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.........................................................................................................................9

   The Communication Perspective of Teaching........................................................................................................9
   Effective Teacher Communication .........................................................................................................................11
   Expert Teacher Communication............................................................................................................................31

3 METHODS AND PROCEDURES..............................................................................................................................48

   Study Design.........................................................................................................................................................48
   Participant Selection..............................................................................................................................................49
   Data Collection.....................................................................................................................................................53
   Data Analysis.........................................................................................................................................................58
   Pilot Study............................................................................................................................................................62
   Credibility and Trustworthiness............................................................................................................................63
   Transferability.........................................................................................................................................................65
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. EXPERT AND NOVICE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSTRUCTIONAL COMMUNICATION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Concerns</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Concerns</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact Concerns</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. EXPERT AND NOVICE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSTRUCTIONAL COMMUNICATION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviors</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Immediacy</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Clarity</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Communication Style</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Use of Humor</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Communication of Content Relevance</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Listening</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATION CONCERNS AND</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSTRUCTIONAL BEHAVIORS OF</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPERTS AND NOVICES</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novices</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experts</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. EXPERT AND NOVICE INSTRUCTIONAL COMMUNICATION

STRATEGIES.................................................................188
Overview............................................................................190
Micro-Level Communication Strategies of Experts and Novices........191
Macro-Level Communication Strategies of Experts and Novices........208
Summary............................................................................219

8. STUDENT RECALL AND PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF EXPERT AND
NOVICE INSTRUCTIONAL COMMUNICATION...........................222
Overview............................................................................223
Student Recall of Expert and Novice Instructional Communication.......223
Perceived Effects of Expert and Novice Instructional Communication.....228
Summary............................................................................242

9. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS..........................................246
Expert and Novice Instructional Communication Concerns..............247
Expert and Novice Instructional Communication Behaviors...............249
Relationship between Communication Concerns and Behaviors of Experts and
Novices............................................................................252
Expert and Novice Instructional Communication Strategies...............252
Student Recall and Perceived Effects of Expert and Novice Instructional
Communication....................................................................254
Conclusion............................................................................256

REFERENCES........................................................................259
APPENDICES

A  INFORMED CONSENT FORMS...........................................................281
B  QUESTIONNAIRES...............................................................................284
C  INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS...................................................................287
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1: Research Questions and Corresponding Data Collection Methods</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1: Frequency of Expert and Novice Communication Concerns</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2: Trends in Each Concern Tier for Experts and Novices</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1: Trends in the Experts and the Novices Instructional Communication Behaviors</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1: Directly Related Communication Concerns and Behaviors for the Experts and the Novices</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1: Expert and Novice Micro-Level Instructional Communication Strategies</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1: Total Number of Recalled Expert and Novice Communication Behaviors in Each Construct</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2: Most Frequently Recalled Expert and Novice Instructional Communication Behaviors</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3: Frequently Recalled Expert and Novice Communication Behaviors and Corresponding Student Perceptions</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1: Key Differences between Expert and Novice Instructional Communication</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure                                    Page

7.1: Path Model of a Prototypical Expert Macro-Level Instructional Communication

Strategy.................................................................209

7.2: Path Model of a Prototypical Novice Macro-Level Instructional Communication

Strategy.................................................................210
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The study of teaching plays out in multifarious settings under the gaze of various paradigms and perspectives (Shulman, 1986). Consequently, the knowledge base on teaching tends to develop in fragments that bear little immediate resemblance to one another. This is why, every so often, comprehensive reviews of research efforts to understand the teaching-learning process are so important. Such reviews provide a bird’s eye view of the extant knowledge within a community of scholarship, revealing the journey we have taken in our collective pursuit of answers and understanding, the place we stand amid the landscape of wisdom, and the direction in which we seem to be headed.

In the 1980s, two reviews that played a major role in bringing to light over a decade of knowledge growth in the field of education were included as chapters in the third edition of the Handbook of Research on Teaching. The first was a review by Brophy and Good (1986) which addressed the many process-product studies that were conducted to identify teaching behaviors that could be categorized as effective. In the second review, Rosenshine and Stevens (1986) identified and discussed the teaching functions that characterized successful teacher training and student achievement programs. Taken together, these reviews highlighted a major distinction between effective and ineffective teaching. Virtually all of the behaviors that were exhibited by effective teachers and which correlated with student achievement were linked to a single teacher attribute. In essence, successful teachers were better classroom communicators.
Communication scholars have capitalized on the idea that communication is central to effective teaching. They have opted to view the teaching-learning process from a communication perspective to better understand differences in the ways more and less effective teachers communicate (Chesebro & McCroskey, 2003; Sorenson & Christophel, 1992). From this perspective, instruction is seen as an inherently communicative process. The communication perspective of teaching is perhaps best summed up by Hurt, Scott, and McCroskey (1978), who noted in the debut edition of *Communication for Teachers* that the difference between knowing and teaching is communication.

For over three decades, research from the sub-discipline of instructional communication has led the charge toward defining the important elements of teacher communication (McCroskey, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2002). By and large, this research has been conducted using a correlational design with classroom teachers and their students to identify teacher communication behaviors that students perceive as effective and associate with learning (Nussbaum, 1992; Staton-Spicer & Wulf, 1984; Waldeck, Kearney, & Plax, 2001). These behaviors can be generally organized via a network of communication constructs (Waldeck, et al., 2001), including teacher immediacy, teacher clarity, teacher communication style, teacher use of humor, and teacher communication of content relevance (Chesebro & McCroskey, 2003). Research on student communication behaviors suggests that listening is also important to effective instruction (Mottet, 2002; Mottet & Richmond, 2003).

Overall, instructional communication research supports the position that teacher communication is critical to effective teaching and student achievement in the classroom (Nussbaum, 1992; Sallinen-Kuparinen, 1992; Scott & Wheeless, 1976; Staton-Spicer & Wulf, 1984; Waldeck, et al., 2001). Interestingly, studies suggest that the link between teacher
communication and student achievement is strongest within the affective learning domain (McCroskey, 2003). The communication of the effective teacher is characterized by messages that students perceive as pro-social, extroverted, and caring (Civikly-Powell, 1999; Valencic, McCroskey, & Richmond, 2005).

Effective teachers gain students’ attention and trust by communicating warmth and affinity through immediacy behaviors, such as smiling, making eye contact, and moving around the room (Richmond, 2003b). These teachers also communicate enthusiasm through style behaviors that are dramatic, friendly, impression-leaving, open, and relaxed (Norton, 1978; 1983), and are both assertive and responsive during instruction (Richmond, 2003a). As well, effective teachers use humor in appropriate ways (Gorham & Christophel, 1990; Wanzer, 2003), taking students’ personalities and humor orientations into consideration when attempting to utilize humor as an instructional tool (Wanzer, 2003).

In addition to signaling affection and enthusiasm, effective teachers communicate in ways that help to increase students’ motivation and commitment to learning. The effective teacher makes content personally relevant to students as a means to increase the level of student interest and affect for the course material (Frymier, 2003; Frymier & Shulman, 1995). Moreover, the effective teacher tracks students’ communication behaviors with great care and gauges his or her instructional effectiveness based on students’ verbal and nonverbal responses (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Mottet & Richmond, 2003).

The communication behaviors of effective teachers form a framework through which instructional communication theory has advanced. Adding to this framework is research on teachers’ perspectives of communication (Book & Eisenberg, 1979; Staton-Spicer & Basset, 1979; Staton-Spicer & Marty-White, 1981). Several studies have explored the communication
concerns of effective teachers, categorizing teachers’ concerns as related to self, task, or impact (Staton-Spicer & Basset, 1979). Results from these studies indicate that as teachers gain experience and effectiveness, their communication concerns shift from focusing on themselves and the task of teaching to the impact their communication has on student learning (Book & Eisenberg, 1979; Staton-Spicer & Marty-White, 1981). Furthermore, Staton-Spicer & Marty-White (1981) conducted a study which demonstrated how teachers’ communication concerns can be linked to specific classroom behaviors. The investigators found that the communication behaviors of an inexperienced teacher became increasingly student-centered as he gained experience and his communication concerns moved from his own performance to that of his students.

Instructional communication theory has matured over the years to the point where it can now describe and explain with some precision the communication process as showcased in effective teaching (McCroskey, 2003). As demonstrated above, this theory has also begun to address the relationship between teachers’ communication concerns and their instructional practices (Staton-Spicer & Mary-White, 1981). However, we have come to understand teacher communication through a rather narrow lens, as most instructional communication research is confined to the classroom environment (Waldeck, et al., 2001; Turman, 2003). Moreover, there is reason to believe that studying effective teachers may only partially reveal the potential power of teacher communication as an instructional device. Some research suggests that we can glean substantially more about helping students learn from those who succeed at this task most often (Berliner, 1994; Schempp, Tan, & McCullick, 2002). While the effective teacher has certainly taken us a long way toward understanding better from worse instruction, it is the expert teacher who has given us a glimpse of what truly outstanding teaching constitutes.
Expert teachers can be identified by their consistently remarkable ability to facilitate student success above and beyond what their non-expert counterparts can achieve (Berliner, 1986; Tan, 1997). In the past, expert-novice comparisons have served to highlight and punctuate the superior performances of expert teachers, demonstrating that these teachers are exceptional due to a combination of experience and knowledge that enables them to outperform non-experts (e.g., Berliner, 1994; Carter, Sabers, Cushing, Pinnegar, & Berliner, 1987; Livingston & Borko, 1989; Schempp, Tan, Manross, & Fincher, 1998). Experts perceive more accurately, diagnose more deeply, prescribe more fittingly, and, ultimately, teach for student learning better than non-experts (Tan, 1997).

Expert teachers also appear to be superior communicators, though research on this topic is scarce. For example, in terms of communicating content relevance, one study showed that experts were better able than novices to make connections between students’ prior knowledge and course material (Sanchez, Rosales, & Canedo, 1999). These experts also communicated more clearly than novices through providing oral explanations that were straightforward and logically organized. In another study, Webb, Diana, Luft, Brooks, and Brennan (2001) found that experts deciphered more from students’ nonverbal comprehension cues than did novices, implying that expert teachers are more attuned and responsive to their students’ learning needs. A study with award-winning physical education teachers further demonstrated experts’ communication skills, showing that these teachers planned and implemented specific strategies related to their use of humor in order to create a more effective learning environment (Ennis, 2003).

Not only are experts more adept as instructional communicators, they also seem to communicate in ways that are not represented in the panoply of behaviors used by effective
teachers. Over the last decade, research by members of the University of Georgia’s Sport Instruction Laboratory has made a significant contribution toward defining instructional expertise. Studies of expert golf instruction have been particularly forthcoming in examining the practices of expert sport instructors (e.g., Baker, Schempp, Hardin, & Clark, 1998; Schempp, McCullick, St. Pierre, Woorons, You, & Clark, 2004; St. Pierre, 2002).

In an investigation of the instructional routines and rituals used by expert golf teachers, Baker, et al. (1998) found experts employed some communication-related tactics that have not surfaced in the effective teaching literature. For example, these teachers used physical manipulation to position their students’ in the desired golf stance and arrange students’ hands in the proper grip placement. They also positioned themselves in relation to students in ways that gave these teachers an optimal viewing angle of student performance and sufficient proximity for providing ongoing verbal and physical support during the lesson.

More recently, a study examining expert golf instructors’ self-monitoring practices indicated that more than any other element of their teaching, these teachers prioritized their communication with students (Schempp, McCullick, Busch, Webster, & Mason, 2006). This finding suggests that, as with effective teaching, communication is a crucial component, perhaps even the lifeblood, of instructional expertise.

Despite these findings, little attention has been devoted to the study of communication in expert teaching. Although experts are clearly more proficient communicators than non-experts, may also possess a unique repertoire of communicative behaviors and strategies, and consider communication essential to their success as teachers, expert instructional communication remains largely unexplored and indescribable. We have only begun to understand the way expert teachers communicate clearly, use humor, make content relevant, and listen, and virtually
nothing is known about experts’ communication tendencies with respect to immediacy and style. Further, the communication concerns of expert teachers have not been explored.

We are thus left with some important questions regarding the role instructional communication plays in delineating expert from non-expert teaching. From a communication perspective, how might the communication concerns and instructional behaviors of experts and novices differ? In what ways are the communication concerns of experts and novices evidenced in their teaching? What characterizes the instructional communication strategies of experts and novices? Finally, following the tradition of instructional communication research exploring effective teaching from the student perspective, what do students recall the most about and perceive as the effects of expert and novice communication with respect to their learning?

Currently, instructional communication theory falls short in its ability to describe and explain the communication process much beyond the classroom and past the boundaries that separate effective and expert teaching. If experts are models of best practice in teaching, then an examination of their instructional communication in comparison to non-experts may serve to expand and refine what we currently know about the communication process in teaching and learning. Such an investigation would also enhance our insight into the nature of expertise in teaching. Since studies in golf instruction have already made some headway in the study of communication in the context of expert teaching, a logical next step is to pursue this research further with a fresh perspective. The framework derived from research on effective teacher communication offers such a perspective, one that might enable us to further define what it is about instructional expertise that accounts for its exceptionality.
Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine and compare aspects of expert and novice teachers’ instruction from a communication perspective. Specifically, this study will address the following research questions:

1. What are the instructional communication concerns of expert and novice golf instructors?
2. How do the instructional communication behaviors of experts and novices differ?
3. How do experts’ and novices’ instructional communication strategies differ?
4. What is the relationship between the instructional communication concerns and teaching behaviors of experts and novices?
5. What do students recall the most about and perceive as the effects of expert and novice instructional communication with respect to their learning?
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to examine expert and novice sport instruction from a communication perspective. To accomplish this, it was necessary to first examine how communication in instruction has been defined and conceptualized in the past. In this chapter, the literature base on teacher communication informing this study is organized into three sections: (a) the communication perspective of teaching (b) effective teacher communication, and (c) expert teacher communication. Organized in this fashion, teacher communication research stemming from various lines of inquiry can be summarized and synthesized to provide a backdrop against which teaching can be understood as a communicative act. Moreover, a review of this research offered both theoretical and methodological guidance with respect to this study’s purpose.

The Communication Perspective of Teaching

The disciplines of education and communication have traveled similar, though rarely intersecting, paths in pursuing the elements of effective teaching (Nussbaum, 1992). Despite their separate routes, both journeys have arrived at a common junction. Regardless of the perspective one takes, communication is clearly paramount to effective instruction (McCroskey, 2003; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986; Rink & Werner, 1989). Moreover, recent evidence from research with expert teachers suggests that communication is equally fundamental to instructional expertise (Schempp, McCullick, Busch, Webster, & Mason, 2006).
As a sub-discipline, instructional communication has made a particularly substantial contribution to the knowledge base on the role and impact of communication in teaching and learning (McCroskey, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2002). Broadly defined as “the human communication process as it occurs in instructional environments” (Staton, 1989; Staton-Spicer & Marty-White, 1981), instructional communication involves the transaction of messages between teachers and students. Yet, as it is the teacher who tends to play the leading role in the communication process within most instructional settings (Civikly, 1992), a major portion of the instructional communication research has examined how teachers communicate (Nussbaum, 1992; Scott & Wheless, 1976; Staton-Spicer & Wulff, 1984; Waldeck, Kearney, & Plax, 2001).

As viewed from the unique perspective of instructional communication research, teaching is seen as an inherently communicative event that is underpinned by a network of communication-related behaviors and concerns (Chesebro & McCroskey, 2003; Sorenson & Christophel, 1992; Staton, 1989; Staton-Spicer & Marty-White, 1981; Staton-Spicer & Wulff, 1984). These have been organized into constructs that, when pulled together, form a useful framework for analyzing and interpreting teacher communication. Unfortunately, this communication perspective of teaching has not informed research on teaching much outside of the classroom context (McCroskey, et al., 2002; Nussbaum, 1992), and it has scarcely begun to frame examinations of teaching expertise. Most of what is known regarding teacher communication derives from research that has explored the communication of effective classroom teachers (Waldeck, et al., 2001). Thus, it is in this context that we begin the task of tracing the extant literature on teacher communication.
Effective Teacher Communication

Communication and instruction are inextricably linked. Every major review of the effective teaching literature has identified communication as woven through virtually all aspects of the instructional process (e.g., Brophy & Good, 1986; Rosenshine & Furst, 1971; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986). Not surprisingly, research that has specifically examined communication in instruction has reached the same conclusion (e.g., Civikly, 1992; Cruickshank & Kennedy, 1986; McCroskey, et al., 2002; Nussbaum, 1992; Sallinen-Kuparinen, 1992). The majority of this research has focused on what teachers say and do in the classroom that their students perceive to be effective and important to student learning. Some earlier work also investigated the communication concerns of more and less effective teachers (e.g., Staton-Spicer & Bassett, 1979; Staton-Spicer & Marty-White, 1981). Combined, teacher communication behaviors and concerns provide a conceptual model for the study of teaching.

Teacher Communication Behaviors

Classroom research from a communication perspective (Sorenson & Christophel, 1992) has highlighted several important teacher communication behaviors that appear to be correlated with effective teaching and student learning. Specifically, effective classroom teachers can have an impact on student learning by communicating their attitudes toward students and content, communicating clearly, signaling the way their messages should be interpreted, expressing humor, and suggesting relationships between course content and student knowledge (Chesebro & McCroskey, 2003). In their recent edition of the classic text, Communication in the Classroom, Chesebro & McCroskey (2003) categorized these effective teacher communication behaviors into five major constructs: (a) teacher immediacy, (b) teacher clarity, (c) teacher communication style, (d) teacher use of humor, and (e) teacher communication of content relevance. Each
construct represents a separate dimension of teacher communication and is defined by a specific set of low-inference teacher behaviors that make the instructional communication process more suitable for study. In addition, research on student communication in the classroom suggests that effective listening is among the attributes of successful teachers (e.g., Mottet, 2002; Mottet & Richmond, 2003).

Teacher Immediacy. As a field, instructional communication is still relatively new (McCroskey, 2003). However, even at this early stage, studies have consistently produced irrefutable evidence that teacher immediacy is fundamentally important in effective classroom communication (e.g., Christophel, 1990; Christophel & Gorham, 1995; Gorham, 1988; Gorham & Christophel, 1990; Kearney, Plax, Smith, & Sorensen, 1988; Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998).

Mehrabian (1969; 1971) first identified immediacy as a category of affinity-seeking techniques in interpersonal communication. Affinity has been defined as “a positive attitude toward another person” (McCroskey & Wheeless, 1976, p. 231) and is inclusive of communication behaviors that fall within the immediacy construct. Specifically, Mehrabian (1969) suggested that immediacy behaviors “enhance closeness to and nonverbal interaction with another” (p. 77). He indicated that immediacy is enacted through both verbal and nonverbal behaviors (Mehrabian, 1971).

Research by Gorham (1988) identified several verbal teacher immediacy behaviors, including self-disclosure statements, narratives, use of humor, addressing students by name, and encouraging students to talk, among others. Examples of nonverbal teacher immediacy behaviors include moving about the classroom, making eye contact with students, smiling, using appropriate touch, and maintaining an open space between teacher and student (Richmond, 2003b).
Waldeck, et al. (2001) identified a number of theoretical bases underpinning research on teacher immediacy. For example, approach-avoidance theory suggests that individuals physically or psychologically move toward encounters they like, prefer, or evaluate highly, and move away from encounters they dislike, do not prefer, or evaluate negatively (Mehrabian, 1971). Hence, it is theorized that students will be drawn to teachers who display warmth and solidarity in the classroom. Moreover, arousal theory and theories of motivation have been used to explain teacher immediacy as a mediating factor in student learning (e.g., Christophel, 1990; Kelly & Gorham, 1988; Richmond, 1990). The underlying premise in each of these theories is that teachers who positively impact student affect (i.e., emotion and attitude) indirectly increase student learning (Sorenson & Christophel, 1992).

Empirical support for this premise can be found in the literature on teacher immediacy. Andersen (1978) was the first to develop and use a low-inference scale of teacher immediacy behaviors to demonstrate the significance of teacher immediacy in student affective learning. Spurred by Andersen’s pioneering work, instructional communication researchers have since produced a wealth of studies, mostly based on student perceptions, underlining the importance of immediacy in effective teaching (e.g., Christophel, 1990; Christophel & Gorham, 1995; Gorham, 1988; Gorham & Christophel, 1990; Kearney, et al., 1988; Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998).

Nonverbal immediacy has been shown to be particularly important to effective communication in the classroom. For instance, one study found that teachers’ nonverbal immediacy behaviors overrode the effects of teacher misbehaviors on students’ perceptions of the teacher’s credibility (Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998). Put another way, teachers who showed immediacy were able to gain students’ trust. Additionally, Kearney et al. (1988) found that students’ decisions to resist or comply with teachers’ on-task demands in the college classroom
were mediated by their perceptions of the teacher’s nonverbal immediacy. As stated by the authors, “students may be more willing to comply with teachers they like as opposed to teachers they don’t” (p. 65).

**Teacher Clarity.** For years, educational researchers studying effective teaching have identified teacher clarity as an element of effective instruction (Rosenshine, 1971; Rosenshine & Furst, 1971; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986; Brophy & Good, 1986). From their review of approximately 50 studies of teacher classroom behaviors associated with student learning, Rosenshine and Furst (1971) identified teacher clarity as the most promising indicator of teacher effectiveness. As a result, the clarity construct has seen a great deal of attention in both the instructional communication literature and more generally in the educational literature (Civikly, 1992).

Based on their extensive review of literature, Cruickshank and Kennedy (1986) defined teacher clarity as “a cluster of teacher behaviors that result in learners’ gaining knowledge or understanding of a topic, if they possess adequate interest, aptitude, opportunity, and time” (p. 43). Clarity can be conceptualized in terms of the content and structure of a teacher’s presentation (Chesebro, 2003). In the classroom, content variables include a teacher’s fluency of speech and explanatory competence. A teacher who speaks fluently avoids using vocalized pauses like “um” or “uh” so that interruptions in the flow of the presentation are minimized, whereas a teacher with explanatory competence explains course content using language and ideas that students understand. Structural variables, on the other hand, have to do with the way a teacher organizes his or her presentation. The organization of a presentation determines when and how the various concepts and main points are introduced, examined, and linked (Chesebro, 2003). Chesebro (2003) recommends that teachers include a preview at the start of a lecture of
the material that will be presented. He also suggests that teachers stay on topic with few tangents, use clear transitions from one main point to the next, and provide short reviews periodically throughout the presentation to reiterate the main ideas.

Early research on teacher clarity used student perceptions to identify clear teacher communication behaviors (e.g., Cruickshank, Myers, & Moenjak, 1975; Bush, Kennedy, & Cruickshank, 1977). For example, Bush et al. (1977) found that a large sample of junior high pupils considered the most important clear teacher behaviors to be related to teacher explanations (e.g., explains things simply; gives explanations students understand) and use of examples (e.g., explains something and then works an example) (cited in Cruickshank & Kennedy, 1986). The authors indicated that the clarity construct:

appears to consist of a rather general dimension which involves explaining directions in an understandable manner and at an appropriate pace…and a second dimension which pertains more specifically to teacher use of examples and illustrations in presenting material (Bush, et al., p. 57)

Following the Bush et al. (1977) study, other research using students’ perceptions, in addition to research using teacher observation and a variety of rating instruments has engendered similar results (e.g., Cruickshank, 1985; Hines, 1981; Hines, Cruickshank, & Kennedy, 1985; Kennedy, Cruickshank, Bush, & Meyers, 1978; Williams, 1983).

Research on teaching in physical education has also attempted to define what constitutes clear instruction (Rink, 2003). Studies investigating how effective physical education teachers present motor content have identified a number of clear teacher behaviors (Graham, 1988; Graham, Hussey, Taylor, & Werner, 1993; Gusthart & Sprigings, 1989; Kwak, 1993; Rink &
Werner, 1989; Silverman, Kulinna, & Crull, 1995), which generally support earlier research by Bush, et al. (1977), Cruickshank, et al. (1975), and others.

For example, Kwak (1993) compared the effects of five different task presentations on the ability of middle school students to learn a lacrosse throw and concluded that the most effective task presentation included verbal explanation with full demonstrations and summary cues. In addition, Silverman et al. (1995) found that task structure, explicit teacher explanations, and holding students accountable for practice and improvement were all related to student achievement in volleyball. Finally, Graham et al. (1993) identified eight dimensions of effective task presentations: (a) making instruction explicit, (b) emphasizing the usefulness of the content being presented, (c) structuring new content, (d) signaling students’ attention, (e) summarizing and repeating information, (f) checking for understanding, (g) creating a productive climate for learning, (h) and presenting accountability measures.

Other physical education research that has examined aspects of clear teacher communication has focused on teachers’ use of demonstrations (Gould & Roberts, 1982; Lee, Swinnen, & Serrien, 1984), verbal cues (Landin, 1994), and feedback (Bilodeau & Bilodeau, 1961; Nixon & Locke, 1973; Magill, 1994). As with clear classroom instruction, teacher clarity in physical education necessitates well-organized presentations which are tailored to students’ levels of understanding. Motor skills should be demonstrated clearly and accurately (Gould & Roberts, 1982) and presented in steps, just as verbal explanations are most effective when they are broken down into main points (Chesebro, 2003). Likewise, verbal cues and feedback help keep students focused on the critical elements of a skill and remind them of the main elements presented in the teachers’ demonstration (Landin, 1994; Magill, 1994).
Teacher Communication Style. A dimension of teacher communication that has received some attention in the instructional communication literature is communicator style (Richmond, 2003a). The foundation for the communicator style construct was first provided by Norton (1978), who charged, “The researcher who wants to establish an interpersonal theory of communication must deal not only with what is communicated, but with the way it is communicated” (p. 99). He defined communicator style as “the way one verbally and paraverbally interacts to signal how literal meaning should be taken, interpreted, filtered, or understood” (p. 99) and operationally defined the construct in terms of nine independent variables (dominant, dramatic, contentious, animated, impression-leaving, relaxed, attentive, open, and friendly) and one dependent variable (communicator image). Using this framework, instructional communication research has identified a teacher’s communication style as significant in the teaching-learning process (Sallienen-Kuparinen, 1992).

Research on communicator style in both teaching and other interpersonal communicative events is rooted in personality theories advanced by psychologists (Norton, 1983; Richmond, 2003). Theoretically, differences in communicator style derive from differences in personality traits. Richmond (2003a) discussed a range of style behaviors that fall along a continuum of personality classifications. As an extreme example, aggressive communicators express themselves through verbal or nonverbal hostility, irritability, negativism, resentment, and suspicion. Conversely, submissive communicators yield their rights to others and tend to behave in ways that project obsequiousness. Researchers have posited that links exist between teachers’ perceivable personality traits and student style preferences (Richmond, 2003a). In accordance with this view, and in parallel with research on teacher immediacy, studies of teachers’ style characteristics suggest that the association between teacher communication style and student
achievement is primarily mediated through the affective learning domain (e.g., Andersen, Norton, & Nussbaum, 1981; Nussbaum & Scott, 1979; Valencic, McCroskey, & Richmond, 2005).

In an early study of teachers’ communication styles by Norton (1983), effective teachers were perceived by students to be more dramatic than ineffective teachers. Additionally, effective teachers were perceived as more open, relaxed, friendly, and impression-leaving. Based on these findings and on educational research promoting teacher enthusiasm (e.g., Rosenshine, 1971), subsequent studies of effective teachers’ communication styles have primarily focused on the dramatic style subconstruct (e.g., Downs, Javidi, & Nussbaum, 1988; Holladay; 1984; Javidi, Downs, & Nussbaum, 1988; Nussbaum, Holladay, & Comadena, 1987). The dramatic communicator, as described by Norton (1978) “manipulates exaggerations, fantasies, stories, metaphors, rhythm, voice, and other stylistic devices to highlight or understate content” (p. 99). From a personality perspective, dramatic communicators possess traits that are both assertive (i.e., firm but not aggressive) and responsive (i.e., sensitive to others but not submissive), allowing them to vary their style according to students’ needs (Richmond, 2003).

In the classroom, research indicates that effective teachers use humor, self-disclosure, and narrative are dramatic style behaviors to clarify course content (Downs, et al., 1988; Nussbaum, et al., 1987). These behaviors have been correlated with increases in students’ affective learning (Sallinen-Kuparinen, 1992). However, research by Javidi et al. (1988) suggests that effective teachers enlist these behaviors in varying degrees across middle school, high school, and college levels. Specifically, the authors found that award-winning mid-high school, high school, and college teachers all used humor, self-disclosure, and narrative in their classes, but the award-winning mid-high and high school teachers used humor significantly less than award-winning college teachers. Additionally, the award-winning mid-high teachers used humor significantly
less than the other two groups. Overall, these studies suggest that humor, self-disclosure, and narrative, though they may operate differently across instructional contexts, are nevertheless important elements of effective teacher communication that merit further investigation.

**Teacher Use of Humor.** Humor has long been considered an important variable in effective teaching (e.g., Scott, 1976; Bryant & Zillmann, 1983; Javidi, et al., 1988). Although it is a subconstruct of teacher immediacy and a dramatic communicator style, humor has been studied independent of other immediacy and style behaviors due to its presumed heuristic value as a teaching strategy (Gorham & Christophel, 1990). Classroom research shows that a teacher’s use of humor can be a powerful instructional tool when it comes to gaining students’ affection, loyalty, and motivation to learn (Wanzer, 2003). Simply stated, students tend to like and learn from teachers who make them smile and laugh.

While this statement may seem obvious, it is not always true. A number of factors seem to influence the effectiveness of a teacher’s use of humor on student learning, including teacher and student gender, the quantity and type of humor that is used, and the interacting effects other immediacy behaviors (Bryant, Crane, Comisky, & Zillman, 1980; Gorham, 1988; Gorham & Christophel, 1990). The bottom line that can be drawn from the research is that humor has many benefits, but it must be used appropriately to give teachers an advantage in terms of their effectiveness (Wanzer, 2003).

Ziv (1979) proposed that humor functions as an arousal mechanism, operating to attract and maintain attention, stimulate memory, and ultimately, promote learning. Ziv’s attention-gaining model has provided the main theoretical framework used to explain the humor-learning relationship in the classroom (Wanzer, 2003; Wanzer & Frymier, 1999; Ziegler, 1988). In addition, other research indicates that teacher use of humor may function to gain student liking
and establish rapport with students. For example, Gorham and Christophel (1990) noted that teachers often use humor in the classroom to reduce tension, to facilitate self-disclosure, to relieve embarrassment, to save face, to disarm others, to alleviate boredom, to gain favor through self-enhancement, to convey good will, or to accomplish some other pro-social goal.

Early research by Bryant et al. (1980) was instrumental in operationalizing the humor construct. Based on an analysis of 70 college classes, instructors’ use of humor was classified into six categories: joke, riddle, pun, funny story, humorous comment, and other (i.e., broad visual/vocal comedy). More recently, in their study of teachers’ use of humor, immediacy, and student learning, Gorham and Christophel (1990) developed a low inference scale of the types of humor teachers use based on undergraduate students’ observations. Example items from Gorham and Christophel’s humor scale include: brief tendentious comment directed at an individual student, brief tendentious comment directed at the class as a whole, personal anecdote or story related to the subject/topic, general anecdote not related to the subject/topic, and physical or vocal comedy.

The work of Gorham and Christophel (1990) played a seminal part in defining the role of humor in effective classroom instruction. In their investigation, they showed that the effects of teachers’ use of humor might best be understood in relation to teacher immediacy. For high immediate teachers, the use of tendentious comments directed at individual students tended to negatively correlate with student learning. Gorham and Christophel suggested that “this finding might be explained by ‘picking on’ students being perceived as out of character for these teachers who had otherwise done so many things to reduce physical and psychological distance” (p. 59).
The results of the Gorham and Christophel (1990) study also indicated that an increase in high immediate teachers’ use of both personal and general topic-related stories led to a decrease in student affect for the teacher. In this case, the authors speculated that high immediate teachers may not need to use stories to increase their effectiveness, and in fact may do more damage than good to student learning if they surpass a certain “story threshold” (p. 59). Taken together, Gorham and Christophel’s findings underscore the importance of moderation and versatility in instructional communication. A relative balance must be achieved between a teacher’s use of humor and other immediacy behaviors if teachers are to maximize their effectiveness.

Personality traits may also play an important role in how humor functions in classroom instruction (Wanzer, 2003). Teachers who are more humor oriented, or predisposed to use humor, are generally perceived by students as being funnier and more socially attractive than teachers with low humor orientations (Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield, 1991; Wanzer, Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield, 1995; 1996). Moreover, a positive relationship appears to exist between student perceptions of teacher’s humor orientation and student learning. As might be expected, results from the related research indicate that high humor orientated teachers are best matched to high humor orientated students. In contrast, high humor orientated students learn the least from teachers with low humor orientations (e.g., Wanzer, et al., 1995). The basic message to be taken from this research is that teachers should be sensitive to their own humor orientation, as well as to the humor orientations of their students, in order to effectively communicate in the classroom (Wanzer, 2003).

Teacher Communication of Content Relevance. With the exception of teacher clarity, the dimensions of teacher communication discussed thus far have been connected to student learning via the teacher-student relationship. That is, teacher immediacy, communication style, and use
of humor all increase teacher effectiveness and student learning by strengthening student affect for the teacher (McCroskey, 2003). Although teacher-student relations are clearly important in terms of student achievement, students can also become motivated learners based on course content (Frymier & Shulman, 1995). Research from the classroom indicates that teachers who make content relevant to students’ interests can increase students’ desire to learn (Frymier & Shulman, 1995; Newby, 1991).

Relevance has been defined as students’ perceptions of whether the course instruction/content satisfies personal needs, personal goals, and/or career goals (Keller, 1983). Frymier (2003) discusses several theories that have served as the basis for research on content relevance. For example, expectancy-value theory predicts that students who value course content (i.e., perceive it to be personally relevant) will become increasingly satisfied with the learning experience, expect to do well, and in turn, be more motivated (Atkinson, 1978; Wong, 1998). Based on this assumption, the most popular model used to explain the role of content relevance in student learning has been Keller’s (1993) ARCS model of motivation, which suggests that students become motivated to learn if they are attentive to instruction, find course content to be relevant, are confident in their ability to succeed, and are satisfied with their progress. Similar to Keller’s model, Petty and Cacioppo’s (1986) elaboration likelihood model predicts that students who perceive course content as relevant to their lives will have an increased likelihood of elaborating (i.e., carefully thinking about) the content and becoming motivated to learn.

In relation to research on other teacher communication behaviors, comparatively few investigations of content relevance and student learning have been carried out (Frymier, 2003). Nevertheless, nearly unanimous support for a relevance-learning relationship has resulted from
initial studies of the topic in the classroom environment (Frymier & Shulman, 1995; Frymier, Shulman, & Housner, 1996; Newby, 1991). Making content relevant appears to increase students’ motivation to study, feelings of empowerment, and beliefs that course content is valuable.

In their seminal study with 470 undergraduate students, Frymier and Shulman (1995) operationalized relevance with a 10-item scale of teacher behaviors, such as uses examples to make content relevant, provides explanations that make content relevant, uses exercises or explanations that demonstrate the importance of the content, and links content to other areas of content. Study results supported the authors’ hypothesis that making content relevant would increase students’ motivation to study for the class.

Of particular note, however, was the finding that content relevance accounted for increases in students’ motivation even beyond the contribution of teacher immediacy (Frymier & Shulman, 1995). The authors concluded, “Relevance and immediacy are conceptually different and there are no grounds for believing that one influences the other” (p. 48). Therefore, teacher effectiveness may be enhanced through a combination of behaviors that positively influence students’ perceptions of both teacher immediacy and content relevance.

Listening. While communication involves both the sending and receiving of messages, little research has focused on teachers as message receivers. However, the primacy of listening in effective instructional communication has found consistent support in the educational literature (Wolvin & Coakley, 1996). Purdy (1997) defined listening as “the active and dynamic process of attending, perceiving, interpreting, remembering, and responding to the expressed (verbal and nonverbal) needs, concerns, and information offered by other human beings” (p. 8). Although instructional communication researchers who have studied listening have done so
primarily with the student in mind, theories of effective listening may have equally important implications for teachers.

Effective listening can be conceptualized as both a behavioral and a cognitive process (Imhof, 1998). As indicated in Purdy’s (1997) definition, five elements are important to the listening process: (a) attention, (b) perception, (c) interpretation, (d) memory, and (f) response (Glenn, 1989). Specifically, listening is conceptualized as an active process of selection, wherein relevant verbal and nonverbal contextual cues are integrated into the cognitive structures of the recipient (Imhof, 1998). Hence, in the classroom, students and teachers actively attend to and select from a wide array of auditory and visual information, interpret the information through a network of prior knowledge, remember the information using metacognitive strategies, and finally choose what they consider to be the appropriate response (Mottet & Richmond, 2003).

Studies of the student listening process in the classroom have elicited several lists of skills necessary for efficient listening (e.g., Devine, 1982; Weaver, 1972; Lundsteen, 1979). Coakley and Wolvin (1991) reviewed the skills that have been deemed most important for student listening competency. Some of these included preparing to listen, determining the main idea(s) of a message, determining the supporting relationship between main ideas and supporting details, detecting and assigning meaning to nonverbal behaviors, distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant materials, using contextual clues to assign meanings, linking new information with prior learning, and checking for accuracy of understanding by asking questions.

Educational research suggests that listening is also an important part of the teacher’s role in the classroom. For instance, Clark and Peterson (1986) found that student responses were more closely monitored by teachers than any other aspect of the instructional context. In this vein, Gage and Berliner (1992) likened teachers to performers in that they evaluate their
performance (i.e., teaching) by the response of their audience (i.e., students). Student responses can include both verbal and nonverbal communicative behaviors, such as immediacy, humor, and expressions of confusion or lack of understanding (Civikly, 1992). According to Mottet (2002), these responses influence teacher expectations of student performance, teachers’ motivation to teach, and teachers’ perceptions of their teaching effectiveness and satisfaction. Hence, teachers who are attuned to their students’ verbal and nonverbal language in the classroom are more likely to be student-focused and know if they are communicating effectively (Mottet & Richmond, 2003).

The teacher communication behaviors reviewed above represent the majority of what has been learned about effective teacher communication. From a communication perspective, effective teachers gain student attention and solidarity by displaying immediacy behaviors that signal warmth and affinity. These teachers provide clear instruction through well organized and logically sequenced presentations. They use redundancy to reiterate main points, they provide lots of examples, and they maintain topical focus. They also ensure content clarity by speaking fluently, demonstrating important points, and delivering information using language and terminology that are appropriate to the student audience.

Effective teachers communicate in a dramatic fashion that captures and sustains student interest. Narratives, humor, and self-disclosure are elements of a dramatic communication style that have been observed in the instructional behavior of effective classroom teachers (e.g., Javidi, Downs, & Nussbaum, 1988). Humor, in particular, is a tool used especially well by these teachers. They effectively balance their use of humor against the instructional context in which they work.
Bridging course content to students’ personal interests and prior experiences is yet another attribute of the effective teacher. Through providing examples and explanations that are personally meaningful to students, effective teachers increase their students’ affect for the course content and motivation to learn. Finally, research suggests that effective teachers are also effective listeners in the classroom (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Mottet, 2002). Teacher effectiveness depends in part upon carefully tracking and accurately interpreting students’ nonverbal and verbal behaviors, as well as responding to these behaviors in a manner that will maintain open and effective channels of communication.

**Teacher Communication Concerns**

Over the course of its development, instructional communication theory has derived mainly through research on teacher communication behaviors. However, several studies have also investigated teacher communication concerns. Staton-Spicer and Marty-White (1981) stated that “for those interested in instructional communication, particularly in understanding the teacher as a communicator, we suggest that they examine the teacher’s perspectives about his or her communication behavior as well as the behavior itself” (p. 355). Research on teacher communication concerns has helped define differences between more and less experienced teachers and has illuminated why experienced and inexperienced teachers communicate in different ways (Staton-Spicer & Marty-White, 1981).

Research on teacher concerns has primarily used Fuller’s (1969) concerns model to understand and categorize teachers’ instructional concerns. Fuller proposed that teachers’ instructional concerns shift with experience from self-concerns to task concerns, and finally to impact concerns. Teachers with communication concerns that are self-oriented focus on themselves as teachers. Research with preservice and inservice teachers that has investigated
various instructional concerns of teachers has connected self-concerns to teachers with less experience (e.g., Erickson & Ruud, 1967; Fuller, Parsons, & Watkins, 1973). Inexperienced teachers tend to be concerned about their responsibilities, behaviors, and presentation of self as they explore their new role as teacher (Fuller, 1969; Goffman, 1961). Sarbin & Allen (1968) referred to the process of adapting to a new role as “role acquisition.”

With more experience, teachers resolve their self-concerns and shift their focus to the mastery of various teaching tasks (Fuller, 1969). They may be more concerned, for instance, with selecting appropriate instructional strategies or employing new methods of assessment. As teachers’ instructional competence develops, their concerns regarding their impact as teachers grow, so that experienced teachers tend to focus more on student learning than on teaching tasks or themselves (Fuller, et al., 1973). For example, teachers who are concerned with student learning may reflect on their students’ achievement in class or think of ways to increase students’ motivation.

Instructional concerns that are defined as communication concerns are those that involve face-to-face interaction with students, such as lecturing before a class or speaking with sufficient volume (Staton-Spicer & Bassett, 1979). Investigations of teachers’ communication concerns indicate that teachers have specific concerns related to their instructional communication which can be categorized according to Fuller’s (1969) model of self, task, and impact (Staton-Spicer & Bassett, 1979; Staton-Spicer & Marty-White, 1981). In an initial study of teacher communication concerns, Staton-Spicer & Bassett (1979) had 227 preservice teachers complete questionnaires which asked participants to identify their concerns regarding their teaching and communication. The investigators used content analysis to sort teachers’ communication concerns, which fell within Fuller’s (1969) concerns framework. As in other research on
teachers’ concerns, Staton-Spicer & Bassett found that prospective teachers’ communication concerns were characterized more by self-concerns, whereas experienced teachers expressed communication concerns that were predominantly impact-oriented.

Later investigations by Book & Eisenberg (1979) and Staton-Spicer & Marty-White (1981) supported the findings of Staton-Spicer & Bassett’s (1979) study. For example, Staton-Spicer & Marty-White (1981) employed a case study approach to examine the communication concerns of a teacher with some teaching experience, but who was teaching a new course. Also of interest to the investigators was the relationship between teacher’s communication concerns and behaviors. The questionnaire from Staton-Spicer and Bassett’s (1979) study, in combination with classroom observations and a series of interviews, were employed to collect data on teacher’s communication concerns and behaviors. Using Fuller’s (1969) three phase conceptualization, qualitative analysis revealed that as the semester progressed, the teacher’s concerns shifted from self to impact in the pattern reported in previous research (Book & Eisenberg, 1979; Staton-Spicer & Bassett, 1979).

In addition, a relationship was established between the teacher’s communication concerns and teaching behaviors (Staton-Spicer & Marty-White, 1981). For example, the teacher expressed self concerns which were identified as pertaining to his credibility as an instructor. These concerns emerged through his attempts to be perceived as personable through self-disclosure behaviors. He also had self concerns about being flexible as a teacher, which manifested in specific communication behaviors, such as making schedule changes and re-teaching certain concepts.

Task concerns were identified as being able to teach abstract concepts concretely and finding the right approach to teaching (Staton-Spicer & Marty-White, 1981). To teach abstract
concepts, the teacher employed guest speakers and used examples, and to find the right teaching approach he varied between lecturing and holding class discussions. Finally, the teacher’s impact-oriented communication concerns were concentrated on establishing a non-threatening environment and facilitating student understanding. Behaviors matching the first impact concern of establishing a non-threatening environment included reinforcement, self-disclosure, comprehension checks, and conveying expectations. Examples of behaviors stemming from a concern for facilitating student understanding were asking students questions, providing examples, and using organizers (e.g., stating objectives, using transitions, and reviewing) (Staton-Spicer & Marty-White, 1981).

To summarize, teachers’ communication concerns have not received nearly the widespread attention that teachers’ communication behaviors have in studies of effective teaching. However, the evidence to date suggests that teachers do have specific communication concerns, which can be categorized and analyzed according to Fuller’s (1969) concerns model. Relatively inexperienced teachers seem to express concerns that are more or less self-oriented, while teachers with more experience progressively focus more on the task of teaching and eventually reach a point where their main concern is their impact on student learning.

Communicatively, teachers whose concerns are self-oriented may engage in behaviors they believe will preserve or enhance their credibility with students. Staton-Spicer and Marty-White (1981) showed that self-concerns led to communication behaviors (e.g., self-disclosure) that appealed to students’ trust and sense of comfort. Self-concerns were also reflected in communication behaviors that increased the teacher’s professional and instructional flexibility.

Communication concerns that are task-related include concerns about how to best link pedagogy to content. These concerns may manifest in teaching behaviors intended to explore
different approaches to organizing and teaching course content. Teachers who express task concerns may communicate subject matter using a variety of teaching styles and strategies in order to discover new and better ways to connect what they teach to how they teach. Finally, the shift from task concerns to impact concerns is marked by communication behaviors that assist in creating a comfortable and productive learning environment. Impact-oriented communication concerns are student-centered and translate to teaching behaviors that promote and maintain clear and effective teacher-student communication as a direct link to student learning.

This section has reviewed the current literature related to effective teacher communication. Clearly, research in education and communication has helped in identifying important pieces of the teacher communication process, including teachers’ communication behaviors and concerns. But what can be said about teacher communication when these pieces are added together? What theoretical implications underpin research on effective teacher communication?

Valencic et al. (2005) stated that “an implicit theory has been the foundation for much of the research that has been published to date.” In their recent study, Valencic et al. (2005) found that teacher communication behaviors fell along a continuum ranging from introversion to extroversion. Positive correlations were reported for teachers’ self-reported extroversion and students’ perceptions of cognitive learning, suggesting that teacher extroversion may be a common thread linking the varied assortment of teacher communication behaviors to instructional effectiveness and student achievement. Indeed, the behaviors and concerns identified from communication research that seem to consistently correlate with teacher effectiveness and student learning are those which might be categorized as humanistic, pro-social, student-centered, expressive, other-oriented, active, caring, affectionate, and warm.
Regrettably, instructional communication theory has remained largely restricted to the study of effective classroom teaching. A detailed description of the communication process in a wide range of instructional environments is conspicuously absent from the related literature (Waldeck, et al., 2001). At present, comparatively little is known about the communication behaviors and concerns of teachers who work in movement settings, and even less is known about the communication of expert teachers. In the following section of this chapter, research that has investigated the nature of expert teaching, particularly in sport, will be reviewed to demonstrate the importance of studying communication in this rare and remarkable instructional context.

Expert Teacher Communication

Attempts to uncover the landscape of effective teaching have far outweighed those that have sought out the definitive elements of instructional expertise (Schempp, McCullick, St. Pierre, Woorons, You, & Clark, 2004). Nevertheless, studies with expert teachers have made an indelible impression on researchers’ understanding of the teaching-learning process, and it has illuminated certain aspects of expert teachers’ communication, though much remains unexplored in this area. At present, several investigations have helped trace the communication behaviors of expert teachers and some recent evidence suggests that communication is a primary concern of these teachers (Schempp, et al., 2005). Some of this research has also revealed that expert teachers develop and implement specific communication strategies when they teach, an aspect of teacher communication that has not been well addressed or delineated in the effective teaching literature. Because so little research has examined expert teacher communication, each communication-related study that follows will be reviewed separately to identify the extent of the current knowledge base in this area.
Research on teaching expertise has clearly demonstrated we can learn more from the expert pedagogue than from any other teacher (Dodds, 1994). Expert teachers possess superior attributes, which enable them to succeed more than other teachers at helping students learn (Tan, 1997). To understand what accounts for expertise in teaching, research has drawn heavily from theories within the cognitive psychology discipline (French & Housner, 1994). For example, information processing theory and schema theory have been used to describe the advanced knowledge structures and problem representation of expert teachers (Dodds, 1994). These theories permit researchers to explain differences noted in teachers with varying levels of expertise on a number of teaching-related tasks (e.g., Borko & Livingston, 1989; Carter, Sabers, Cushing, Pinnegar, & Berliner, 1987; Griffey & Housner, 1991; Housner & Griffey, 1985; Leinheart & Greeno, 1986; Nelson, 1988).

Expert-novice comparisons in teaching have underscored differences in expert and novice teachers’ selection processes for instructional planning and decision-making (Carter, et al., 1987; Griffey & Housner, 1991; Housner & Griffey, 1985). In physical education, Housner & Griffey (1985) employed a technique called stimulated recall to examine experienced and inexperienced teachers’ decision-making strategies. Briefly, this technique involves the teacher and investigator together reviewing a videotape of the teacher giving a lesson. While reviewing the tape, the investigator asks the teacher to explain his or her reasoning and rationale behind various instructional acts. This procedure has proven to be effective at identifying individuals’ thought processes in the educational environment (Bloom, 1954; Peterson & Clark, 1978; Shavelson & Stern, 1981).

Housner and Griffey (1985) found that, in comparison to inexperienced teachers, experienced teachers made more strategic decisions in planning for instructional activities and
used their wealth of knowledge and experience to make more appropriate (i.e., learning-focused) on-the-spot instructional decisions than novices. Experienced teachers focused their planning and instruction more on individual student performance, while inexperienced teachers planned and taught with the main purpose of keeping the entire class happy and on-task. Housner and Griffey suggested that “experienced teachers possess knowledge structures rich in strategies for managing and facilitating psychomotor performance” (Housner & Griffey, 1985, p. 45).

Well-developed knowledge structures also enhance experts’ perception and recall of critical information about students and other contextual elements that escape the notice of novices (Leinheiser & Greeno, 1986; Woorons, 2001). For example, expert tennis instructors were shown to draw more meaningful and skill-related details from slides of instructionally-related tennis scenes than novices (Woorons, 2001). By identifying such information, experts were able to play the roles of diagnostician and technician, prescribing technical remedies for the tennis players they had seen in the slides. Thus, experts advanced perceptual capacities helped them glean more pertinent information for planning and instruction.

Another attribute of expert teachers is their ability to use more flexibility and improvisation than novices in their instruction (Borko & Livingston, 1989; Griffey & Housner, 1991). Studies of experts in domains other than teaching suggest that the knowledge base of the expert is patterned in a hierarchical and efficient manner that facilitates “chunking” of interrelated pieces of information (Chase & Simon, 1973; Chi, Glaser, & Farr, 1988; Ericsson & Smith, 1991). This chunking increases the speed at which experts can access and retrieve information for performance purposes (Chi, Glaser, & Rees, 1981). Researchers have suggested that experts’ highly efficient schema representations allow them to rapidly search their long term memory stores for relevant and useful knowledge for problem solving (Chi, Feltovitch, & Glaser,
In teaching, these mental representations allow experts to teach on somewhat of a contingency basis. Novices, in contrast, deviate very little, if at all, from their lesson plans (Housner & Griffey, 1985). Expert teachers are more responsive to the needs of each student and they adapt their instructional strategies fittingly as they teach (Griffey & Housner, 1991).

Several investigations comparing expert and novice teachers have illustrated how teacher communication also transpires as a function of these teachers’ vast knowledge and sophisticated information processing capabilities (Sanchez, Rosales, & Canedo, 1999; Webb, Diana, Luft, Brooks, & Brennan, 2001). For example, Sanchez, et al. (1999) conducted a thematic analysis of nine experts’ and nine student teachers’ classroom discourses and found that the expositive discourse of experts was more sophisticated than novices. Experts established and utilized links between students’ prior knowledge and the presentation of new information. This finding can be interpreted as one way experts communicate content relevance to students.

In terms of teacher clarity, Sanchez et al. (1999) found that experts provided oral explanations that were characterized by topical continuity, clear transitions, and the use of supports, such as repetitions, simple examples, and recapitulations. A central idea was easily identifiable in these teachers’ explanations, whereas student teachers tended to deliver explanations that were “semantically denser” (p. 48) and less focused. Additionally, experts continually evaluated their clarity of communication by asking students questions pertaining to the most important ideas of the discourse. The expositive discourse of the novices, on the other hand, revealed no implementation of evaluative strategies.

Communication differences between expert and non-expert teachers were also observed in three related studies by Webb, et al. (2001). In the first study, twenty-nine teachers were
selected and categorized as experts, advanced beginners, or novices, using Berliner’s (1986; 1994) criteria for teacher expertise level. Videotapes were made of students responding to an orally administered exam. These students were identified by their teachers as nonverbally expressive. Participants were asked to view the videotapes, write down their analyses of students’ nonverbal comprehension cues, and then discuss their analyses. One group of participants was also given feedback concerning the accuracy of their analyses. Teachers’ verbal reports indicated that experts were more confident and more adept than non-experts at assessing students’ nonverbal comprehension cues when provided sufficient contextual information. Experts made use of this information to assess students’ nonverbal behavior more accurately, whereas non-experts were less likely to find such information as useful. In this way, experts listening skills were better developed than novices.

Based on these findings, Webb et al. (2001) designed a second study to test the effects of contextual prior knowledge on expert teachers’ judgments of nonverbal comprehension, the effects of feedback about experts’ initial responses on these teachers’ judgments, and the confidence with which experts make these judgments. Using a questionnaire, interviews, and naturalistic observation, the investigators once again found contextual knowledge to play an important role in experts’ interpretation of students’ nonverbal comprehension cues. Feedback on their initial judgments of students’ comprehension enabled experts to refine their observational skills and better discern student nonverbal comprehension.

A third study by Webb et al. (2001) conducted with 47 preservice teachers, who were considered novices, demonstrated that these teachers were able to acquire skill in interpreting students’ nonverbal behavior if provided feedback about students’ performances. Overall, the studies by Webb et al. (2001) strengthen the conviction that expertise in teaching is a product of
extensive knowledge and experience. As stated by the authors, “Teachers who are considered to be experts have developed a holistic knowledge base about students, learning and instruction, and the classroom that allows them to interpret nonverbal cues more accurately than less experienced teachers” (p. 95).

Expert teachers also seem to use humor effectively for instructional purposes. The forms and effects of expert teachers’ use of humor was the focus of a study conducted with two award winning elementary physical education teachers and their students (Ennis, 2003). Observations and interviews were triangulated and coded to elicit the different ways the teachers used humor and how their humor was interpreted and perceived by students. Results indicated that the teachers mainly used positive forms of humor, such as puns and self-deprecating comments. Interview data revealed that the teachers used such humor strategically to relieve tension and anxiety, as well as to emphasize important course content. Student perceptions indicated that the students felt the teachers were funny and that the teachers’ use of humor did, in fact, function to help create a more relaxing and accessible learning environment.

A fruitful line of inquiry that has developed in the last decade is the study of expertise in sport instruction. The advantage of studying expert sport instructors is that these teachers typically work with only one student at a time or with small groups and infrequently need to work around various interruptions in the way that school teachers do. Professional sport instructors can focus their attention and practice on the improvement of their teaching skills and subject knowledge and thus achieve higher levels of expertise in teaching than most public school teachers (Schempp, Manross, Tan, & Fincher, 1998). Research conducted at the University of Georgia’s Sport Instruction Laboratory has explored the nature and development of instructional expertise in a number of sports, including dance (You, 1999), volleyball (Bian,
Through funding from the Ladies Professional Golf Association, (LPGA), a large number of these studies have focused on various aspects of expert golf instruction. The teaching practices of expert golf instructors were studied in several investigations, all of which examined one-on-one golf instruction. Using mainly qualitative research techniques, data from these studies have revealed further insight into the characteristic behaviors and have highlighted experts’ instructional routines and rituals (Baker, Schempp, Hardin, & Clark, 1998), use of non-literal language (St. Pierre, 2002), and interaction patterns with students (Schempp, et al., 2004). Taken together, this research has unearthed some of the communication behaviors of expert sport instructors and significantly advanced our understanding of expert teaching.

Baker, Schempp, Hardin, and Clark (1998) videotaped expert golf instructors giving lessons to beginning golfers and found through a thematic analysis that, during their lesson opening, expert golf instructors routinely ask purposeful questions that target students’ athletic experiences in sports other than golf, previous golf exposure, and injuries or physical limitations. The teachers also asked questions to identify lesson objectives and set a course for instruction. Verbal instruction was focused and made relevant to students’ prior experiences and knowledge, based on the information gleaned from the lesson opening. Frequently, content relevance and clarity were achieved through descriptions and explanations that were rich in non-literal language. Feedback was almost invariably immediate and positive, emphasizing mechanical issues rather than outcome. As was done in the lesson opening and the setting of goals, instances of feedback were commonly initiated with question-asking.
Baker et al. (1998) also identified nonverbal patterns of expert golf instruction. The teachers reinforced their verbal instruction with physical manipulation and demonstration. Interviews with experts revealed that physical manipulation was used as a strategy to place students’ in the desired position while practicing a skill, such as the grip, the proper posture, or the swing. Demonstrations were typically used to model sub-skills related to the golf swing, but rarely used to model the full swing.

Based on the findings from the Baker et al. (1998) study and a later investigation of expert golf instruction (Schempp & St. Pierre, August 2000), St. Pierre (2002) further explored experts’ use of nonliteral language in teaching. It was discovered through videotape analysis of experts’ lessons and interviews with experts that while the frequency of metaphorical language used by experts was not as high as expected, instances of metaphorical instruction emerged from the teachers’ extensive experience and acquired knowledge in teaching golf. These teachers used metaphors to paint a mental image for students, provide personal relevance, express difficult concepts, and increase communication efficiency.

During his investigation, St. Pierre (2002) observed that one reason metaphors were not pervasive in the instruction of expert golf instructors was that these teachers had access to video technology, which they used as their primary source of instructional communication. However, anecdotal evidence from previous investigations of expert golf instructors suggests that even in the absence of such technology, these teachers have tremendous success in helping students learn through other instructional strategies, including the use of metaphors (Schempp & St. Pierre, August, 2000).

A more recent study of expert golf instruction investigated teacher-student interaction patterns (Schempp, et al., 2004). Systematic observation and qualitative analysis of experts’
videotaped lessons revealed dominant instructional behaviors and a repetitive pattern of interaction between instructors and students. The instructors focused their instruction on subject matter content, delivering information in a focused manner through emphasizing only a few main points. The interaction patterns between instructors and students began with teacher explanations, demonstrations, and directions, which were followed by student practice and teacher praise of student achievements. These patterns were routine-like and seemingly automated, qualities which are consistent with the performances of experts in other domains (Bloom, 1986). Although communication was not investigated per se, the authors noted that, “it appears that the teachers’ communications were clear, because…the most frequently occurring student behaviors were predictable verbal and nonverbal responses” (p. 68).

Another dominant behavior of the expert teachers in the Schempp et al. (2004) study was prompting student communication through asking students questions. A common observation in the lessons taught by these experts was that students appeared to feel comfortable communicating with instructors, often initiating conversation. The benefit of this teacher behavior, as shown in the qualitative analysis of the instructors’ lessons, is that the teachers were able to ascertain important information from students via an open channel of communication, which later proved to be invaluable to their instruction.

While the expertise research discussed thus far has revealed something of expert teachers’ communication behaviors and strategies, none of this research has specifically examined experts’ communication concerns. However, a recent study by Schempp, et al. (2005) examining the self-monitoring characteristics of 31 of the nation’s top ranked golf instructors revealed that these teachers identified communication as the most important aspect of their teaching. Questionnaire data indicated these teachers carefully monitored and sought to improve
their communication, suggesting that experts do have specific communication concerns in relation to their teaching. This finding also suggests that, similar to its role in effective instruction, communication is a major factor in pedagogical expertise.

In summary, expertise in teaching translates to consistently outstanding performance in helping students learn. The extensive and highly developed knowledge base of the expert teacher, acquired over years of experience in the domain, can be credited for superior skill in a number of teaching-related tasks. Experts’ are better than novices in making planning and interactive decisions that center on the needs of individual learners. Experts also perceive, recall, and make use of important contextual cues to identify problem areas in student performance and prescribe fitting solutions. Efficiently organized knowledge structures also increase experts’ rate of information processing, enabling them to teach with more flexibility and improvisation than novices.

Domain-specific knowledge and experience are also behind experts’ ability to communicate with students more effectively than non-experts. The expositive discourse of experts is uniquely structured to bridge students’ prior knowledge to new ideas and concepts in a way that the discourse of novices does not achieve. Experts are thus more successful at communicating content relevance to students. Experts also explain course content more clearly than novices through better explanatory structure and verbal fluency, as well as through continually evaluating their instructional clarity by monitoring student understanding. Students’ nonverbal behavior is more accessible to experts as a tool to assess student comprehension, and this may be why novices do not seem to evaluate their clarity in the way that experts do. In this regard, expert teachers are also better listeners than novices.
Research in physical education has demonstrated that experts use humor effectively as an instructional tool, as well. These teachers strategically use humor to gain student attention, alleviate group tension, and emphasize important course content. They make the instructional climate more relaxed and accessible to engage students in class activities and promote learning. Closely related to physical education research is sport pedagogy, which has enabled researchers at the University of Georgia to broaden and refine our understanding of expert teacher communication. Examinations of expertise in golf instruction have shown that experts routinely ask questions to develop an instructional plan, employ physical manipulation to demonstrate, provide positive and useful feedback, use metaphorical language to communicate content relevance and teach clearly, focus their instruction on subject matter content in relation to one or two main points, use automated and efficient instructional patterns that lead to desired student responses, and ask questions that lead to student-initiated dialogue and open channels of communication.

Finally, recent research with expert golf instructors has also unveiled the importance of communication in expert teaching (Schempp, et al., 2006). According to these teachers, communication is paramount to teaching expertly, as demonstrated by their constant self-monitoring of this aspect of their professional practice. Regrettably, nothing is yet known about what specific communication concerns expert teachers have or how these concerns might play a role in expert instruction.

Clearly, many of the communication behaviors of expert teachers are consistent with those used by effective teachers. For example, establishing lesson objectives, providing clear explanations and demonstrations, asking questions, and offering positive and immediate feedback are all communication-related teacher behaviors that have been linked to both effective
and expert instruction (e.g., Rink, 2003; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986; Sanchez, 1999; Schempp, et al., 2004). In addition, research on both effective and expert teacher communication has underscored the importance of asking questions to ascertain student information that can be used to make content personally relevant later in the lesson (Frymier & Shulman, 1995; Sanchez, 1999).

Simultaneously, several aspects of expert teachers’ communication are unique. For example, Baker et al.’s (1998) finding that expert golf instructors display a tendency toward physically positioning their students’ grip, posture, and swing during practice indicates that these teachers consider physical manipulation an important part of their instructional repertoire. However, the effective teaching literature makes no mention of physical manipulation as a recommended instructional strategy.

While the idea that teachers employ specific communication strategies has not been directly addressed in research on effective teacher communication, it has been shown that expert teachers do devise and utilize certain strategies to increase their communicative effectiveness. For instance, the use of metaphorical language as an instructional strategy has not emerged as a characteristic feature of effective teaching, but has been distinctly noted and examined in research with expert teachers (Schempp, et al., 2004; St. Pierre, 2001). Also, Gorham (1988) identified the encouragement of student communication as a communication behavior of effective classroom teachers in teacher immediacy research, but only research on expertise has demonstrated how the promotion of student communication can be used strategically to enhance teaching effectiveness and student learning (Schempp, et al., 2004).

In studying expertise, Ericsson (2003) noted that a representative set of tasks through which repeatedly superior performance in a given domain can manifest must be identified in
order to create similar conditions for research purposes. The research reviewed in this section suggests that teacher communication is among those teaching tasks that permit expert performance to shine. The strategies and behaviors of expert teachers have given us new insight into the communication process in teaching, though we still have much to learn about exemplary instructional communication. Regarding experts’ communication strategies, we know something of how experts communicate clearly (Baker, et al., 1998; Sanchez, et al., 1999; Schempp, et al., 2004), listen through tracking students’ nonverbal communication (Webb, et al., 2001), and communicate humor (Ennis, 2003), but what other techniques do they employ? What strategies do expert teachers implement in relation to communicating immediacy, style, and making content relevant? Do novice teachers employ communication strategies, and if so, how do their strategies differ from experts’?

Expertise research has also described in some detail the communication behaviors of expert teachers. We have seen how these behaviors can be organized and framed within several communication constructs, including teacher clarity, teacher use of humor, teacher communication of content relevance, and teacher listening. Studies with expert golf instructors conducted by Baker et al. (1998), St. Pierre (2002), and Schempp et al. (2004) have been particularly helpful in this area. However, this research has only begun to explore the broad landscape of expert communication in teaching. Little is known about these aspects of expert teacher communication, and no work has described expert teachers’ communication styles or immediacy behaviors. What does expert golf instruction look like through an extensive examination of teacher communication behaviors? How might a comprehensive portrayal of expert and novice teaching within each of the teacher communication constructs reviewed in this chapter look different?
Finally, expert golf instructors have expressed the fundamental importance of communication in their teaching (Schempp, et al., 2006). If communication plays such a central role in expert teaching, then what are the communication concerns of expert teachers and how do these concerns play out in the instruction of these teachers? Do the communication concerns of expert and novice teachers differ?

To answer all of these questions, the framework outlined in this review can offer some conceptual guidance. The communication perspective of teaching can provide us with a fresh set of eyes for studying the pedagogy of expert and novice teachers. From this perspective, research on effective teaching has highlighted the importance of studying teachers’ communication behaviors and concerns, and expertise research additionally points to teachers’ communication strategies as an integral component of the instructional communication process. Each of these aspects of teacher communication should be considered in the study of expert teaching if a global understanding of how expert teachers communicate and why they communicate as they do is to be reached.

To study these aspects of teacher communication, several of the methods and procedures used in previous teacher communication research should prove to be quite useful. As demonstrated throughout this chapter, researchers in education and communication have used a variety of methods to capture and define the essence of teacher communication in effective classroom and physical education instruction, as well as in the context of expertise. Studies of effective teacher communication have largely defined teacher effectiveness through student perceptions, employing quantitative techniques to elicit a list of behaviors that describe the communication of effective teachers (e.g. Bush, et al., 1977; Chesebro & McCroskey, 2003).
While this approach to the study of teacher communication has proved to be useful, it presents only one perspective of the instructional communication process.

Some effective teacher communication studies have also employed qualitative techniques, including the direct observation of teachers’ classroom instruction, questionnaires and interviews to gather teachers’ perspectives of their communication and student perceptions of teacher communication behavior. For example, Staton-Spicer and Marty-White (1981) used each of these methods to identify and track the communication concerns and related behaviors of a teacher over the course of a semester. This qualitative approach to the study of teacher communication enabled the researchers to provide rich descriptions of differences in the communication process at increasing levels of experience.

Similarly, expert-novice comparisons have used qualitative methods to create detailed accounts of expert and novice teachers’ communication strategies and behaviors. Studies have employed teachers’ verbal reports to examine teacher communication (Sanchez, et al., 1999), as well as videotape analysis (e.g., Baker, et al., 1998; Schempp, et al., 2004), teacher and student interviews (e.g., Ennis, 2003; St. Pierre, 2002), and other qualitative techniques, such as stimulated recall (Housner & Griffey, 1985).

In contrast to previous instructional communication research, which is primarily based on student perceptions of effective teaching, a combination of the various approaches discussed above can greatly enhance the study of teacher communication and offer a more global perspective of the instructional communication process. To study and compare the instructional communication of expert and novice golf instructors, videotape analysis is one technique that can be used effectively in this investigation. As other research with expert golf instructors has already used videotape analysis to successfully outline these teachers’ instructional behaviors
(e.g., Baker, et al., 1998; Schempp, et al., 2004), this method seems appropriate to study expert golf instructors’ communication behaviors. As well, the perspective of the student has been invaluable to our understanding of both effective and expert teacher communication, as well (e.g., Civikly, 1992; Ennis, 2003; Nussbaum, 1992; St. Pierre, 2002). Therefore, student interviews will allow for an enhanced view of expert and novice teacher communication in this study.

Regarding teachers’ communication concerns, Staton-Spicer and Bassett’s (1979) Communication Concerns Questionnaire will be particularly useful in this study to develop an understanding of how expert and novice golf instructors’ communication concerns differ and what these differences mean in relation to expert and novice teaching. Finally, expertise research has begun to demonstrate the superior decision-making skills of expert teachers with respect to their planning and instruction (Griffey & Housner, 1991; Housner & Griffey, 1985), as well as their communication (e.g., Ennis, 2003; Sanchez, et al., 1999). The stimulated recall technique has proven to be a useful tool for studying expert and novice decision-making in the past (Housner & Griffey, 1985), and it can well serve as a guiding method for examining the communication strategies of expert golf instructors in this study.

The study of expert instructional communication is in its nascent stages. With teacher communication as the centerpiece of the instructional process, it is important that we pay closer attention to how our most successful teachers communicate with their students and further underline distinctions between expert and non-expert teaching. Research on both effective and expert teacher communication provides a useful theoretical and methodological framework for examining the communication behaviors, concerns, and strategies of expert and novice teachers. In the next chapter, the methods and procedures that will be used to examine each of these aspects of expert teacher communication will be discussed in greater depth. Using these
methods, expert and novice instructional communication will be revealed in the context of golf instruction, lending insight to the teacher communication process and also bringing new light to the nature of expert teaching.
CHAPTER 3
METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to examine the instructional communication of expert and novice golf instructors. Specifically, these teachers’ communication concerns, strategies, and behaviors were identified, as were student perceptions of learning in relation to expert and novice instructional communication. As mentioned in chapter two, researchers have examined these aspects of teacher communication in various ways, some of which are particularly useful in guiding this study. In this chapter, the methods and procedures selected for use in this investigation will be discussed. These are organized and outlined in the following sequence: (a) study design, (b) participant selection, (c) data collection, (d) data analysis, (e) pilot study, (f) credibility and trustworthiness, and (g) transferability.

Study Design

In his most recent text on qualitative research methods, Michael Quinn Patton quoted Albert Einstein as saying “Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted” (Patton, 2002, p. 13). As shown in chapter two, previous research has demonstrated that a complete understanding of teacher communication requires research efforts that go beyond the measurement of communicative thought and action in terms quantity, intensity, or frequency. To make sense of and describe in detail the complex phenomenon of communication in instruction, a qualitative appraisal of teachers’ behaviors, concerns, and strategies was necessary.
Denzin and Lincoln (2000) state “The word qualitative implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings” (p. 8, italics in original). Qualitative research capitalizes on people, their words and actions, and the meanings that language and behavior carry. As a paradigm of inquiry, qualitative research differs from quantitative research in several significant ways, most importantly in its unique ability to capture intimate portrayals and perspectives of individuals in action (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Unlike quantitative research, qualitative studies are concerned more with description than with prediction. The methods and procedures advanced through the qualitative tradition find their strength in securing rich descriptions of people and events within a well circumscribed setting (Denzin, 1978; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002).

Accordingly, a qualitative research design was chosen for purposes of data collection and analysis in this study, where the intent was to describe in depth and extensive detail the instructional communication of expert and novice golf teachers. Techniques for data collection included questionnaires, videotaping, and interviews. All data were analyzed thematically, following recommendations and insight provided by Huberman and Miles (1995), Patton (2002), and Bogdan and Biklen (1992). These qualitative techniques helped to elicit rich and descriptive accounts of expert and novice communication in golf instruction.

Participant Selection

Since this study aimed to investigate a pre-specified group of teachers according to their caliber of expertise, purposeful sampling was employed to select participants (Patton, 2002). Berliner (1986: 1994) established several criteria for identifying teachers at varying levels of expertise that guided participant selection in this study. According to Berliner’s developmental model, teachers exhibit pronounced differences in their pedagogical thinking and practice as they
progress through various stages of expertise. Relevant to the present study are two stages at the extreme ends of Berliner’s model, novice and expert.

Berliner (1994) described novice teachers as having typically taught for fewer than three years. These teachers are inexperienced and inflexible regarding their planning, instruction, and evaluation. As a result, their thinking and decision-making is rational and rule-based. Novices have not developed comfortable routines or procedures and, therefore, tend to focus on classroom management as opposed to student learning. They are heavily reliant on experience through trial and error to learn how to improve as teachers (Bell, 1997). Finally, novice teachers feel they have little control over the learning environment and lack a sense of responsibility for their actions.

In stark contrast, the expert teacher is characterized by a record of consistently superior success in helping students learn (Tan, 1997). Expert teachers have at least 10 years of teaching experience. They are highly intuitive in their teaching and are not rule-bound in the way novices are. Experts teach using well-established routines that enable them to freely attend to students’ learning needs. Experts also possess a vast storehouse of knowledge because they are insatiable learners. They draw from this knowledge to create optimal learning conditions for their students.

Using Berliner’s (1986; 1994) criteria as a guide, four expert and four novice (n = 8) golf instructors were recruited to participate in this study. Golf instruction presents several attractive features to the study of expert teaching, all of which increase the stability of the research conditions and help to facilitate data collection and analysis. First, the subject matter of golf mainly comprises the swing, which reduces the need to control for lesson content. Second, golf is typically taught using a one-to-one instructional format, as opposed to a group format. A one-to-one format enables the teacher to focus more on instruction than management. Third, as long
as the teacher and student stay at a lesson tee (usually a practice station at a driving range), the investigator does not have to reposition him/herself and can easily maintain an optimal viewing angle from which to observe and videotape. In addition to these advantages, the University of Georgia Sport Instruction Research Laboratory has long standing professional ties with the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA), developed through collaboration in research and professional development in golf instruction and instructor certification.

Expert Golf Instructors

The selection criteria used to identify expert teachers in this study were modeled after other research examining expertise in golf instruction (Schempp, et al., 2004), which has primarily drawn from Berliner’s (1986; 1994) developmental framework to compare expert and novice teaching. Expert teachers in the present study were selected based on the following criteria: (a) a minimum of 10 years of golf teaching experience (experts selected for participation each had between 20 and 25 years of experience teaching golf, mostly giving individual lessons), (b) LPGA certified instructor, (c) received formal recognition for the quality of their instruction from the golf community in the form of National Teacher of the Year Award, and (d) have established a consistent record of success with students at the local, regional and national levels.

In addition, while past research was helpful in pointing to characteristics of expert teachers, the assistance of the staff of the LPGA was solicited to strengthen the selection process. A short profile of each expert instructor is provided below. Codes are used in place of the teachers’ names to preserve confidentiality. The coding format for all participants is a letter (“E” for expert, “N” for novice, and “S” for student) followed by a number.

E1. At the time of this study, Expert One had over 20 years of experience teaching golf, was an eight-time Golf Magazine Top 100 Teacher in America and a two-time Golf Digest Top
50 Teacher. She also received numerous awards from the LPGA and the PGA for her instruction.

**E2.** Expert Two played on the Women’s Florida Golf Tour before joining the LPGA Teaching Division in 1988. Among her many awards for golf instruction, she has been awarded LPGA National Teacher of the Year and was nominated a Top 50 Teacher by *Golf for Women*.

**E3.** Expert Three was honored by *Golf Digest* as the best teacher in her state and was also an LPGA National Teacher of the Year. She became a golf professional in 1977 and has earned Master Professional status for the LPGA.

**E4.** Before beginning a career in golf instruction, Expert Four was a college and professional golf player. Her list of teaching awards is extensive and includes a place on *Golf Magazine*’s 100 Best Instructors in America and *Golf for Women*’s Top 50 Teachers.

**Novice Golf Instructors**

Berliner (1994) identifies novices as student teachers or first year teachers. Therefore, the novice teachers selected for participation in this study were at either of these stages of professional development. All four novices were female physical education specialists who had taken a formal university course in golf as part of their program of study, but who had no experience teaching golf. All instructors, expert and novice, completed an approved informed consent form (see Appendix A) before participating in the study.

**Students**

Virtually no control was asserted over the student selection criteria in this study. While student characteristics, such as race, gender, age, and skill level may play a significant role in the instructional communication process, insufficient research is available to make knowledge claims regarding the effects of such student characteristics on teacher communication.
(Richmond, Lane, & McCroskey, 2006). Incidentally, some recent teacher immediacy studies have found that culture and gender do not significantly alter the effects of teacher immediacy behaviors in the classroom environment (e.g., Jones & Burleson, 2003; Pribyl, Sakamoto, & Keaton, 2004; Roach & Byrne, 2001), suggesting that teachers need not manipulate their communication to ensure instructional effectiveness from a relational perspective (Mottet & Beebe, 2006).

The single stipulation employed in recruiting student participants for the study was that students assigned to take a lesson from a novice teacher were selected only if they had never played golf. The purpose of this added control was to reduce any anxiety the novice teachers might have experienced if they were expected to teach a student with more golf playing proficiency than them. Students who participated in the study ranged in age from 19 to 42, although most were college aged. As with the instructors, all students completed an approved informed consent form (see Appendix A).

Data Collection

A formal letter of invitation was sent to each instructor identified as meeting the above outlined criteria. Two weeks later, each instructor was contacted by telephone to confirm her interest in participating in the study and to schedule a time for data collection. All instructors completed a background questionnaire (see Appendix B) prior to data collection to ensure they met the criteria for participation in the study. The background questionnaire took approximately 10 minutes to complete and included questions pertaining to the instructors’ (a) age, (b) past teaching experience, (c) previous golf playing experience, (d) educational background, (e) qualifications and certifications, (f) honors, and (g) professional development endeavors.
Students were recruited for the study with the help of the LPGA. The incentive offered to students to participate was that they would receive a free golf lesson.

Data gathering was completed in five phases. Phase One was conducted with the expert teachers and their students in January at two golf courses in Orlando, Florida with the approval of the LPGA. During this phase, which took place the weekend following the 2006 PGA Merchandise Show, the expert teachers completed a questionnaire pertaining to their communication concerns (see Appendix B), were videotaped teaching a lesson to a student, and then interviewed following the lesson.

In Phase Two, a telephone interview (see Appendix C) was scheduled and conducted with each teacher, as well as each student. Phase Three was conducted in February at the University of Georgia Golf Course using the same procedures as Phase One, but with the novice teachers and their students. Telephone interviews with these participants were scheduled and conducted to complete Phase Four. The final phase of data collection involved contacting the golf instructors over the telephone to conduct follow-up interviews (see Appendix C). All instructor and student interviews were audio taped and later transcribed for analysis. There were no differences in the equipment provided for each lesson, the space available, or the conditions afforded between the three facilities used for the study.

Each data collection method employed in this study was designed to capture and highlight aspects of expert and novice instructional communication, including teachers’ communication concerns, strategies, and behaviors. A more detailed description of each of these techniques and procedures is provided below. Table 3.1 lists each research question and its corresponding data collection technique(s).
Table 3.1

*Research Questions and Corresponding Data Collection Methods*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Data Collection Method(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. What are the instructional communication concerns of expert and novice golf instructors?</td>
<td>Communication Concerns Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How do experts’ and novices’ instructional communication behaviors differ?</td>
<td>Videotaping, instructor telephone interview, student telephone interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What is the relationship between the instructional communication concerns and behaviors of experts and novices?</td>
<td>Communication Concerns Questionnaire, videotaping, instructor telephone interview, follow-up instructor interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How do expert and novice golf instructors’ communication strategies differ?</td>
<td>Stimulated recall interview, follow-up instructor interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What do students recall about and perceive to be the effects of expert and novice instructional communication?</td>
<td>Student telephone interview</td>
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*Communication Concerns Questionnaire*

To collect data relevant to expert and novice teachers’ communication concerns, a questionnaire modeled after that used by Staton-Spicer and Bassett (1979) was developed (see Appendix B). The questionnaire used an open-ended format and asked the instructors, “When you think about your teaching and communication, what are your concerns?” Each instructor completed the concerns questionnaire on site in approximately 15 minutes.
Videotaped Lesson

As mentioned in chapter two, videotaping has been used successfully as a data collection method in previous research conducted with expert golf instructors (e.g., Baker, et al., 1998; Schempp, et al., 2004). In this study, each instructor was videotaped teaching a lesson to a student to examine the communication behaviors of expert and novice teachers. Lessons lasted between 35 minutes and just over an hour. Each lesson had the same topical focus, the golf swing, so that the language, behaviors, and instructional activities used by each instructor manifested according to a common purpose. A Sony® digital camcorder with tripod was positioned several feet behind the instructor and her student to capture teacher communication behaviors. Instructors wore a wireless microphone to ensure sufficient vocal volume and clarity during video replay.

Stimulated Recall Interview

The stimulated recall interview (see Appendix C) involved the instructor reviewing segments of her videotaped lesson and explaining the meaning and intent behind her communication behaviors to the researcher while being audio taped. Housner and Griffey (1985) employed this technique to examine the planning and interactive decision making strategies of experienced and inexperienced physical education teachers. In the present study, this exercise was used to identify the communication strategies of expert and novice golf instructors.

The instructors were shown selected segments of their videotaped lessons in sequential order. Following each segment, the instructors were asked to respond to the following set of questions about their communication strategies: (a) What are you doing in this segment and why? What were you trying to convey to the student? (b) What were you noticing about the students? How were they responding? (c) Were you thinking of any alternative actions or
strategies at that time? Did you consider alternative or multiple forms of communication (e.g., demonstrations, metaphors, questions)? The segments of the lesson that were reviewed were selected by the investigator based on Siverman’s (1994) claim that “in actual instructional situations, communication generally is presented at three different times: (a) before practice, often as an explanation or a demonstration; (b) during practice, as feedback; and (c) after practice, as a review or for group feedback” (p. 345). Therefore, the segments selected for review during stimulated recall included the opening and closing of the lesson, teacher explanations and demonstrations, and teacher feedback. For each instructor, the stimulated recall interview took approximately 30 minutes to complete.

**Instructor Telephone Interview**

A telephone interview (see Appendix C) was scheduled with each instructor approximately two weeks following her videotaped lesson. The purpose of the interview was to add dimension to the videotape and stimulated recall data and glean a more comprehensive understanding of expert and novice communication strategies and behaviors. Questions focused on the instructors’ self-perceptions of their (a) communication strengths and limitations, and (b) communication behaviors related to immediacy, clarity, style, humor, content relevance, and listening. Instructor telephone interviews generally lasted between 30 and 40 minutes each.

**Student Telephone Interview**

Fittingly, student perceptions have played a major role in defining what constitutes effective communication (Chesebro & McCroskey, 2003). In this study, each student was contacted by telephone one to two weeks following his or her golf lesson with an expert or novice instructor. Students were asked to (a) recall their most vivid memories of their instructors’ communication traits, including aspects of immediacy, clarity, style, use of humor,
content relevance, and listening, and (b) identify which elements of their teachers’ instructional communication were most or least helpful with respect to their learning (See Appendix C). The purpose of the interview was to determine the impact that expert and novice teachers’ various communicative behaviors and strategies had on student recall and learning and to ascertain students’ perceptions and preferences regarding their teachers’ instructional communication. Each student telephone interview took approximately 30 minutes to complete.

**Follow-Up Instructor Interview**

A follow-up teacher interview (see Appendix C) was conducted with each teacher over the telephone to fill gaps in the data and extend the researchers’ understanding of (a) the relationship between teacher concerns and behaviors and (b) the teachers’ communication strategies. The follow-up interviews each took between 20 and 30 minutes to complete.

**Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using data management and reduction procedures recommended by Huberman and Miles (1994). A four stage analysis model was used, which involved (a) data management, (b) data reduction, (c) data display, and (d) drawing and verifying conclusions. Data management is defined as the process of data collection, storage, and retrieval, and is aimed at ensuring high-quality, accessible data, documentation and tracking of data analysis, and post analysis retention of the data. In this study, data were collected and organized by separating the data into two major clusters. The first cluster contained data that would be used to describe the nature of expert and novice instructional communication (i.e., communication concern questionnaires, videotaped lessons, stimulated recall interviews, and instructor telephone interviews). The second cluster contained data that would be used to describe the impact of expert and novice instructional communication (i.e., the student interviews). In the first cluster,
data were further grouped into communication concerns, strategies, and behaviors for experts and novices.

The next stage, data reduction, is characterized by an ongoing engagement with the data, during which regularities and consistencies in the data emerge through inductive analysis. Simultaneously, emergent themes are confirmed through a process of deductive analysis. The instructional communication and expert teaching literatures were consulted to further guide the analysis in this stage. Below, the steps taken to reduce each data set and address each research question are described in detail.

**Communication Concerns.** A coding system used by Staton-Spicer and Bassett (1979) in their study of teacher communication concerns was helpful in reducing data from the communication concerns questionnaires into Fuller’s (1969) three-tier conceptualization of teachers’ concerns (i.e., self, task, and impact). Staton-Spicer and Bassett’s system includes five categories of concerns for coding data: (a) No Concern, (b) Not a Personal Concern about Own Communication, (c) Non-Communication or Non-Teaching Concern, (d) Self-Concern, (e) Task Concern, and (f) Impact Concern. Content analyses of the instructors’ concerns in the Self, Task, and Impact categories was conducted to identify trends in the experts’ and the novices’ communication concerns.

**Communication Behaviors.** Data collected through videotaping, the teacher telephone interviews, and the student telephone interviews were searched for trends in the teacher’s communication behaviors with respect to each of the constructs from the conceptual model outlined in Chapter Two (i.e., immediacy, clarity, style, humor, content relevance, and listening). Emerging behavior trends were examined and considered in light of contemporary definitions and conceptualizations for each communication construct (Cruickshank & Kennedy, 1986;

**Relationship of Concerns and Behaviors.** Trends in the experts’ and novices’ instructional communication concerns were compared with identified trends in the teachers’ communication behaviors to search for possible links between concerns and behaviors. Data gathered from the follow-up instructor interviews were consulted to confirm or deny these links and produce a concerns-behaviors matrix for experts and novices.

**Communication Strategies.** Communication strategies were conceptualized at two levels of instructional communication: (a) the micro level and (b) the macro level. At the micro level, strategies were defined as corresponding communication goals and instructional behaviors within independent instructional episodes (e.g. giving explanations). At the macro level, strategies were defined as overarching communication plans for any lesson. Communication goals and corresponding instructional behaviors were distilled from the stimulated recall and follow-up interview data and a goals-behaviors matrix was developed for experts and novices. Expert and novice macro-level strategies emerged from an analysis of the relationships among the instructors’ micro-level strategies.

**Student Recall and Perceived Effect of Teacher Communication.** A second review of the student telephone interviews was conducted to identify statements pertaining to the students’ recall and perceived impact of the instructors’ communication behaviors on their learning. These statements were reduced into two fragments, one describing the teacher’s behavior(s), and the other describing the perceived effect of the behavior. The number of recalled teacher behaviors for experts and novices and the identified student perceptions were quantified and the most frequently recalled teacher behaviors were noted. All student perceptions associated with each
teacher behavior were then grouped to determine the range of effects expert and novice instructional communication behaviors had on students’ perceptions of learning. Dominant effects (those cited in the majority of student interviews within each group) were identified through this process, as well.

Huberman and Miles’ (1994) third stage of data analysis is data display. As the data is reduced to workable categories and themes, a suggested graphic portrayal of the data evolves concurrently. During this third stage, themes and categories are represented in an organized and sensible manner so that conclusions can be drawn and verified in the final stage of the analysis. In the present study, large poster boards and various tables were assembled to display trends in the instructors’ communication concerns, strategies, and behaviors. In doing this, several new patterns emerged that were missed in the previous stage of the analysis, which enabled the researcher to condense several of the trends and to produce crystallized themes.

The final stage of Huberman and Miles’ (1994) four-step analysis is drawing and verifying conclusions. Themes in the data are considered for meaning and are examined against the backdrop of the related literature. As well, each theme is checked for fit within the original data sets to verify its validity. These procedures were completed in the present study and were supplemented with member checks to increase the credibility of the findings (see the section below on credibility and trustworthiness).

The communication perspective outlined in Chapter Two provided the main conceptual framework for data analysis. The instructors’ communication behaviors and strategies were analyzed according to their fittingness with the teacher communication constructs of immediacy, clarity, style, use of humor, communication of content relevance, and listening. In addition, the instructors’ communication strategies were examined under the lens of contemporary theories of
teaching expertise. As discussed in chapter two, information-processing theory and schema theory are commonly used to account for experts’ superior performances when compared to non-experts (Dodds, 1994). Purdy’s (1997) efficient listening model of attention, perception, interpretation, memory, and response was used to guide the analysis of teachers’ listening in this study. Finally, the instructors’ communication concerns were analyzed using Fuller’s (1969) three-tier teacher concerns model of self, task, and impact.

To remain sensitive to these perspectives, yet also be open to possible nuances that might transpire in the analysis of expert and novice teacher communication in this study, modified analytic induction (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Patton, 2002) was a particularly helpful analytic tool. As described by Bogdan and Biklen (1992), modified analytic induction enables the researcher to modify the formulations of a theory, if needed, over the course of a qualitative study as trends in the data emerge. Common characteristics of expert and novice golf instructors’ communication were thus compared and contrasted with what is currently known and theorized concerning the teacher communication process and expert teaching.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was completed with an experienced golf instructor and two highly successful University coaches in Georgia. The purpose of the pilot study was to test the usefulness and feasibility of the methods selected for use in the actual study. The experienced golf instructor completed the background questionnaire and the communication concerns questionnaire and was videotaped teaching a one hour lesson to a student using the same equipment that was later used to collect data from the expert and novice teachers. The instructor also sat for an audio taped stimulated recall interview directly following the lesson and
participated in a telephone interview two weeks later. Around the same time, the student was interviewed over the telephone, as well.

The two coaches were given a modified version of the communication concerns questionnaire to compare the readability of both versions and to determine which version best facilitated participant comprehension and interpretation when reading the question. Minor modifications were made to the original instruments and procedures so that the final methods would elicit data optimally fitting to the research questions and the overall purpose of the study.

Credibility and Trustworthiness

Issues of credibility and trustworthiness in qualitative research parallel the traditional notions of validity and rigor in quantitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). Research conducted in the quantitative tradition has primarily sought to look beyond the frame of a single study to see the bigger picture (Crotty, 1998). Conversely, qualitative researchers seek to represent the inside, or “emic”, perspective of the studied phenomena and thus concern themselves with preserving this view (Patton, 2002).

Briefly, credibility is a qualitative referent for the internal validity criterion in quantitative research and is the extent to which participants’ interpretations and experiences match an investigator’s reconstruction of these phenomena (Janesick, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Janesick (2000) states “Validity in qualitative research has to do with description and explanation and whether or not the explanation fits the description” (p. 393). Trustworthiness has to do with the dependability and confirmability of the selected research approach and the corresponding findings. Dependability (i.e., reliability) involves tracking and documenting the research process so that the journey taken by the researcher to arrive at an interpretation of the data is clear and unambiguous (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Confirmability (i.e., objectivity) is
“concerned with assuring that data, interpretations, and outcomes of inquiries are rooted in contexts and persons apart from the [researcher] and are not simply fragments of the [researcher’s] imagination” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 243). The techniques selected to increase the level of credibility and trustworthiness in this study included (a) member checks, (b) triangulation, and (c) an audit trail.

*Member Checks*

With the researcher as the instrument for analysis, a qualitative design can incorporate several techniques to ensure credibility. Two popular methods are member checks and triangulation (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Patton, 2002). Member checks can be defined as the process of sharing with participants the research questions, data, preliminary categories, and interpretations to reduce misinterpretation and confirm the fidelity of the investigator’s research approach to the perspectives and beliefs of the participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). In this study, the participants were consulted periodically throughout data analysis to strengthen the credibility of both the analytic process and the emergent findings.

*Triangulation*

The second method, triangulation, is the process of cross-checking theories and/or data using various techniques (Denzin, 1978; Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Patton, 2002). Data was collected in the present study through multiple methods, as indicated above, including the communication concerns questionnaires, videotaping, stimulated recall interviews, student telephone interviews, and instructor follow-up interviews. Analyzing these data allowed for what Denzin (1978) called “between methods triangulation.” The purpose of this technique is to expand and sharpen the lens through which data is analyzed, thereby reducing the effects of potential weaknesses in the study design (e.g., researcher bias, measurement deficiencies, etc.).
The combination of methods selected for triangulation should be complimentary, in that each method should bring an enhanced perspective to the analysis that cannot be achieved in its absence. By triangulating methods in this study, the complexities of each teacher’s instructional communication emerged with increased clarity and fullness.

**Audit Trail**

To address the issue of trustworthiness in this study, a procedure called an audit trail was followed. An audit trail increases dependability and confirmability and is defined as a well-documented record of the inquiry process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This process primarily includes the steps taken to analyze data, as well as acknowledging personal influence in serving as the instrument for analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). One strategy for establishing an audit trail is the use of a researcher journal (Lecompte & Preisle, 1993), which can serve as a monitoring device to track the researcher’s investigative decisions and also promote reflective thinking. The researcher in this study kept a journal of his engagement with data analysis on both a professional and a personal level. Journal entries were consulted to form the fabric through which interpretations and findings interwove. In this way, the investigative journey of the researcher was represented wholly and honestly, which will allow others to trace the research findings to their original sources.

**Transferability**

A final consideration in a discussion of trustworthiness is the distinction made by qualitative researchers between generalizability and transferability (Patton, 2002). Strong quantitative designs are judged in part by their ability to control research conditions to the extent that the results of a study are deemed applicable to a relevant, broader context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). As stated earlier in this chapter, however, the merit of a strong qualitative study
is evaluated based on its ability to describe in depth the conditions of a specified context. Unlike most quantitative studies, the benefit of qualitative research is not that it permits generalization, but rather that it reveals the complexities and intricacies of certain phenomena of interest. Yet, through what Geertz (1973) called “thick description”, these phenomena might be explained in ways that allow for transferability from one context to another.

This study endeavored to describe expert and novice instructional communication in golf. It, perhaps, says little about instruction in the classroom, in other sports, or even in golf instruction at other levels of proficiency. On the other hand, it would be difficult to argue that research conducted with expert and novice teachers in golf is not transferable in some measure to other instructional contexts. Indeed, it seems safe to say that most teachers can tremendously benefit from the lessons learned through research conducted with any teacher deemed expert. This investigation does provide at least some helpful hints to anyone who considers him or herself a teacher. Although context determined in large part how the study’s findings were interpreted, teachers will almost certainly find relevance and value in ways that fit the unique educational cultures in which they work (Patton, 2002).

In the following chapters, the study’s findings will be presented and discussed. Chapter Four will present the findings relative to expert and novice instructional communication concerns. Chapter Five will in depth on expert and novice golf instructors’ communication behaviors with respect to immediacy, clarity, style, humor, relevance, and listening. The relationship between the communication concerns and the instructional behaviors of experts and novices will be the focus of Chapter Six. In Chapter Seven, expert and novice instructional communication strategies will be explored. Finally, following the most prominent tradition in instructional communication scholarship, Chapter Eight will address findings from the analysis
of expert and novice instructional communication from the student’s perspective. These findings
will be summarized and recommendations are provided for continued research and in the final
chapter (Chapter Nine).
CHAPTER 4

EXPERT AND NOVICE INSTRUCTIONAL COMMUNICATION CONCERNS

Educational researchers acknowledge the primacy of presage variables in the process and product of teaching (Brophy & Good, 1986). Perhaps the most consequential of such variables are teachers’ thoughts and perceptions. What teachers think determines what they do, which in turn influences the outcome of a lesson. As was shown in Chapter Two, the fundamental role of teacher cognition in instruction is reflected in the communication literature by research on teacher communication concerns and their relationship to teacher behaviors in the classroom. Through Staton-Spicer and Basett’s (1979) seminal research conceptualizing teacher communication concerns, subsequent research not only identified such concerns, but also linked them to patterns of instruction (Staton-Spicer & Marty-White, 1981).

Importantly, these studies suggest that teachers’ communication concerns conform to Frances Fuller’s (1969) theory that, with increasing experience, teachers move from having concerns about themselves as teachers, to the task of teaching and, finally, to the impact their teaching has on students. Based on this premise, the first question asked in the present study was, “What are the communication concerns of expert and novice golf instructors?” This chapter presents the findings from the analysis with respect to this question and discusses them in light of the related literature. In doing so, this chapter sets the stage for Chapters Five and Six, which, following the work of Staton-Spicer and Marty-White (1981), focus on expert and novice communication behaviors and the relationship of behaviors to concerns, respectively. Looking ahead, Chapter Seven presents the findings relevant to expert and novice communication...
strategies, Chapter Eight focuses on the effectiveness of expert and novice instructional communication from the student perspective, and in the final chapter, the entire scope of the study’s findings are reviewed and evaluated with an eye for future significance and benefit in the study and practice of teaching.

Overview

As with other teachers studied in the past (Staton-Spicer & Bassett, 1979; Staton-Spicer & Marty-White, 1981), the expert and novice golf instructors articulated clear concerns about their teaching and communication that were easily identified using Fuller’s (1969) developmental framework. Contrary to previous research, in which beginning and experienced teachers indicated concerns fitting all three tiers of self, task, and impact (Staton-Spicer & Bassett, 1978), the novice golf instructors in the present study expressed concerns in each tier, but the experts expressed only task- and impact-related concerns (see Table 4.1).

Also, as shown in Table 4.1, the number of expert and novice concerns in each tier differed markedly, with novices expressing fewer concerns overall and experts expressing more than twice as many impact concerns as novices. The major concern of the novices had to do with the task of teaching. Content analysis in each concerns tier for experts and novices also revealed qualitative differences between groups. Trends emerged in the content of expert and novice communication concerns (see Table 4.2), which help bring to light some of the problems these teachers perceived as relevant to their instructional success. The types of concerns that emerged in each tier for novices and experts are presented and discussed in more detail below.
### Table 4.1

*Frequency of Expert and Novice Communication Concerns*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4.2

*Trends in Each Concern Tier for Experts and Novices*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Novices**
- Teacher credibility
- Communicating clearly
- Increasing student learning through getting student to understand teacher’s instructional messages
- Self-monitoring instructional communication
- Communicating content relevance
- Gathering information from student
- Increasing student learning through getting to know student
- Communicating honestly
- Developing student understanding of self to create ownership and confidence

**Experts**
- Teacher credibility
- Communicating clearly
- Increasing student learning through getting student to understand teacher’s instructional messages
- Self-monitoring instructional communication
- Communicating content relevance
- Gathering information from student
- Increasing student learning through getting to know student
- Communicating honestly
- Developing student understanding of self to create ownership and confidence
Self Concerns

As stated above, only the novice golf instructors in this study indicated concerns related to themselves as communicators when teaching. Furthermore, only two concerns in this tier were evident in all (see Table 4.1). The first concern, stated below, indicates marked feelings of uncertainty and a lack of confidence in teaching:

My main concern in regards to teaching is that I don’t have a lot of confidence in my own abilities. I doubt myself and start questioning whether or not I am teaching the correct/adequate technique. It really doesn’t matter how much I look over material; when a student (especially older students closer to my age) start questioning me (even if I know the correct answer) I second-guess myself. This probably makes communicating more difficult during instruction because I don’t want to say the “wrong” thing, so I end up failing to say things I need to convey (N4CQ).

This concern reflects a well-documented struggle of beginning teachers in the teacher concerns literature. Previous research indicates that beginning teacher concerns typically center on the teaching role and the personal negotiation of professional identity as it relates to self-perceptions of credibility in teaching (e.g., Erickson & Ruud, 1967; Fuller, 1969; Staton-Spicer & Bassett, 1979; Staton-Spicer & Marty-White, 1981). As stated in Chapter Two, the process of becoming a teacher often includes the formation of a professional identity, something which
Sarbin and Allen (1968) called “role acquisition”. The fusion of professional role demands with personal conceptions of self (Goffman, 1961) creates instability as a new identity is shaped and constructed, thus leading to concerns that pull inward and seek to resolve feelings of insecurity and inadequacy.

The second novice concern coded as self-related centered on the challenge of continually monitoring communication when teaching. As stated by the novice instructor, “The hardest part about my communication is remembering to be aware of my communication and conscious about how I am communicating” (N3CQ). This concern seemed to reflect a problem the instructor experienced training her focus on her communication, which she seemed to believe was critical to her teaching success.

A concern about developing an ongoing awareness of instructional communication represents a departure from the types of self concerns (e.g., identity, credibility, efficacy) generally reported in studies with beginning or experienced teachers. Despite the inconsistency of this finding with previous teacher concerns research, it does find footing in the expertise literature. Expert-novice studies in teaching and other performance domains indicate that novices lack the well developed and efficient knowledge structures of experts, which limits cognition with respect to perceptual acuity, memory, information processing and retrieval, and decision-making (Chase & Simon, 1973; DeGroot, 1965; Griffey & Housner, 1985; McCullick, Schempp, Hsu, Jung, & Vickers, et al., 2006; Woorons, 2001). Features of the teaching environment, including self, students, and other contextual variables, that catch the attention and focus of experts are often lost to novices, who either do not know what to look for or have already exhausted their regulatory capacity in tracking or monitoring other aspects of the teaching environment.
Extensive research underscores the facilitative role of self-regulation in a variety of performance domains (Lan & Morgan, 2003; Zimmerman, 2002; Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 1996). A recent study by Schempp, McCullick, Busch, Webster, and Mason (2006) of expert golf instructors revealed that self-monitoring is also a facilitator of excellence in teaching. The authors found that a major focus of expert golf instructors’ self-monitoring was their communication with students. Thus, over many years of teaching, experts clearly learn to develop an astute awareness of their instructional communication.

Although just one novice instructor in the present study indicated a concern for maintaining a close watch on her communication, this finding suggests two important propositions. First, vigilance towards communication in teaching could stem, at least in part, from self concerns related to communication consciousness. Second, these concerns surface as early as the first stage in the development of expertise. At least in some cases, the problem encountered by novices is not one of knowing what key features of teaching to focus on and monitor for improvement, but rather distilling these critical elements from the teaching environment to accomplish this task.

In addition to the content of the self concerns, the lack of this type of concern among the novices in the present study merits some discussion. First, the concerns questionnaire was designed to elicit teachers’ concerns related to their teaching and communication in general, not just in the context of golf instruction. Therefore, while teaching golf was a new experience for these teachers, they likely pulled from their general teaching experiences in thinking about their concerns. With each novice already engaged in student teaching or the first year of teaching, one would expect self concerns to have already waned, based on the trend depicted in previous teacher concerns research (Staton-Spicer & Bassett, 1978; 1979). Eliciting novice
communication concerns specific to golf instruction may result in a more dominant presence of self concerns, given the novelty of the content area for these teachers.

On the other hand, Staton-Spicer & Marty-White (1981) used a similar questionnaire in their study of teacher communication concerns and found that the concerns of an experienced college instructor teaching a new course matched Fuller’s (1979) developmental framework as the academic quarter progressed. Contrary to what the present study found, their results indicate that, despite teaching experience, the task of teaching new content can present a situation in which self-related concerns override other teaching-related concerns.

Related to this contradictory evidence, a question that deserves consideration is whether the novice golf instructors felt comfortable sharing all of their communication concerns. Plausibly, a reluctance to admit concerns about self-struggle or self-efficacy stood in the way of these teachers expressing their feelings honestly. Using a written as opposed to an oral format to collect concerns statements, as was done in this study with the concerns questionnaire, likely reduces feelings of anxiety disclosing such information might elicit, though it may not expunge them. Further measures taken to facilitate participant candor, such as collecting data anonymously through an open Internet forum, may be necessary to prevent teachers from withholding concerns they consider embarrassing or believe others will associate with incompetence.

Another consideration is whether sufficient concerns data were collected to produce a representative model of novice concerns for the purposes of the study. While the open-ended questionnaire used in this study permitted unrestricted solicitation of concerns, unlike the surveys and checklists employed in some previous teacher concerns research (e.g., Robinson & Berry, 1965; Thompson, 1963; Triplett, 1967), a combination of techniques may help to better
illustrate a fuller body and more extensive range of concerns in future investigations. These techniques should be administered over a relatively short time period in order to capture the concerns of “true novices” (i.e., teachers with no experience teaching the given subject matter) before experience causes a shifting tide of concerns to take place.

Task Concerns

Citing the work of Borich & Fuller (1974), Buhendwa (1996) explains that “a developing teacher gradually moves from overemphasis on issues of self to an orientation towards issues of the complexity of the teaching tasks and roles” (p. 6). With increasing experience and expertise, teachers resolve concerns about self and shift their focus more toward concerns about mastering teaching tasks that go along with professional responsibilities. Staton-Spicer and Bassett (1979) define task concerns related to instructional communication as “concern(s) with teaching and communication performance,” where the “focus is on situational concerns; ‘how to’ give a lecture, lead a discussion, ask various types of questions, [and] use appropriate vocabulary” (p. 141). Both experts and novices expressed task-related concerns in the present study. However, while the number of task concerns between groups was similar (see Table 5.1), the type of task concerns between groups differed greatly.

Novices

The prominent theme of the novices’ task concerns was a concern about communicating clearly when giving instruction. Example statements fitting this theme from the novices’ concerns questionnaires include “I try to change my verbal cues and add visuals but after that, I’m not sure how to correct the problem” (N3CQ), “I…feel that sometimes I have a hard time getting my point across” (N1CQ), and “Analogies and metaphors do not always work and it becomes difficult to teach certain subjects” (N1CQ). These task concerns match up well to most
of those reported in previous instructional communication research, such as teaching abstract
concepts concretely, finding the right approach to teaching, speaking with an appropriate
vocabulary, and giving clear and concise explanations (Staton-Spicer & Bassett, 1979; Staton-
Spicer & Marty-White, 1981). However, the related research also includes several task concerns
of beginning teachers specific to instruction that were absent in the concerns of the novice golf
instructors. These include concerns about decoding students’ speech patterns and concerns about
speaking without rambling.

One novice teacher also expressed a different type of concern, which had more to do with
her ability to make golf content relevant to students than to make the content clear. In her words,
“I feel that when I have little knowledge and experience in specific activities that I have a hard
time explaining ‘why’” (N1CQ). Recent instructional communication research highlights the
importance of communicating the relevance of course content to students’ interests and goals
(Frymier & Shulman, 1995; Newby, 1991). Effective teachers find ways to make what they are
teaching matter to students, which increases the students’ motivation to learn (Keller, 1983). A
concern for making content relevant appears to be absent from previous studies that have
examined beginning teachers’ task-related concerns. Therefore, the emergence of such a task
concern among the novice golf instructors in the present study suggests that student and first year
teachers new to the task of teaching a given content area think not only about different ways to
ensure that their instructional messages are clear, but also about different ways to make the
content relevant and meaningful to individual students.

Experts

The major task concern of the expert golf instructors had to do with their ability to gather
information from the student. This type of concern was evident in statements like “I always
want to be sure that I get to know the student first—who they are and what are their goals, what brought them to the lesson tee to see me” (E1CQ), “Really listen to what they want, try to understand why and determining if what they say or even think they want is truly their desire or someone else’s desire instilled in them” (E4CQ), and “Sometimes my best communication is silence and a positive head nod. I must remain diligent with being in receive mode the majority of the time and limit my transmit mode to the appropriate times” (E1CQ). These statements suggest that the experts perceived listening as their most relevant teaching task and were determined to master their ability to retrieve information that would give them insight into their students’ goals.

Listening is not emphasized as a task concern of teachers in the related literature. Rather, concerns about tasks related to instructional strategies, instructional clarity, and other teacher behaviors generally have been shown to reflect more of a teacher-centered than a student-centered focus of attention. However, studies of expert teacher communication indicate that experts are superior listeners in the classroom, an ability which enables them to read students’ nonverbal comprehension cues with a high degree of accuracy (Webb, Diana, Luft, Brooks, & Brennan, 2001) and also connect new content to student knowledge (Sanchez, Rosales, & Canedo, 1999). Just as keen, relevant, and focused self-monitoring of instructional communication may stem from a self concern about developing communication consciousness, experts’ ability to listen effectively may be rooted in concerns about mastering this teaching task.

The experts’ other task concerns included a concern about communicating accurate information and a concern about communicating honestly. One expert stated, “I want to be sure…that my information reflects motor learning and performance concepts” (E3CQ). While the novices mainly focused on their ability to teach clearly, this expert’s concern emphasizes a
more principled approach to communication. That is, clearly communicated information means very little to a learner unless it is also accurate. Another expert stated, “I’m also concerned that I am really clear and honest about what I feel it takes or will take each person to achieve the goals he or she expresses to me” (E4CQ). This concern relates well to the above concerns about listening, as a focus on understanding the student’s goals predetermines the ability to convey an opinion of what the student will need to be successful.

Impact Concerns

Research clearly indicates that experienced teachers are less concerned about themselves or the task of teaching and more concerned about the impact their teaching has on students and student learning (e.g., Fuller, 1969; Staton-Spicer & Bassett, 1979; Staton-Spicer & Marty-White, 1981). However, research also indicates that such concerns, while more common in experienced teachers, also surface, though to a lesser extent, in beginning teachers (Staton-Spicer & Bassett, 1978). Both experts and novices in the present study expressed impact concerns, although a major distinction emerged in the volume (see Table 5.1) and content of these concerns between groups.

Novices

The novices in this study expressed several impact concerns, the majority of which had to do with whether the student understood their instructional messages. For example, one novice instructor stated, “My first concern about teaching would be that by means of communication that the student would not be able to understand what I am asking of them” (N2CQ). Another novice wrote, “If they answer correctly, I will know that I communicated effectively. I know my communication is lacking when my student(s) don’t get it” (N3CQ). Thus, in terms of the impact of their instructional communication, these teachers seemed to define success as getting
the student to follow directions and respond in ways that indicate an understanding of the teacher’s instructions and explanations.

In previous studies of teacher communication concerns, beginning and experienced teachers expressed similar impact concerns as the novice golf instructors. For example, both preservice and inservice teachers in Staton-Spicer and Bassett’s (1979) study imparted concerns about speaking so that students understood the teachers’ messages. In addition, one of the primary impact concerns of the college instructor studied by Staton-Spicer and Marty-White (1981) related to facilitating student understanding.

Experts

With twelve concerns about the impact of their teaching (more than double the amount expressed by novices) and no concerns about themselves as teachers, the dominant focus of the experts clearly centered on the student. Like the novices, several of the experts’ impact concerns reflected a priority related to student understanding. However, whereas the novices’ concerns centered on increasing learning through getting the student to understand them, the experts’ concerns centered instead on increasing learning through getting to know and understand the student. Examples of this type of expert concern include “By knowing them as a person—hobbies, work, family, etc.—I believe I can better coordinate a lesson plan that is designed specifically to them—a prescription, if you will” (E1CQ) and “Diagnosing the best strategy for the student; making sure that I give the student what they want and listen to them so they (and I) know how they can improve” (E2CQ).

The largest theme in the experts’ impact concerns seemed to be an extension of the concerns discussed above. The experts expressed a number of concerns about not only developing an understanding of the student, but also about developing the student’s
understanding of self. Part of the second quote above reflects this type of concern (“…making sure I give the student what they want and listen to them so they (and I) know how they can improve”). Some of the other statements reflecting a concern about getting students to understand themselves and their needs included “I want the student to be aware of what they are doing—not what I am saying,” My intention is to create an experience in which they learn (create ownership)” (E3CQ), “I always attempt to help the student feel better, stronger, clearer, more hopeful or more empowered when they leave than when they came” (E4CQ), “My biggest concern is the student’s self-esteem and confidence in themselves to know they can do it” (E2CQ), and “It is of utmost concern to me to encourage them to either accept and be happy where they are or be willing to risk change if they’d like to improve and reach higher or different goals” (E4CQ).

Finally, the experts expressed a third type of concern that centered on creating a safe and comfortable learning environment for the student. For example, one expert stated, “I am always concerned or careful to build rapport with them” (E4CQ). Other statements reflecting this type of concern included “…very important for [the] student to use their own words and to seek clarification in a safe environment” (E1CQ) and “I know that I must match my students in order to gain their trust” (E3CQ). The novice instructor who made this last statement explained her concern in more detail, writing,

In order for the student to understand and improve, I am concerned with matching the student to make them feel comfortable with me. Also, to make them relaxed in the learning environment, so they trust me. I want them to be able to talk and give feedback so I can speak their language and make simple sense to them.
Several of the expert concerns in the impact category parallel those reported in previous research with experienced teachers. For example, inservice teachers have previously indicated impact concerns about listening sympathetically and understanding others, as well as building the self-concept of students (Staton-Spicer & Bassett, 1979). In addition, as the instructor studied by Staton-Spicer and Marty-White (1981) gained experience teaching a new course, he expressed increased impact concerns about establishing a non-threatening environment. However, the concerns of the experts in the present study also differed somewhat from those of experienced teachers studied in the past, in that the experts seemed to focus in more depth on helping students reach an understanding of self and personal needs in relation to the subject matter. Expert golf instructors not only wanted their students to feel more confident with respect to playing golf, but also to reach levels of self awareness that would influence the direction and landscape of the students’ future learning experiences.

Summary

Expert and novice teachers in this study had concerns about their instructional communication, indicating a shared perception that teacher communication and success in teaching are linked. Extended support for Fuller’s (1969) developmental conceptualization of teacher concerns was provided—expert and novice communication concerns were easily categorized as related to self, task, or impact. Specific to this study’s purpose, which was to compare the instructional communication of experts and novices, both quantitative and qualitative differences between the concerns of the two groups of instructors emerged.

Expert golf instructors expressed more concerns overall than novices, despite the fact that the novices expressed concerns in all three of Fuller’s (1969) tiers and the experts expressed concerns related only to the task of teaching and the impact of their teaching on students. The
substantially higher number of expert than novice concerns suggests that the experts prioritized their communication more than the novices and monitored this aspect of their teaching more closely. This finding is consistent with recent research indicating that expert golf instructors self-monitor their communication with students more than they monitor other areas of their teaching (Schempp, et al., 2006).

With no self concerns, the experts clearly confronted little to nothing in the way of unresolved issues related to self so commonly faced by beginning teachers and still present to a lesser degree in more experienced teachers (Fuller, 1969; Staton-Spicer & Bassett, 1978). The absence of expert communication concerns about self suggests high levels of self-efficacy and personal confidence on the part of the experts. The finding that experts’ impact concerns more than doubled the novices’ is consistent with the literature, which shows that, with increasing experience, teachers’ concerns shift toward a focus on students and student learning (Fuller, 1969; Staton-Spicer & Bassett, 1979; Staton-Spicer & Marty-White, 1981).

Based on the general nature of the questionnaire used in the present study, the finding that novices’ concerns capitalized on teaching tasks also fits the expected concerns profile for student teachers and first year teachers as indicated in previous research. However, the possibility exists that self concerns related to credibility or efficacy were withheld by teachers in this study due to feelings of insecurity or anxiety associated with sharing such information. Future studies should aim to solicit teacher concerns using instrumentation or methods that participants will perceive as risk free in order to collect data representing a full and accurate set of concerns.

Qualitative analysis of the instructors’ concerns revealed themes in the content of expert and novice concerns highlighting more profound differences between groups. The central theme
of the novices’ concerns indicated a strong focus on finding ways to help the student understand the lesson content from the teacher’s perspective. In striking contrast, the experts indicated concerns that centered on seeking to understand ways to communicate more effectively based on their understanding of the student’s perspective. Put another way, the novices gave a great deal of thought to how they could get the student to tap into the teacher’s world of knowledge, whereas the experts concentrated mainly on how they could get themselves into the student’s world. Each of the expert golf instructors seemed to believe that the most important communication challenge to overcome was finding her way into students’ shoes and learning to communicate on their terms.

Teacher concerns represent the skeleton of the teacher communication process; research shows that they shape teacher behaviors in the classroom (Staton-Spicer & Marty-White, 1981). However, before connecting the dots between teacher concerns and behaviors, a detailed discussion of expert and novice instructional communication behaviors is warranted. In the next chapter, findings relevant to an examination of these behaviors will be discussed. These findings will then be reconsidered against the backdrop of expert and novice concerns in Chapter Six to illustrate the relationship between teacher concerns and behaviors from a communication perspective at two distinct levels of expertise.
CHAPTER 5

EXPERT AND NOVICE INSTRUCTIONAL COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS

The proliferation of process-product studies in the 1970s and 1980s gave way to a sizeable body of literature describing teacher behaviors and their impact on student learning. Out of this research paradigm grew a model of effective teaching that continues to hold sway, despite considerable changes in perspective and method in the last two decades. Chapter Two reviewed the research on effective, and in some cases, expert teacher communication behaviors and presented a framework for conceptualizing these behaviors, including the constructs of immediacy, clarity, style, humor, content relevance, and listening. Using this framework, an aim of the present study was to examine the communication behaviors of expert and novice golf instructors. Data analysis drew from the perspectives of the researcher, the students, and the teachers, themselves, to compare expert and novice instructional communication behaviors. This chapter presents and discusses the findings from the analysis of these behaviors, while the relationship between communication behaviors and concerns is the focus of Chapter Six.

Overview

The conceptual model of teacher communication outlined in Chapter Two was useful in analyzing the communication behaviors of the expert and the novice golf instructors. Behaviors corresponding with all of the communication constructs were represented in these teachers’ instruction. However, experts had at their disposal a more extensive and varied range of behaviors than novices, as evidenced in the lesson each teacher taught, the teacher telephone interviews (hereafter referred to as the teacher interviews for the duration of the chapter), and the
student interviews. In all, 177 different communication behaviors were identified for experts and 65 were identified for novices. Additionally, themes in expert and novice communication behaviors emerged from a content analysis of behaviors in each construct (see Table 5.1), emphasizing the major trends in the communication behaviors of expert and novice golf instructors and exposing qualitative differences between these teachers. The common thread in these differences is that the experts’ communication behaviors were more student-centered than the novices’, particularly with respect to listening and making content relevant.

Teacher Immediacy

As illustrated in Chapter Two, instructional communication research shows that in the classroom environment, teacher behaviors that signal care and warmth in the eyes of students almost invariably lead to student perceptions of teacher effectiveness and student affective learning. Moreover, such behaviors, termed immediacy behaviors by communication scholars, reduce the effects of teacher misbehaviors on students’ perceptions of the teacher’s credibility (Thweatt & McCroskey, 1988) and mediate students’ resistance to and compliance with the teacher’s on-task demands (Kearney, Plax, & Burroughs, 1991). Some research has also successfully linked teacher immediacy with student cognitive learning (Kelly & Gorham, 1988; McCroskey & Richmond, 1992). Previous studies report a range of both verbal and nonverbal immediacy behaviors used by effective teachers (Gorham, 1988; Richmond, McCroskey, & Johnson, 2003). For example, verbally immediate teachers disclose information about themselves to students, tell stories, use humor, address students by name, employ vocal variety when they speak, and encourage students to talk. Some of the behaviors used by nonverbally immediate teachers include making eye contact with students, smiling, reducing physical
Table 5.1

*Trends in the Experts’ and the Novices’ Instructional Communication Behaviors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Experts</th>
<th>Novices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immediacy</td>
<td>Show nonverbal immediacy</td>
<td>Show nonverbal immediacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ask student personal questions</td>
<td>Provide positive verbal feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disclose personal information</td>
<td>Converse with student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respond to student’s immediacy/non-immediacy behaviors</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gain Physical Proximity</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Present/review material in multiple ways</td>
<td>Demonstrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physically position student</td>
<td>Give explicit instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keep amount of telling to a minimum</td>
<td>Present material in small steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use student’s words</td>
<td>Have student repeat main points</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provide examples</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>Animated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attentive</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Dominant</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td></td>
<td>Make self-deprecating remarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct</td>
<td>Experts</td>
<td>Novices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Relevance</td>
<td>Use student’s experiences to demonstrate/introduce concept</td>
<td>Use own experiences to demonstrate importance of content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explicitly state how the material relates to student’s goals</td>
<td>Link content to other areas of content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use examples to make the content relevant to student</td>
<td>State how the material relates to other people’s lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explicitly state how the material relates to student’s future</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Attend</td>
<td>Perceive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perceive</td>
<td>Interpret</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpret</td>
<td>Remember and respond</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Remember and respond</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

distance between themselves and students, and moving around the classroom. Immediacy behaviors surfaced to a greater extent in the instruction of expert teachers than novice teachers in the present study. Overall, 28 immediacy behaviors were identified for the experts and eight were identified for the novices. The findings also showed that experts and novices characteristically used different types of immediacy behaviors when teaching.

**Novices**

The analysis of the novices’ interviews, their students’ interviews, and the videotaped lessons revealed three trends of immediacy behaviors. These included showing positive nonverbal language, providing positive verbal feedback, and conversing with the student. Interestingly, the first of these trends emerged quite strongly across all three data sources, but the
second and third trends emerged in only one or two of the data sources. Thus, there was some discrepancy in the perceptions of the students, the teachers, and the researcher regarding the types of immediacy behaviors most commonly practiced by the teachers.

**Showing Nonverbal Immediacy.** The most pronounced set of immediacy behaviors exhibited by each of the novice teachers was positive nonverbal cues while interacting with students. This theme emerged consistently in the perceptions of the teachers and the students in their interviews and of the researcher in watching the videotaped lessons. Examples of behaviors fitting this theme included making eye contact, smiling, standing in a non-threatening posture, squatting down to look up at the student while communicating, and maintaining close physical proximity.

During their golf lessons, the novice teachers stood close to their students when giving instruction, held eye contact, and smiled when speaking or listening. Regarding physical proximity and eye contact, one of the novices explained, “I don’t stand too far away from [the students]. I make sure that I have a good distance between them and I look them straight in the eyes” (N2PI). Eye contact and smiling were particularly dominant immediacy behaviors of the novice teachers. For example, all of the students recalled the prevalence of these behaviors in their teachers’ instructional communication with comments like “she was looking at me straight in the eye and she was being really supportive like that” (S7PI), “she was smiling, she was laughing, smiling all the time” (S5PI), and “I just remember feeling immediately comfortable because she had a big smile on her face…” (S8PI).

Nonverbal immediacy stands out in the instructional communication literature as the most attractive construct for research on effective teaching (Waldeck, Kearney, & Plax, 2001). Research unflaggingly indicates that effective teachers are immediate teachers in the classroom
environment. The prominence of nonverbal immediacy behaviors in the instruction of the novice golf instructors suggests that experience in teaching may not be necessary to realize the importance of showing approach tendencies and signaling to students a desire to teach and work with them. Behaving in ways that promote positive student affect toward the teacher may develop intuitively early in a teacher’s training and/or career based on other interpersonal experiences unrelated to teaching. The findings indicate that the novice golf instructors were effective from the standpoint taken by nonverbal immediacy scholarship.

**Providing Positive Verbal Feedback.** Each student that took a lesson from a novice teacher described their teacher as warm and caring. This assessment was repeatedly based on the fact that the teachers provided positive feedback to the students. For example, one student said about his teacher, “whenever I made a mistake, she was trying to work on it in a positive way” (S5PI). Another student said about his teacher, “even when I would screw up really badly, she would point out things I did well…she wasn’t critical…she was pointing out stuff I was doing right” (S7PI). Some other student comments about positive feedback that indicated perceptions of teacher immediacy included, “She was just saying, ‘Oh, you’re doing really good,’ and every time after I hit [the ball], she was like, ‘Oh, that’s great’” (S6PI), “I would hit the ball and something went wrong and she would just say, ‘Oh, that’s okay, it happens’ or ‘You did good’” (S6PI), and “she would give me the instruction and what I was doing well. She would comment on [my performance] and say, ‘Good job’” (S8PI).

Data from the videotaped lessons reaffirmed this theme in the novices’ communication behaviors. Each novice instructor consistently pinpointed positive aspects of her student’s golf swing and commended the student for doing a good job. However, in their interviews the teachers did not identify positive verbal feedback as a behavior they believed to be a major
source of their showing care or warmth toward students. Only one novice said her students saw her as warm and caring during instruction because she always gave positive feedback and did not “[come] down on the negative” (N2PI). Rather, the dominant theme for immediacy behaviors as identified by the teachers was conversing with the student (see the subheading below).

Educational research indicates that effective teachers praise students and provide positive performance feedback (Brophy & Good, 1986; Rink, 1994; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986). From a communication perspective, Gorham (1988) identified a teacher’s praise of the student’s work, actions, or comments as a verbal immediacy behavior. As with nonverbal immediacy, links between verbal immediacy and student learning are strongest in the affective domain (Witt, Wheeless, & Allen, 2004). Students respond favorably to and like teachers who are verbally immediate. Although the novice golf instructors did not see their use of positive verbal feedback as a primary tool for communicating warmth or solidarity with their students, the students and the researcher did. The videotaped lessons and the student interviews provided sufficient evidence that the novices frequently engaged in this well-documented communication behavior of effective teachers.

Conversing with Student. The third theme that emerged from the analysis of the novices’ communication behaviors was conversing with the student at the beginning of a lesson about topics unrelated to class or lesson content. Each novice instructor explained that she believed her students at school saw her as approachable because she initiated conversations with them. For example, one teacher said, “I’ll ask how they’re doing or I’ll tell them something funny that’s happened to me in the past couple of days; just trying to keep conversation with them versus…’Get up, let’s start’ without letting them know my personality at all” (N1PI). Referring to her experiences as a student teacher, another of the novices said, “I try to be very personable
when [the students] are walking into the classroom…I try to talk to them to try to get them to interact with me…[I’ll ask them] ‘How has your day been? How was your weekend’” (N3PI)?

Despite what they said in their interviews about their experiences teaching at school, none of the teachers opened their golf lessons in a conversational manner. However, two of the novices used a conversational approach during instruction, though only for brief periods. One student recalled her teacher initiating a conversation while teaching the golf swing. In the student’s words, “we were having a conversation in between the golf instruction. So, she’d be like, ‘this is how you hold a golf club. What year are you in school? What’s your major? You’re not doing that quite right. Try pulling your hand up on the grip a little bit…”’ (S8PI). None of the other students of the novice teachers discussed feeling comfortable, liked, or cared for based on their teachers using a conversational approach during the lesson.

Getting into conversations with individual students before class is one of several items listed on Gorham’s (1988) verbal immediacy in teaching scale. Teachers who hold a personal conversation with a student demonstrate to the student an interest in the student’s life beyond the classroom context. In their interviews, the novice golf instructors capitalized on this verbal immediacy behavior as something they frequently do to show affinity toward students when they teach. Although they did not demonstrate this behavior when giving their golf lessons, the newness of the content they were teaching might have made a difference in the way they normally behaved when teaching at school. Just as the concerns questionnaire used in this study elicited general concerns from the novices about their teaching and communication that weren’t necessarily specific to teaching golf (see Chapter Four), the teacher interviews also allowed for broad answers beyond the scope of what was observed by the students and the researcher in each teacher’s golf lesson.
Overall, immediacy behaviors identified as effective in the literature were represented in the instructional communication of the novice teachers. The novices used both nonverbal and verbal behaviors that they, their students, and the researcher believed were effective in communicating warmth and affinity and which made the teachers more approachable in the eyes of the students. As mentioned above, discrepancies in the perceptions of the teachers, the students, and the researcher regarding which behaviors most prominently characterized the immediacy facet of the novice’s instructional communication likely arose from differences in focus between data collection methods. The videotaped lessons and the student interviews focused solely on the novices’ golf lessons, whereas the teacher interviews cast a much wider net that captured the novices’ other teaching experiences, as well. Differences in perception and focus aside, the findings suggest that the novice golf instructors employed several key immediacy behaviors that research links to effective teaching, which included expressing solidarity and warmth to students through nonverbal language, praising student performances, and showing individual interest in students through initiating personal conversations.

Experts

As with the novices, the most dominant theme that emerged from a content analysis of the experts’ immediacy behaviors was showing nonverbal immediacy behaviors, such as greeting the student, making eye contact, smiling, and using neutral body language. Teacher, student, and researcher perceptions all confirmed the prevalence of these behaviors in the experts’ instruction. However, the students and the teachers also identified additional teacher immediacy behaviors in their interviews, including the teacher asking the student personal questions, the teacher disclosing personal information, the teacher gaining physical proximity to the student, and the teacher responding to the student’s immediacy/non-immediacy cues. Although some of the
behaviors were discussed only by the students or only by the teachers, an analysis of the videotape data confirmed that these behaviors were evident in each expert teacher’s instruction.

*Showing Nonverbal Immediacy.* Like the novices, the expert golf instructors mainly used nonverbal behaviors to signal approachability and warmth to their students. Nonverbal immediacy behaviors were densely spread across the instructional landscape of each expert teacher’s lesson. In their interviews, the students talked about feeling welcomed and encouraged by such teacher behaviors as a firm handshake, making eye contact, and smiling. In analyzing the student and the teacher interviews, smiling and making eye contact were the two most commonly cited examples of how experts communicated immediacy to students. For example, one student explained that by looking him in the eye, the teacher avoided seeming pretentious and increased his level of comfort. In his words, “by looking me in the eye, that helps a lot because some people won’t do it, especially…if you know you’re better than somebody, you could accidentally not look them in the eyes or not help them out as much as you would” (S2PI).

In another example, one of the experts said, “[I] allow the students to see as much of my face, including my eyes, if I can… I think there’s sincerity, there’s meaning [in that]” (E3PI).

Another common nonverbal behavior the experts talked about in their interviews and demonstrated in their lessons, especially during the lesson opening, was using either neutral or positive body language. As stated by one of the experts,

I think there is a fine line between walking with your shoulders down and your head down, real quiet and all hunched up with your arms folded or your arms crossed. I mean you can do that sometimes, but if you do it too much, on the one hand, it makes people, certainly it’s not body language that makes them think that you’re better than they are. But on the other hand…you can seem too timid. So I think you have to stay, I guess
somewhat neutral…really neutral and available and I guess the main thing is just friendly (E4PI).

Another of the experts said,

I’m careful about how I stand. I do catch myself crossing my arms in front of my chest often and I will, as soon as I catch myself, I’ll put my arms down to my side or put my hands sometimes behind my back, but that’s not the best posture, either. But I am always careful about how I use my hands and my body and my posture (E3PI).

Distinct differences were evident between the experts and the novices with respect to the teachers’ body language. In terms of immediacy, only the experts discussed using their body language as a tool to communicate approachability and increase student comfort. The section of this chapter on teacher communication style further discusses differences between experts’ and novices’ body language.

The literature suggests that nonverbal immediacy is a more powerful predictor of student affective learning than verbal immediacy (Witt, et al., 2004). In the present study, both the expert and the novice golf instructors seemed to realize and appreciate the importance of nonverbal communication in showing care and approachability toward students, although, as stated earlier, the experts utilized more immediacy behaviors than the novices. An interesting finding is that one of the students perceived his teacher as modest and unpretentious through her nonverbal immediacy behaviors, which he claimed made him feel more comfortable. When an expert teacher uses nonverbal immediacy behaviors, students may appreciate these behaviors not only because they communicate positive feelings toward the student, but also because they suggest that the teacher is communicating without airs and is “down-to-earth” (the impact of the experts’ and novices’ instructional communication will be further described and discussed in
Chapter Eight). It may especially behoove teachers with considerable content knowledge and expertise to use immediacy behaviors so that students see the teacher as less intimidating.

*Asking Personal Questions.* At the beginning of their lessons, the experts spent between five and eight minutes asking their students personal questions related to the students’ past golf experience, other sports experiences, personality, personal background, reasons for taking a golf lesson, hobbies, and personal and professional aspirations. One student said about her teacher, “She asked me a lot of questions about my past, my sports history and stuff that I did in high school and stuff that I was involved with at school here…I really like that—it made it a lot more personal” (S1PI). As indicated by the experts in their interviews, one purpose of asking these questions was to get students to talk about themselves and feel comfortable. By asking questions and simply listening to their students’ answers, the experts allowed their students to take some control of the learning environment.

The sheer number of questions and time spent getting the students to talk about themselves made this trend in the experts’ communication behaviors easy to identify and to contrast with the instruction of the novices. None of the novice instructors asked more than two questions at the beginning of their lessons, spending between five and 30 seconds gleaning information only relative to students’ previous experiences with golf and other sports. The expert teachers clearly valued an active student role in the lesson as a gateway to building a comfortable learning space for the student. While different from novice instruction, asking students questions and getting students to talk is not unique to expert instruction. Research shows that effective teachers use these immediacy behaviors, as well (Gorham, 1988). However, as will be shown later in this chapter and in Chapter Seven, what does make the experts unique is
that they had much more than the student’s comfort in mind as they asked questions and got their students talking.

**Disclosing Personal Information.** The expert teachers all shared personal information with their students in response to the information the students divulged about themselves in the lesson opening. While sharing personal information was a practice used by each expert, only one student identified this behavior as important to her feeling comfortable while taking her golf lesson. Nevertheless, the student reiterated several times in his interview that he perceived the teacher as approachable because of the teacher’s willingness to disclose personal information. For example, the student stated that he was given the impression that the teacher liked golf because she told him about her job working as the golf pro at a country club. In listening to the teacher describe her work the student said he could tell she was passionate about teaching golf, which led him to develop a stronger affinity for the teacher and for the sport.

The first behavior item listed on Gorham’s (1988) verbal immediacy scale for teachers is “Uses personal examples or talks about life experiences she/he has had outside of class.” An interesting aspect of the experts’ disclosure is that these teachers shared personal information in response to what their students told them. For example, after learning that her student had participated in the marching band in high school, one expert shared her own marching band experiences with the student. Each expert seemed to search for commonalities between their own experiences and those of their students and then offer personal information that might help to create an environment conducive to increasing the student’s level of comfort.

**Responding to Student’s Immediacy/Non-Immediacy Behaviors.** The experts sought to increase their students’ comfort level by not only displaying warmth and approachability through verbal and nonverbal immediacy, but also by gauging their level of immediacy behaviors in
response to those communicated by the student. As indicated in the teachers’ interviews, the volume or intensity of immediacy behaviors used depended on the immediacy cues the teachers’ perceived in the student’s communication behaviors. For example, one expert said,

I do my best to mirror [the student’s] body language, which just from a comfort level, they start to feel more comfortable when they start to see people who have similar mannerisms. It can put them at ease…my job is to really mimic their [body language]—if they’re standing tall and straight, then I’m going to stand tall and straight. If they’re kind of hunched over and looking at the ground, then I’m going to be standing there hunched over and looking at the ground (E1PI).

Another of the expert teachers said she monitored her physical proximity with the student when teaching based on whether she felt the student’s messages communicated approachability or avoidance. In her words, “There are times that I specifically back off and take my physical self out of the equation as much as I can and then there are times where I might be particularly close or I might even squat down to talk to someone” (E3PI). Squatting down is a behavior that resurfaced several times in the experts’ interviews. As stated by one expert, its purpose is to “make [the student] feel bigger than I am, that it’s more about them than me” (E2PI).

Research indicates that students’ immediacy behaviors influence teachers and their instruction in a variety of ways (Mottet, Beebe, & Fleuriet, 2006). However, none of this research suggests that teachers use what they read in the student’s behaviors to shape their own and, by doing so, attempt to create a more comfortable learning environment for the student. The expert golf instructors went beyond communicating in ways they believed would signal approachability to their students. These teachers withheld some of their efforts to be immediate until they discovered what their students found socially attractive.
Gaining Physical Proximity. Despite responding to the student’s immediacy cues, a behavior trend that emerged in the teacher’s interviews and videotaped lessons was gaining physical proximity. The expert golf instructors began their lessons at a conversational distance from their students, but inevitably moved in closer during instruction to the point where the teachers completely occupied the students’ personal space. At times, this advancement was temporarily relinquished if a student showed signs of discomfort or stress, but a third of the way into her lesson, each expert was making physical contact with her student to position him or her to desired movement postures and manipulate his or her grip, stance, and golf swing. The most extreme example of this was when one of the expert teachers began her lesson standing approximately ten or twelve feet away from her student, asking him personal questions. By the middle of the lesson, the teacher was holding onto the student’s arms and golf club, moving his body through the swing pattern she wanted him to learn and practice.

Appropriate touch is considered a nonverbal immediacy behavior (Richmond, et al., 2003), although the criteria that determine what is appropriate and what is not largely depend on the instructional context. Previous research conducted with expert golf instructors indicates that physically manipulating the student is a common instructional routine of these teachers (Baker, Schempp, Hardin, & Clark, 1998). To create conditions where touching the student to demonstrate a point is acceptable to the student, the experts had to first increase the student’s level of comfort and build the student’s trust through the immediacy behaviors already discussed and through gradually closing the physical distance between themselves and the student. More about the relationship between these various immediacy behaviors and their purpose in the experts’ golf instruction are the focus of Chapter Seven (Communication Strategies of Expert and Novice Golf Instructors).
Immediacy behaviors were clearly evident in both the experts' and the novices’ instructional communication. However, the experts used more of these behaviors than the novices (see the introduction to this section) and also used a different variety (see Table 5.1). A fundamental difference between the expert and the novice golf instructors was that the novices employed immediacy behaviors they believed communicated approachability to their students, whereas the experts communicated immediacy by employing behaviors their students used and found socially attractive. Importantly, the novices’ immediacy behaviors reflected effective teaching practices as identified in instructional communication research, as did the experts’. However, the experts used some immediacy behaviors that were unique, such as responding to the student’s immediacy and non-immediacy cues and gaining physical proximity to the student. These findings suggest that the instructional communication of expert teachers differs markedly from that of novice or even effective teachers.

In contrast to data collected with the novices, each trend in the experts’ immediacy behaviors emerged consistently across at least two data sources. The fact that the experts’ teaching experiences were all in golf probably increased the consistency of the findings across the teacher interviews and the videotaped golf lesson. As mentioned earlier, the novices’ teaching experiences were not in golf, so their behaviors in teaching golf and in teaching content with which they had more experience were likely to differ and emerge as inconsistencies in the data. Another possibility to consider is that the novice instructors perceived their immediacy behaviors differently from their students and, in some cases, the researcher. It could be argued that because the experts shaped their immediacy behaviors around those of their students, the expert teachers and their students shared similar perceptions of teacher immediacy in the instructional environment.
In its extant form, the teacher immediacy literature is almost entirely shaped around student perceptions of effective teaching. Research has not explored teachers’ perceptions of what they do or say to be immediate communicators, even though their perceptions of immediacy may vary dramatically from those of their students. Future investigations should focus on what teachers think about their instructional communication and how their perceptions compare to or contrast with the perceptions of their students. In the present study, methodological design may have caused some of the inconsistencies that emerged from the analysis of the interviews conducted with the novice teachers and their students, as the students drew from their experience taking a golf lesson with the teacher, who had never taught golf before, and the teachers drew from their experiences teaching other content at school, which they may have taught previously. This is an important consideration because, as was shown in this study, immediacy behaviors seem to change with increasing experience and expertise in teaching.

Teacher Clarity

In proposing that teacher clarity held the most promise as a variable worth considering in future investigations of effective teaching, Rosenshine and Furst (1971) are generally credited with jumpstarting a long and prosperous line of inquiry into the nature and influence of clear teaching. Chapter Two reviewed the research on teacher clarity in the fields of education and communication and demonstrated that exploring and conceptualizing the clarity construct has significantly impacted the scholarship of teaching and learning. This research confirms that effective teachers are clear teachers in the classroom, as well as in other instructional environments (e.g., Civikly, 1992; Cruickshank & Kennedy, 1986; Mottet, et al., 2006; Silverman, 1994). In short, teachers who are able to communicate clearly increase the fidelity of
the students’ interpretations to the teacher’s instructional messages. This, in turn, leads to higher levels of student understanding and achievement.

Not surprisingly, recent research indicates that expert teachers are also clear communicators (Baker, et al., 1998; Sanchez, Rosales, & Canedo, 1999). However, findings from these investigations show that experts are clear in ways that add dimension to the clarity construct as it is conceptualized and understood in the context of effective teaching. For example, whereas effective teachers primarily use explicit explanations and examples to achieve instructional clarity (Civikly, 1992), experts get their point across mainly through well-structured delivery of content, recapitulating a few main points in many ways, and, in the case of expert golf instructors, by physically positioning their students into correct postures and movement patterns (Baker, et al., 1998; Sanchez, et al., 1999). In the present study, interview and videotape data confirmed that expert golf instructors consistently utilized several clarity behaviors, and inconsistently used many more. Overall, 34 clarity behaviors were identified in the expert data. The novices also communicated clearly, but they employed fewer (16) and primarily different behaviors than the experts in doing so.

**Novices**

Four behavior trends related to teacher clarity emerged in the novices’ instructional communication in reviewing the videotaped lessons, the teacher interviews, and the student interviews. These included demonstrating, giving explicit instruction, presenting material in small steps, and having students repeat the main points.

**Demonstrating.** All of the novice teachers used demonstration (i.e., modeling) to show skill performances they wanted their students to mimic. Demonstrations were usually performed in front of or next to the student by the teacher first showing the student what to do, followed by
the student copying what the teacher did. For example, each teacher demonstrated the grip by first putting her hands on her own golf club and then asking the student to do the same thing using the student’s golf club. The students explained that the teacher’s demonstrations helped them understand the teacher’s instructions. As stated by one student about his teacher, “she would go and stand in front of me and then show me the visual, the swing or stuff. That really helped me a lot more than just saying, ‘Hold the club this way’” (S7PI). Another student said, I learned the most when she would get in front of me and she actually showed me that you should stand this way and you should be in the athletic position and you should grip like this and when she showed me everything I should be doing. I think that’s when I got the most out of it, just by watching (S6PI).

As evidenced in their interviews, the teachers also saw demonstration as a critical behavior they used to achieve clarity during instruction. For example, one of the novices said, “Observation for the participant, [just] observing [me] demonstrating, that’s a big nonverbal communication strategy that I use” (N4PI).

Research in physical education pedagogy emphasizes the importance of providing demonstrations or modeling in presenting movement skills (Kwak, 1993; Werner & Rink, 1987). In a review of research on task presentation in pedagogy, Rink (1994) concluded that giving full demonstrations is a component of effective teacher communication in movement settings. Despite having limited experience with the content, the novice golf instructors used demonstrations to try to communicate what they thought each golf skill should look like. Whether or not these demonstrations increased the students’ skill performances is beyond the scope of this study, although Chapter Eight will address what teacher communication behaviors the students believed helped or hindered them from learning golf. However, there is no question
that in demonstrating skills to their students, the novice teachers utilized a behavior also used by effective teachers when giving direct instruction.

*Giving Explicit Instruction.* In most cases, the novice teachers combined their demonstrations with explicit instructions and explanations. Each teacher explained the skills they were demonstrating and described the key aspects of each skill in detail. In the words of one student, “[My teacher] was very good at explaining, going over things verbally and physically together” (S6PI). Another student said about his teacher “she did a good job of explaining” (S7PI). The teachers also considered giving explicit instruction to be a behavior they commonly employed to be clear when teaching. As stated by one of the novices, “I’m pretty specific. I try to tell them exactly what I want them to know” (N4PI). Another novice instructor said, “When I’m teaching a sports skill, I try to demonstrate as I’m explaining it so they can see it, [that way] they’re learning visually, as well as audibly” (N3PI).

Explicit instruction is included as an item on Chesebro and McCroskey’s (1998) Teacher Clarity Short Inventory (TCSI), which was used in a study investigating students’ perceptions of their learning based on a range of teacher behaviors, including clarity behaviors. The investigators found that students attributed increased motivation to learn, affective learning, and cognitive learning to clear teacher behaviors indicated on the TCSI. Moreover, a second study using an experimental design supported Chesebro and McCroskey’s results with evidence of a cause and effect relationship between these clarity behaviors and student learning (Chesebro, 2003). By giving explicit explanations and instructions, the novice golf instructors enhanced their instructional effectiveness.

*Presenting Material in Small Steps.* Another trend in the novices’ communication behaviors was the presentation of material in small and related steps. A typical lesson beginning
for the novices included first talking about and showing their students how to hold a golf club and then introducing additional elements of the golf swing, including the stance, the backswing, making contact, and the follow-through. The step-by-step fashion of the novices’ lessons reflected a planned sequence of instruction conceived before the teachers taught their lessons.

Evidence for this surfaced in one of the novice’s interviews, in which she stated, “I prepare what I want to say before. I’m a pretty good preparer, deciding what I want the person to know before I go into the lesson so that I can remember when I get into the lesson the main points that I want to get across” (N4PI). The students recalled their teachers using a step-by-step instructional approach. For example, one student said,

She didn’t throw it all at me, it was taking it very, very slowly with me, taking it step by step, and I think that really helped because once I was getting better at each individual thing, we kept on moving on to more and more (S7PI).

Another student recalled,

She didn’t just jump right into anything. We took it step by step—and they were all little steps—and then practiced the little steps before we even added on and then practiced them all together to where by the end of the lesson, I had the full package (S8PI).

A consistent finding in the teacher clarity research is that clear teachers present material in a related step-by-step manner (Cruickshank, 1985). Specific to teaching motor skills, physical education researchers support the use of this instructional approach, as well (Rink, 1994). The use of part-task versus whole-task training methods is widely supported in the motor learning literature and has been linked to long-term skill retention. Presenting material in small steps and building upon previously covered material is more effective than presenting and practicing the task in its entirety and then disassembling it into its separate parts (Schendel, et al., 1978). Thus,
the novices’ choice to start small and build continuously in their presentation of content is congruent with best practices for achieving clarity and effectively teaching motor skills as identified in the related research.

*Having Student Repeat and Re-Practice Main Points.* Checking for understanding emerged as a common practice in the novices’ instructional communication. To do this, the teacher’s primarily had their students repeat or re-practice the main points that the teacher had introduced during the lesson. All of the novices engaged this behavior at the lesson’s end and some of them also requested that the student repeat important points at intervals in the lesson body. For example, one student indicated in his interview, “[My teacher] made me repeat and do [the skill] again. When she was going through the exercise, through the steps…she allowed me to go back and do it again and start again and try again” (S7PI). Stepping backward to revisit main points and re-practice skills already covered earlier in the lesson gave the teachers reassurance that they had given clear instruction. In the words of one teacher,

> In the beginning of the lesson, I would give two or three things that I wanted [the student] to take away from the lesson and then about 15 minutes through the lesson, I would go back and ask questions about those three things that I wanted them to take away from it and see if they could tell me exactly what I wanted them to know. Then I would go on and do it one more time and then at the end…so I want to make sure that through the entire lesson I’m going back to those major fundamental things that I want them to learn and let them tell me exactly what they know (N2PI).

Based on the novices’ tendency to ask their students to revisit covered material and repeat the main points, it appears these teachers’ intent was to ensure that their students understood golf content the way the teacher had taught it. The effective teaching literature stresses the
importance of asking questions to monitor student comprehension of what has been presented (Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986). However, this research also indicates that effective teachers have students repeat important points using the students’ own words. Beyond having their students repeat what they had been shown and told, the novice golf instructors did not encourage their students to re-conceptualize or rework material in ways that reflected ownership of the content.

Taken together, the clarity behaviors most commonly used by the novice golf instructors resemble effective teaching practices. The novices also employed and discussed a number of other teaching behaviors, which did not emerge as trends but matched or reflected conceptualizations of instructional clarity from the related literature. Some of these included providing examples, keeping instruction simple, giving previews of instructional presentations, and indicating transitions from one main idea to the next. These findings suggest that novice teachers can be clear instructional communicators and teach for increased student understanding and achievement from the standpoint of research on effective teaching.

Experts

Triangulating the videotaped lessons, student interviews, and teacher interviews produced five major trends in the clarity behaviors of the expert teachers. These included presenting and reviewing material in multiple ways, physically positioning the student, keeping the amount of telling to a minimum, using the student’s language, and providing examples.

Presenting and Reviewing Material in Multiple Ways. Although some clarity behaviors emerged as more commonly used than others in the instructional communication of the four expert teachers, a trend worth noting is that each expert engaged a wide range of behaviors to be clear. For example one of the experts endeavored to be clear during her lesson by using physical positioning, general language as opposed to golf terminology, written notes, the student’s words,
language to match the student’s learning style, checks for understanding, a narrow scope of content focus, drills that eliminated sensory feedback to emphasize feel, eye contact, reviews, and specific performance feedback. In the following excerpt from her interview, another of the expert instructors explains how she reiterated the main points for her students using different approaches:

[I use] repetition, repetition, repetition. Keep reviewing those main points and review the main points and review the main points. You introduce a concept and then you keep revisiting it throughout the lesson. So it could be that you show somebody the concept and then have them do it. You could have them verbally refer back to it. You might use videotape…but it is really reviewing in a variety of options (E1PI).

The experts’ students all recalled that their teachers revisited the main points time again throughout the lessons their lessons. One student said in his interview that his teacher used redundancy to make sure he understood the lesson content. In his words, “we didn’t go over probably everything we could’ve, but the things that we did, we went over a few times to make sure I really understood…” (S2PI). Even thought the students did not specify in their interviews the different ways their teachers attempted to be clear, the videotape data were replete with numerous teacher clarity behaviors (as illustrated above) for each expert lesson.

In a study of expert golf instructors instructional interaction patterns with students, Schempp, McCullick, St. Pierre, Woorons, and You, et al. (2004) found through quantitative analysis that the experts talked a great deal when giving instruction, which suggested these teachers were overloading their students with information. However, a follow-up qualitative analysis of the data revealed that, although the teachers were in fact talking a lot, they were really only talking about one or two ideas in various ways. The findings from the present study
support those of Schempp et al. and reaffirm that one way experts strive to be clear in their instruction is by communicating the key messages to the student in as many different ways as possible.

Physically Positioning Student. A distinct behavior pattern identified in the instruction of each expert golf instructor was physically positioning the student into desired movement forms. Importantly, each teacher asked for the student’s permission before touching the student. Physical positioning was used to teach the set-up (the grip, the stance, and the posture) and the swing (the backswing, making contact, and the follow-through). The experts emphasized in their interviews the importance of getting their students to feel the correct skill executions, as opposed to only seeing them or hearing them described. In referring back to her videotaped lesson, one expert said, “[My student’s] posture was so hunched over and I took my hand and I asked if I could put my hand on his back. I wanted him to feel the curve and he did when I rubbed my hand along his hunched back” (E2PI). The students’ recalled this behavior trend in their teachers’ instruction, as well. As one student put it, “[My teacher] was very helpful in making sure my stance was right, getting my left foot turned out a little bit by just moving it and putting me in the position I need to be…” (S4PI). Recalling how her teacher taught her the grip, another student said, “She showed me how to place my hands on a golf club…She actually took my hands and placed them on the golf club where they were supposed to be” (S1PI).

As noted earlier in this section, in the previous section on teacher immediacy behaviors, and in Chapter Two, Baker et al. (1998) also identified physical positioning as a routine instructional behavior of expert golf instructors. Reviewing the effective teaching literature reveals that physically positioning students for purposes related to instructional clarity is a behavior that seems to be unique to expert teaching. However, it is important to remember that
research on effective teaching centers primarily on instruction in school settings, where opportunities to physically position students may be reduced by school policy and larger versus smaller teacher-student ratios. At the same time, if the instructional context of teaching a one-to-one golf lesson does afford increased opportunity to employ physical positioning, the experts in the present study took much greater advantage of this opportunity than the novices and uniquely perceived this behavior as fundamentally important in achieving instructional clarity.

*Keeping Amount of Telling to a Minimum.* Despite talking a great deal during their lessons, the expert golf instructors were also quiet for a considerable portion of the time. Moreover, much of the experts’ instructional communication was conveyed in the form of questioning as opposed to telling. In their interviews, the experts explained that they tried to keep the amount of telling to a minimum when teaching so that the student would develop a sense for what worked well and what didn’t on his or her own and then communicate that sense to the teacher. The experts also indicated that while they felt that using redundancy to reiterate the main points was fundamental to communicating clearly, it was equally important to avoid reiterating the main points too much. As stated by one of the experts,

> One of the things I consistently monitor is that what I’m saying is really a benefit to [the student] and not just reiterating. I think that reiterating is a good thing, but it can be overdone. I want them to be kind of in their own heads and in their own bodies and if I talk too much, then I think it takes them out of that place (E3PI).

The experts’ students remembered that their teachers emphasized student feel and deemphasized teacher talk in their lessons, as reflected in the following excerpt from one of the student interviews:
She was just communicating to me that, ‘I don’t tell you the position you need to be in, but it’s up to you to figure out a way to remind yourself in your own mind to train your body to do it. I can’t train you to do it, you’re just, you’re just going to have to…I’ll show you where I want you to be, but you have to figure out your own way, your own thought about how you’re going to get there (S4PI).

Research indicates that effective teachers are straightforward communicators, which contributes to increased instructional clarity (Chesebro & McCroskey, 1998; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986). Certainly, in keeping the amount of telling they did when teaching to a minimum, the expert teachers in the present study avoided being verbose or circuitous in their instruction. However, the experts did not only restrict their telling to be more direct, but also to give their students a chance to find answers independently. This additional purpose of verbal brevity stands out as a unique instructional intent behind a communication behavior that, on the surface, appears to coincide with what effective teachers do. For an expert, whose knowledge of the content is extensive and superior to most, it seems the desire to share such knowledge would be strong, indeed. Nevertheless, this study’s findings suggest that the approach taken by the expert teacher to be clear generates not from their experiences in engaging the content, but rather from their students’.

*Using Student’s Words.* Another behavior trend that surfaced in the instructional communication of each expert teacher was using student language to explain and discuss golf content. Even though the experts introduced new content using golf terminology and interspersed golf terms throughout their instruction, these teachers primarily built the instructional discourse around words the student used to describe his or her learning experiences in context. As stated by one of the experts,
I always want [my students] to tell me...how it feels when they [perform a skill] because I have no idea. My feeling of what I see them do a lot of times doesn’t match. If I say, ‘Feel like your hands are snapping,’ they may look at me like ‘What’s that supposed to mean?’ So I always try to get them, when we agree on what to do and their motion is improving, I want them to tell me how it feels [so] I know exactly what language to use to encourage and reinforce what they’re doing (E2PI).

Another expert said in her interview,

I would want to use words that [my student’s] been using in a communication style or learning style that is concurrent with their preferred way of taking in information, either from a visual perspective (I would say, ‘Now, let’s look at this again, do you see what I mean?’) or if I have detected that they’re more auditory, I’m going to ask them ‘Does that sound alright? Let’s talk about what we just went over,’” and then from a kinesthetic perspective I might say, ‘How do you feel about what we accomplished today? Let’s go back and revisit the positions that make sense to you.’ So I put it in their preferred learning style that makes a lot more sense to them and helps them to take better ownership of it when they leave (E1PI).

The students tuned in to the fact that their teachers used language that was familiar to them, although they did not seem to specifically recall that they (the students) were the originators of that language. For example, one student said about his teacher’s communication, “instead of using words that I may not have understood, she made it so that I could understand” (S3PI). Overall, the impression the students shared from an instructional experience constructed around their language was that their teachers communicated at the students’ level of
understanding. As stated by the student who is quoted above, “[My teacher] seemed to talk to my level of knowledge” (S3PI).

Framing the instructional discourse with the student’s language to fit the student’s conceptualization and understanding of the lesson content bears no resemblance to other behavioral constituents of instructional clarity outlined in the related research. One clarity behavior utilized by effective teachers is to have student’s repeat key points using their own words (Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986), but only the expert teachers examined in the present study appeared to adopt and integrate the student’s language into their instructional communication. In the words of one of the expert teachers, “It’s as much about wanting to repeat what’s coming from the student or the other person as it is about what I’m saying” (E3PI).

Providing Examples. Many of the expert golf instructors’ clarity behaviors emerged as examples to introduce, illustrate, or support lesson content. Examples were drawn from general life experiences, shared experiences between the teacher and the student, and the student’s personal experiences. In most cases, the teachers gave examples that helped to simplify or demystify complex or peculiar ideas. For instance, one expert likened golf clubs to people during her lesson, stating that clubs come in all different shapes and sizes just as people do. The teacher stated in her interview that her reason for doing this was because the beginning students she teaches usually wonder why there are so many different types of golf clubs. Another expert helped clarify a more appropriate, quicker pace for her student’s pre-swing set-up by giving him the commands, “On you mark, get set, go” (E3V)! In both of these instances, the teachers drew from common experiences to clearly communicate the messages they wanted to convey.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, Bush, Kennedy, and Cruickshank (1977) defined teacher clarity as consisting of two dimensions, one having to do with instructional explanations and the
other pertaining “specifically to teacher use of examples and illustrations in presenting material” (cited in Civikly, 1992). More recent conceptualizations of the clarity construct also include the use of examples as a distinct clarity behavior (Chesebro & McCroskey, 1998). Experts utilized examples to a much greater extent than the novices in the present study, perhaps because their wealth of teaching experiences and superior content knowledge permitted them to do so. As will be shown later in this chapter (see the section on content relevance), the experts were successful not only in conjuring examples that applied well to the content, but that also connected to their students’ prior experiences and level of knowledge.

The clarity behaviors of expert and novice golf instructors emerged differently in terms of their quantity and their quality. As with immediacy behaviors, the experts used over twice as many clarity behaviors in their instructional communication than the novices. While the novices used several behaviors identified in the effective teaching literature as pertinent to increasing instructional clarity, their behaviors might be classified as more closely related to structural clarity than content clarity (Chesebro, 2003). The novices presented golf content in an organized and pre-conceived fashion, which enabled them to give explicit, step-by-step instructions and explanations. Furthermore, the novices were determined to show their students the “correct” way to execute skills and these teachers evaluated their level of clarity by the fidelity of their students’ performances and reiterations to the teacher’s messages.

On the other hand, the experts strove for instructional clarity at a more profound level that moved beyond description and demonstration and encouraged their students to explore and engage content in a more flexible fashion and at a more self-driven pace. Through physical positioning and by reducing unnecessary teacher talk, the experts helped to create learning experiences that revealed key sensations to the student in relation to the content. From these
sensations grew a common language that shaped the instructional communication interacted between teacher and student. For the expert instructors, clarity, like immediacy, was primarily enacted through clues provided by the student.

Teacher Communication Style

A construct that saw some attention early in the development of communication and instruction research was teacher communicator style. Robert Norton (1978; 1983) fathered the construct and led a programmatic effort to conceptualize its dimensions and understand its role in the teaching-learning process. As discussed in Chapter Two, Norton (1978) operationalized communicator style as consisting of nine dependent variables (dominant, dramatic animated, open, contentious, relaxed, friendly, attentive, and impression leaving) and one independent variable (communicator image). To date, Norton’s work remains one of the only efforts, and certainly the largest, to conceptualize the style construct.

Research indicates that the styles most commonly identified for effective teachers are dramatic, relaxed, friendly, open, and impression leaving (Norton, 1983; Nussbaum, Holladay, & Comadena, 1987). In light of these findings and educational research linking teacher enthusiasm to instructional effectiveness, the dramatic style in particular attracted the focus of instructional communication researchers in the 1980s (e.g., Downs, Javidi, & Nussbaum, 1988; Javidi, Downs, & Nussbaum, 1988; Norton & Nussbaum, 1980). Studies provide consistent support for positive links between a teacher’s dramatic style and students’ perceptions of the teacher’s effectiveness (Sallinen-Kuparinen, 1992).

More recent research examining teacher’s socio-communication styles indicates that effective teachers are assertive and responsive (Richmond, 2003), which, when applied to Norton’s (1978) model, align most closely with the characteristics exhibited by friendly, relaxed,
open, and attentive teachers. In the present study, the assertive-responsive continuum and Norton’s original construct were useful in analyzing expert and novice teachers’ communication styles. As with immediacy and clarity behaviors, a wider and more versatile range of style behaviors were identified for experts in comparison to novices. Fourteen styles were identified in the experts’ instructional communication and eight were identified for the novices’. Dominant trends emerged in the instructors’ style behaviors, with primarily different trends characterizing expert versus novice communication styles. However, both consistent and contrasting perspectives were evident in analyzing and triangulating the student’s impressions of their teachers’ communication styles, the teachers’ communicator images (i.e., self-perceived communication styles), and the researcher’s perception of each teacher’s communication style. Sallinen-Kuparinen (1992) noted similar findings in reviewing the research on teacher communicator style, stating, “teacher perceptions do not reliably predict students’ perceptions of their teacher’s communicator style” (p. 157).

**Novices**

The style characteristics of the novice golf instructors conformed to Norton’s (1978) style variables, with all but one style (contentious) identified in the novices’ instructional communication. Overall, the novices’ communicator styles principally fit the subconstructs of animated, friendly, and dominant.

*Animated.* Norton (1978) defined an animated communicator as someone who “provides frequent and sustained eye contact, uses many facial expressions, and gestures often” (p. 100). Each of the novice golf instructors wrapped their literal messages with nonverbal or para-verbal language they believed signaled excitement and which their students and the researcher
perceived as teacher enthusiasm. For example, one of the novice teachers said the following about her communication style:

[I like] being enthusiastic, smiling, being excited, hearing the excitement in [my] voice when [I’m] excited to teach somebody or when [I’m] excited to learn. I am always really peppy and bouncy, I never stand in a corner, I always want to be in front and [be] ready to teach (N2PI).

Another of the novices said, “instead of just standing there completely still, just spitting out words, if I can, in my face, show excitement or use my hands to kind of get [my students] excited, it helps get their enthusiasm up about the activity” (N3PI). Other words the teachers used to describe their communication that suggested an animated style included “energized,” positive,” and “upbeat.”

The novices’ self-perceptions of their communication styles were accurately reflected in their golf lessons and in their students’ interviews. In teaching golf, the novices continually displayed enthusiastic behaviors, such as smiling, making eye contact with the student, gesturing with their hands, moving frequently, and, in most cases, moving quickly. The students recalled these teacher behaviors in their interviews. One student remembered that his teacher was always “energetic, positive, and smiling” (S5PI). Another student said about her teacher, “she was very bouncy. You could tell [she had] high energy, [she was] excited about [teaching] and she was ready and knew everything that she was going to show me” (S6PI).

Some research has linked an animated communicator style with student perceptions of teacher effectiveness (Norton, 1983). However, further conceptualization of the variable beyond Norton’s (1978) initial work is lacking in the literature, which makes it difficult to search for and identify specific teacher behaviors that represent an animated communicator style. The overlap
between animated style behaviors and immediacy behaviors (e.g., smiling, making eye contact, moving as opposed to standing still) confounds this problem. Given its current definitional boundaries, an animated style is likely to surface in the instructional communication of a teacher who also uses immediacy behaviors. As discussed above in the section on teacher immediacy behaviors, the novices used nonverbal immediacy behaviors extensively in their instructional communication. Thus, the emergence of animated style behaviors in the novice data is not surprising and is consistent with the analysis of the novices’ behaviors in the immediacy construct.

*Friendly*. In addition to communicating animatedly, the novice golf instructors also conveyed instructional messages in a friendly manner. Norton (1978) defined a friendly communicator style using broad parameters that encompass a range of metamessages signaling simple “unhostility to deep intimacy” (p. 101). As with an animated communicator style, a friendly style may emerge through behaviors that also signal immediacy. Teachers who smile, make eye contact, and communicate warmth through nonverbal behaviors are likely to be perceived by students as both friendly and approachable. In the present study, the students of the novice teachers consistently described their teachers’ style as friendly. For example, one student said about her teacher’s style, “It was just…very friendly. I don’t think there was a time during the whole 35, 40 minutes that she wasn’t smiling or she wasn’t giving a helping hand. I don’t know—she was just very, very friendly and cordial” (S8PI). Another student said about his teacher, “She was extremely friendly and nice” (S7PI).

This style trend spanned across the novices’ videotaped lessons, but was not depicted in the teachers’ interviews. In describing their communicator image, the novice instructors did not discuss using behaviors or stylistic devices that would lead others to perceive them as friendly.
Rather, aside from describing themselves as animated communicators, these teachers enlisted several other words to describe their style, such as open, patient, and approachable. These words, in addition to the descriptions the teachers gave to establish what they meant in using the words, more closely fit style variables other than a friendly style. Open, patient, and approachable suggest open and attentive communicator styles or, alternatively, a responsive socio-communication style.

With respect to a friendly communicator style, the novices’ communicator images clearly represented an aberration in the trend found in the student interviews and videotaped lessons. A possible reason why the teachers saw their communication style differently is that they potentially chose to capitalize on and discuss only personal style characteristics they believed were unique or special. During their interviews, some of the teachers struggled with the concept of communicator style and were told by the researcher to think about what makes their communication recognizable or distinctive when teaching. Being friendly may have seemed to the novices like an ordinary and unremarkable way to describe their instructional communication.

As was previously discussed in the section of this chapter on teacher immediacy behaviors and in Chapter Four regarding expert and novice communication concerns, the discrepancy between teacher, student, and researcher perceptions may also be due to the design of the teacher interviews, which allowed the teachers to draw from all of their teaching experiences, not just teaching a golf lesson. In contrast, the perspectives of the students and of the researcher were shaped only by the teachers’ videotaped lessons and therefore were limited in scope. Given the purpose of this study, it is important to remember that the teachers’ instructional communication as evidenced in the context of teaching golf is of primary concern,
whereas the function of the teacher interviews was to add dimension to the student and videotape data.

*Dominant.* Although the novice teachers and their students discussed other style elements of the teachers’ instructional communication, no other trends emerged in analyzing the teacher and student interviews. The videotape data, however, revealed another set of common communication characteristics in the novices’ instructional behaviors. These characteristics suggested a strong and dominating attitude on the novices’ part in relation to their students. As defined by Norton (1978), a dominant style is marked by behavioral or psychological correlates that suggest the communicator is in “charge of social interactions” (p. 99). Each novice instructor’s communication seemed to dictate the pace of the lesson and override the student’s instructional communication.

In their lessons, the novices started quickly by introducing the lesson content after asking the student only one two questions about the student’s golf experience or other experiences in sport. The teachers then oriented their students to the golf club or clubs, the grip, the set-up, and the different swing phases, leaving little room for the students to communicate their experiences in engaging the content. In cases where the students were given a chance to voice their level of understanding or comfort, the teachers asked their students questions that generally solicited closed-ended responses from the students. Moreover, student-initiated talk was rare. Thus, student communication in the context of each novice golf lesson was limited in form and content. Student opportunities to respond and communicate were mostly brief and teacher-directed and did not permit the student to increase the legitimacy of his or her role in the lesson discourse. In terms of lesson content, the topical topography of the novices’ lessons was mapped out solely by the teacher.
Behavioral indicators of a dominant communicator style remain virtually absent from the instructional communication literature. In operationalizing the variable, Norton’s (1978) only low inference measure of a dominant style was speaking frequently in most social situations. Similarly, research framing the style construct through a socio-communicative lens, which refers to people who dominate interpersonal interactions as assertive communicators, leaves little in the way of offering specific communication behaviors one might use to identify assertiveness. The findings from the present study suggest several behavioral indices that may help future researchers identify teacher dominance in instructional communication. These include starting a lesson with few or no questions, asking mostly closed-ended questions, setting and sustaining the pace of the lesson, and determining the lesson content with little or no student input.

In sum, the novice golf instructors’ communication styles were principally characterized by behaviors fitting Norton’s (1978) style variables of animated, friendly, and dominant. Despite some inconsistencies between student, teacher, and research perspectives of the teachers’ styles, sufficient evidence was available to suggest that the novices tended to communicate in ways that signaled enthusiasm and kindness, but also power. The novices clearly dominated the instructional discourse in teaching golf and instances of co-construction of the instructional communication between teacher and student were only sparsely evident.

It is important to remember, however, that although the researcher perceived the novice teachers to communicate using a dominant style, none of these teachers’ students shared that perception. The positive effects of an animated and friendly communication style may override any negative effects that teacher dominance could have on students’ perceptions of the teacher. Alternatively, some students may even respond positively to teachers who dominate the social environment in an instructional setting. Some students may perceive teacher dominance as
representing other communication styles framed more positively in the research (e.g., friendly, animated, impression leaving). The students’ perceptions of what teacher communication behaviors helped or hindered their learning is the focus of Chapter Eight.

**Experts**

A more extensive and varied set of behaviors characterized the communication styles of the expert golf instructors. Even so, trends in communication style behaviors emerged more consistently across data sets for the expert instructors than for the novices. In the main, the experts were confident, attentive, relaxed, open, and flexible communicators.

*Confident.* Although Norton’s (1978) style construct does not include a confident communicator style, the experts all communicated in ways that they, their students, and the researcher believed signaled an assured attitude. A careful balance seemed to be in play as the experts communicated with their students, one that suggested the experts knew what they were talking about but also wanted to learn from the student. For example, making eye contact, gaining physical proximity, and physically positioning the student into desired movement forms, while constituting immediacy behaviors, also communicated confidence from the perspective of the researcher. At the same time, the high volume of questioning that characterized the experts’ instructional communication also signaled a desire to learn from the student, thereby reducing what otherwise might be interpreted as teacher dominance or arrogance to teacher confidence.

The experts’ students also perceived their teachers’ communication styles as confident, citing several teacher behaviors that played a role in making that assessment. One student said about his teacher, “she stood straight up and that shows that she has confidence in her skills. Also, she never turned her back to me…also, she would ask me which way I’d feel more comfortable swinging, left handed or right handed and she was willing to teach me either”
Another student said, “I would say [my teacher’s] very confident. She never stutters or doubts herself. She speaks clearly. She looks at you when she speaks…body language-wise she never slouched or looked down toward the ground when she spoke” (S4PI). Later in his interview, the same student said,

She’s confident about what she’s speaking about. You can feel that she knows what she’s doing and there’s a fine line between confidence and arrogance. I think she’s right on the confidence line. She knows what she’s doing is correct, she knows what she’s talking about (S4PI).

The experts described their communicator image as signaling confidence, as well. One expert said about her style, “I think mainly it would be…my energy level, [my students] would feel a certain amount of energy, not spazo energy, but steady, solid, flowing type energy that I think they could sense that they could depend on it” (E4PI). Another expert discussed the importance of showing confidence when she communicates, as shown in the following excerpt:

It’s very important to have a very positive body language and when you look at successful people and their body language, how you stand and how your mannerisms are either exudes success or exudes non-success…if you start standing like a chump, then you won’t be a champ (E1PI).

It comes as no surprise that the expert golf instructors signaled confidence through their instructional communication. What should be emphasized, however, is that despite knowing more than most about teaching golf, these teachers were careful to avoid seeming arrogant when giving instruction. The expertise literature shows that experts are insatiable learners who never feel they know enough. For example, in a recent study of the nation’s most winning college football coach, the coach was asked how much he knew about his profession (Smith, 2004). At
first the coach approximated he knew 60 percent of what there is to know about coaching football, but then he reconsidered and decided he only knew 50 percent. The instructional communication of the expert golf instructors clearly suggests these teachers were confident about teaching golf, but were also eager to continue their search for knowledge and learn from their students.

**Attentive.** Norton (1978) said the following about the attentive communicator style:

There is not much empirical research describing attentiveness per se as a style variable. As a broader concept, it is frequently embedded in interpersonal and therapeutic literature under the label ‘empathy’ or ‘listening’…In general, the attentive communicator makes sure that the other person knows that he is being listened to.

Attentiveness shined as a distinctive style element of the expert teachers instructional communication. The inquiry-focused nature of the experts’ approach to teaching resonated with attention to student communication. With almost one fifth of the lesson time devoted to interviewing the student, each expert clearly imparted a sense both to the student and to the researcher that the expert’s full attention was on the student. Because this style variable is so closely tied with the experts’ listening behaviors, more about how these teachers conveyed attentiveness is discussed later in this chapter in the section on teacher listening.  

**Relaxed.** Another dominant style that characterized the experts’ instructional communication was the relaxed communicator style, which Norton (1978) discussed as located at one end of a dimension ranging from relaxed to tense. Norton’s (1978) Communicator Style Measure identified relaxed communication behaviors as calm and collected speaking in general, calm speaking under pressure, and flowing and rhythmic speech patterns under pressure. These and other behaviors suggested a relaxed communication style for the expert golf instructors.
A host of statements made by the students in their interviews supported the presence of a relaxed style in the experts’ instructional communication. During her interview, one student continually revisited her teachers’ relaxed style with statements like “[my teacher] was very suave about [her communication]…she was calm—she wasn’t hyper or anything like that. It was a good pace, nice and smooth,” “she was very, very relaxed. She was not uptight at all. She was very flexible. It was a very low stress type of lesson. She just took her time and she let me take my time in learning it—she didn’t rush me through it,” “she was able to keep her cool the whole time,” and “she was so calm about [golf] and it really made me realize that it’s definitely a sport that you can enjoy and it doesn’t have to be high stress” (S1PI). Another student recalled, “[my teacher and I] were joking around and laughing throughout half the lesson. It was never serious to where I felt like I was being pressured to do things or [was] nervous” (S4PI).

The experts identified being relaxed as part of their communicator image, as well. For example one expert said, “I’m a very calm communicator. My communication style is smooth. Maybe, as I’m hesitating here, slow would be another way of putting it. Slow, smooth, and calm” (E3PI). Another of the expert golf instructors stated,

I would think that my communication style is direct without being heavy-handed. I would like to think that it’s easy-going and clear and it’s a style of communication that is accessible for the student to achieve the goals that they want to achieve (E1PI).

Research indicates that students perceive a relaxed communicator style as tied to teaching effectiveness (Norton, 1983). The findings from the present study suggest that students also identify a relaxed teacher communicator style with teaching expertise. As shown in the student quotes above, a relaxing communication style on the part of their teachers helped to create a low stress and easy going instructional environment. Teachers who communicate in a relaxed
manner are likely to reduce tension and alleviate pressure students may feel. This may be especially important when the teacher-student relationship is in its beginning stages.

*Open.* In addition to being confident, attentive, and relaxed in their communication styles, the expert golf instructors were also open communicators. The paralinguistic cues these teachers communicated suggested an invitation for students to communicate and take an active part in shaping the lesson. Norton (1978) defined an open communicator style as inclusive of “communicative activity which is characterized by being conversational, expansive, affable, convivial, gregarious, unreserved, unsecretive, somewhat frank, possibly outspoken, definitely extroverted, and obviously approachable” (p. 101). He went on to also say, “Stylistically, the open communicator readily reveals personal information about the self in communicative interactions. The counterpart of this notion is manifested in the poker-faced individual who is hard to read” (p. 101).

Statements made by the teachers and the students indicated openness as a style dimension of the experts’ communication. For example, one of the experts said, “you have to make the student feel like they’re a part of the lesson; it’s about their progress and their success. So, I think I make it a dialogue between us” (E2PI). Another expert mentioned she used open body language to appear receptive to student communication. Examples of student statements that centered on the openness of their teachers’ communication include, “it was almost kind of like a compromise…you do it this way, but we’re going to work on changing just one thing here…we were kind of meeting in the middle” (S4PI), and “Some people are a little bit more rigid and uncomfortable and they tend to turn people away, but you could tell that she got pretty comfortable right away” (S2PI).
As with the relaxed communicator style, openness has been linked to student perceptions of teacher effectiveness in previous research (Norton, 1983). The expert golf instructors employed behaviors Norton (1978) identified for an open communicator style, such as being conversational and approachable. As discussed earlier in the section on teacher immediacy behaviors, another trend in the experts’ instructional communication was to disclose personal information. Based on Norton’s (1978) above definition for an open communicator style, this behavior trend played a dual communication role for the experts with implications related to both immediacy and style. Just as a relaxed communicator style emerged partly through behaviors that also signaled immediacy, an open style seemed to go hand in hand with being immediate. These findings suggest behavior trends that transcend constructs, which may serve to illustrate broader communication patterns relevant to advancing instructional communication theory. This proposition is revisited at the end of this chapter and discussed in more depth in Chapter Nine.

Flexible. Perhaps the most intriguing style characteristic shared by the expert teachers was the tendency to adapt teacher communicator style to the style of the student. Despite also showing strong tendencies toward being confident, attentive, relaxed, and open, the experts envisioned their style as continually changing to meet the communication needs of their students. As stated by one of the experts,

It’s going to be a style that’s constantly changing because the people who I’m dealing with, they’re changing every time the next lesson shows up. So I would have to say it’s flowing to the needs of the student and is evolutionary in nature because of whom I’m dealing with. It’s not just one style. I need to adapt to many different styles of people that come (E1PI).
Another expert said about her style that it’s “fun when it has to be [and] serious when it has to be, depending on the student” (E2PI). The expert quoted above who said her style is “constantly changing” illustrated how her communication style changed with different students by telling a story about a lesson she once taught to a retired lieutenant colonel, during which she realized he responded best to instruction that mirrored the style of a drill sergeant. She told him, “Colonel, I am the general. You take orders from me” (E1PI)!

The videotaped lessons confirmed that the experts had in fact communicated in ways that seemed to match the style tendencies of their students. One expert, whose student was energetic and affable, became increasingly buoyant and humorous throughout the lesson. Another of the expert instructors taught a student who was more reserved and quiet. Her communication style matched his initially, although she took license in attempting approach behaviors later in the lesson (as discussed earlier in this chapter, the experts tended to increase teacher immediacy by gaining physical proximity, as well as increase instructional clarity by physical positioning the student into desired movement forms). While the students’ instructional communication was not the focus of this study, teacher and student styles appeared to converge in each of the experts’ lessons.

Norton’s (1978) original communicator style construct does not include a flexible style. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine many people being capable of manipulating their communication style to match that of another person, especially within the span of a 45 minute lesson. The literature on socio-communicative style, however, does specify versatility or flexibility as a style component (McCroskey, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2002). As stated by McCroskey et al. (2002), “Teachers high in versatility would be expected to be able to adapt to different students’ communication more quickly and appropriately” (p. 388). To date, no research has uncovered
this style in teachers or described its nature in action, apart from the present study. The conceptual framework used in this study to frame expert and novice teaching only considers the teacher’s side of the instructional communication process. Unfortunately, a flexible teacher communication style cannot be fully examined or understood in the absence of student variables. Future research seeking to further investigate the nature of such a style in the context of expert teaching should conceptualize instructional communication as a relational, as opposed to a rhetorical, process (Mottet, et al., 2006).

The confluence of seemingly consistent style tendencies and adaptive style tendencies noted in the experts’ communication merits some discussion, as it brings into question the true nature of the experts’ communication styles. A possible reason for these conflicting data is that the experts each had preferred styles of communication, but also modified these styles whenever needed in order to benefit the student. In discussing her communication style, one of the experts explained that she is ordinarily a fun-loving and positive person who has an easy time teaching students who have similar life attitudes. Nevertheless, she stressed that she always tries to “get into the student’s world” when communicating, even when that world seems like a negative and unappealing place to be.

Norton (1978) predicted that a person’s communication would generally encapsulate one of two large clusters of style variables, categorizing the person as either an active or a passive communicator. He determined that active communicators would be dominant, dramatic, animated, contentious, impression leaving, and possibly open. Passive communicators, he guessed, would be attentive, friendly, and relaxed. In his study, Norton’s hypothesis was mostly supported, although these clusters were not so neatly bifurcated and four clusters emerged instead of two. Overall, however, he found that the clusters could be grouped to form two
distinct behavior sets in relation to communicator style, the first representing active listening and
the second representing the active sending of messages.

In the present study, a comparison of the styles found to best characterize the
communication of the expert and novice golf instructors resulted in a similar duality. The
findings suggest that novices, who communicate in ways that are mostly strong, self-imposing,
and extroverted, might be characterized as active message senders, whereas experts, who are
more reserved, responsive, and flexible in their communication styles, might be characterized as
active listeners. Further discussion with respect to this topic is provided later in this chapter in
the section on teacher listening. Interestingly, nothing in the findings suggests that either experts
or novices dramatized their instructional communication, as effective teachers have been shown
to do so often in the related literature (e.g., Javidi, Downs, & Nussbaum, 1988; Sallinen-
Kuparin, 1992). As stated by Norton (1978) the dramatic communicator “manipulates
exaggerations, fantasies, stories, metaphors, rhythm, voice, and other stylistic devices to
highlight or understate content” (p. 100). The section of this chapter on the communication of
content relevance demonstrates that the experts did use metaphors to introduce or illustrate
concepts, but these were not used in a dramatic fashion.

At this juncture, it is important to revisit what was first stated in this chapter’s overview,
which is that overall, the instructional communication of the expert golf instructors emerged as
more student-centered than that of the novices. In light of what has been discussed up to this
point regarding differences between the experts and the novices in terms of immediacy, clarity,
and style behaviors, one can see that the central tendency thus far of the novices’ instructional
communication is that it was prearranged, mostly static, and largely teacher-focused. The
novices communicated in ways that reflected their own personality and style. On the other hand,
although experts brought their personality and communication preferences with them to teach, they did not put these on display unless it benefited the student to do so. Thus, the evidence has shown and will continue to show in the last three sections of this chapter that, in comparison to the novices’ communication, the experts’ communication was mostly shaped by interaction with the student and therefore, more dynamic and student-directed.

**Teacher Use of Humor**

The conceptual framework outlined in Chapter Two includes teacher behaviors that fall into the construct of teacher humor. Research unequivocally shows that students appreciate and learn from teachers who use humor in the classroom (Chesebro & Wanzer, 2006). However, research also shows that for humor to work effectively, it must be used appropriately in light of the instructional context. The nature of the content, the age and educational level of the students, and the students’ orientations toward the subject matter and humor-orientations all play significant roles in the functionality of humor as an instructional device (Chesebro & Wanzer, 2006). Gorham and Christophel’s (1990) operationalization of instructional humor has been helpful in previous research examining teacher humor (Neuliep, 1991) and their typology was employed to guide the analysis of expert and novice humor in the present study.

In comparison to other teacher behaviors, humor emerged as only a small part of the experts’ and novices’ instructional communication, though its role was slightly more pronounced in the novices’ instruction in comparison to the experts’. This finding is somewhat surprising, as instructional humor has been linked to expert teaching in previous research (Ennis, 2003). Despite its increased prevalence in novice instruction, the humor behaviors identified in the expert data ranged more widely than the novices’ in terms of variety. Behaviors fitting four of Gorham and Christophel’s (1990) humor categories were identified for the novices and behaviors
fitting seven categories were identified for experts. Therefore, even though the experts were not characteristically humorous teachers, when they chose to be humorous, they were humorous in more ways than the novices were.

**Novices**

Four types of humor behaviors were identified for the novice golf instructors in analyzing and triangulating the interview and videotape data. These included making self-deprecating comments, using shtick, making brief tendentious comments directed at the student, and making jokes. When the novices used humor, they most often did so by making self-deprecating comments.

*Making Self-Deprecating Comments.* People who use themselves as the object of a joke or pinpoint personal flaws to be funny communicate humorous messages that research classifies as self-deprecating (Gorham & Christophel, 1990). The novice golf instructors used this type of humor in teaching their videotaped lessons and, in their interviews, discussed also using it in their other teaching experiences. For example, one novice said, “a lot of times, I’ll kind of make fun of myself” (N1PI). In her golf lesson, this teacher continually told her student that he was doing much better than she had done the first time she tried playing golf, describing the mistakes she had made and causing the student to laugh. The other novice teachers repeatedly used this same humor tactic, as well.

Gorham and Christophel (1990) found that self-disparaging remarks made by the teacher were significantly and negatively correlated with student learning. From a humor standpoint, therefore, making self-deprecating comments may decrease teacher effectiveness and even interfere with student learning. However, some research suggests that teachers may use self-deprecating comments for reasons other than to be humorous. As indicated by a small faction of
the instructional communication research exploring the behaviors teachers use to save and support student “face” in the instructional environment (Kerssen-Griep, Hess, & Trees, 2003), students are motivated by teacher behaviors that satisfy the student’s need to feel competent. Teachers who poke fun at their own skill competence may do so primarily to increase the student’s self-efficacy in performing a skill. The communication strategies engaged by the novice and expert teachers in teaching golf are the focus of Chapter Seven, although the scope of this investigation did not include instructional face support as a variable for study and the findings were not pinned against the research from that line of inquiry. It is recommended that future research examine teacher facework and its role in expert and novice teaching.

Experts

The types of humor behaviors identified in the instructional communication of the expert golf instructors included the use of shtick, getting students to think about something funny, turning something serious into something funny, making jokes, telling funny personal stories, making brief tendentious comments about golf, and making fun of golf-related terminology and skill techniques. None of these behaviors emerged as more common than others in the experts’ instruction, and as stated earlier, only one teacher used humor consistently in her lesson. It should be noted, however, that only one of the four students taught by an expert teacher displayed communicator style characteristics that suggested an orientation toward humor. In light of what was discussed earlier about the experts’ tendency to match their students’ communication (see the section of this chapter on teacher communication style), the finding that the other experts used humor only in limited amounts during their lessons is less surprising.

Ennis (2003) studied two award-winning elementary physical education teachers’ use of humor and found that these teachers used several different forms of humor, which included
positive humor from television commercials, puns and other word play, and self-deprecating comments. Interestingly, the experts in Ennis’ study used self-deprecating humor in teaching elementary-aged students, as did the novices in the present study, who taught beginning golf students. It is possible that teachers, whether expert or novice, may feel that students who have less experience engaging content or who are at lower levels of skill development need more of a confidence boost than higher-skilled or more experienced students. However, this theory is contradicted by the fact that the expert golf instructors who taught beginning students did not use self-deprecating comments during their lessons. In addition, Ennis reported in her study that the expert physical education teachers used humor to relax students, but nothing was mentioned about these teachers’ wanting to increase students’ self-efficacy.

The differences between experts’ uses of humor as identified in the present study and in previous research may primarily stem from contextual factors, such as the number and age of students being taught and the subject matter. Ultimately, this study’s findings suggest that humor was used only nominally by both expert and novice teachers. The limited employment of humor relative to other instructional behaviors indicates that neither the expert nor the novice teachers relied very heavily on humor to increase their instructional effectiveness.

Teacher Communication of Content Relevance

An emerging topic of study in communication and instruction is teacher communication of content relevance. As discussed in Chapter Two, teachers who connect the subject matter to student interests, needs, and goals increase student motivation to learn, on-task behavior, affect toward the content and the teacher, feelings of empowerment, and use of effective learning behaviors (Frymier & Shulman, 1995; Frymier, Shulman, & Housner, 1996; Newby, 1991). However, to make content relevant to students, teachers must know and understand their students
beyond the surface level. In an environment where the teacher is continually the center of focus, personal characteristics of the student remain hidden.

Until this point in the chapter, the fundamental difference between expert and novice instructional communication, as illustrated in the present study, has been reiterated in many ways. The findings repeatedly portray the novices as more direct in their communication and instruction, which is in contrast to the experts, who appear to communicate more indirectly when teaching. Therefore, it should come as little surprise to the reader that, in using the categories outlined in Frymier and Shulman’s (1995) relevance scale to guide the analysis, the experts demonstrated significantly stronger trends toward communicating content relevance than the novices. Overall, eleven types of relevance behaviors were identified in the experts’ instructional communication and five were identified in the novice data. The experts made content relevant to their students more frequently than the novices and also communicated relevance on a more personal level. These findings support previous research comparing the communication of expert and novice teachers (Sanchez, et al., 1999).

**Novices**

All but one variety of novice behaviors in the relevance construct matched items on Frymier and Shulman’s (1995) relevance scale. Emergent trends in the novices’ relevance behaviors that matched Frymier and Shulman’s typology were (a) uses own experiences to demonstrate a concept and (b) links content to other areas of content. A third trend emerged that did not match any of the items from Frymier and Shulman’s relevance scale. This trend represented behaviors that in some way illustrated how golf relates to people’s lives in general.

*Using Own Experiences to Demonstrate the Importance of Concept.* The novices attempted to make content relevant to the student by using their own experiences to demonstrate
the importance of the content. For example, one novice, who had her student warm up with a stretching drill before practicing the swing, told the student that she was sore after the first time she took a golf lesson. From the researcher’s perspective, sharing that experience was the teacher’s way of indirectly saying “You’re doing this warm up so you won’t be sore.” Another teacher emphasized to her student the importance of not turning the lead foot when executing the backswing by sharing a personal experience. The teacher explained that her own swing performance improved dramatically once she stopped turning her foot. In her interview, the teacher recalled sharing this experience with her student, saying, “I made [the content] relevant by telling [my student] that that’s what I did when I tried to learn how to swing a golf club” (N4PI).

The students of the novice teachers also recalled their teachers sharing personal experiences to demonstrate the importance of an instructional message. For instance, the student whose teacher shared a personal experience to emphasize the importance of not turning the lead foot on the backswing remembered the teacher’s story and other instances where the teacher used the same approach. In the student’s words,

Throughout the lesson, [my teacher] was like, ‘I totally understand where you’re coming from, I did this, this is how I fixed it, it might help you.’ For example, my left foot always want[ed] to come up on my backswing and it’s not supposed to and she had the same problem. So, it was like little personal pointers that you can’t really learn by like if I got a Golf for Dummies book” (S8PI).

Frymier and Shulman (1995) were interested in the relationship between instructional relevance messages and student motivation to study in a class. While their findings indicated a positive significant relationship, no effort was made to discriminate between more and less
effective relevance behaviors. However, of all the items on Frymier and Shulman’s (1995) relevance scale, using one’s own experiences to illustrate relevancy of the content for others is probably the least personal of the identified behaviors. There is no guarantee that students will find the teacher’s experiences relevant to their own in learning the content. Thus, it seems the application of this behavior carries more potential to be ineffective than other teacher behaviors that focus on student experiences, goals, needs, and interests to make content relevant. In Chapter Eight, the impact of the novices’ relevance behaviors on perceived student learning is brought to light.

*Linking Content to Other Areas of Content.* Although they were relatively new to the subject matter, the novice instructors each made an effort to demonstrate relationships between different areas of golf content as a way to communicate content relevance. These relationships were mostly causal in nature, indicating how certain actions lead to others in performing a golf swing. For example, one novice told her student that taking a full swing would increase the student’s swing power. In the words of the teacher’s student, “In the beginning, when I was working on my stroke, she showed me if I move my arm all the way back, then I gain all that much more power” (S2PI). Another of the novice teachers pointed out to her student that straightening body posture during the swing leads to missing the ball at contact. Some other examples of this type of relevance behavior included linking the club loft and body posture to ball flight and explaining how rotating the hips more than 45 degrees on the backswing causes the lead foot to turn.

It stands to reason that linking areas of content to show relationships between movement patterns and performance outcomes can help students understand the importance of learning discrete skills in developing complex ones, though there is not yet any evidence to support this.
claim. However, just as the teacher’s experiences may lack utility as a link between the content and student perceptions of relevancy, illustrating the relevance of one area of content to another may still leave the student asking, “What’s in this for me” (Frymier & Shulman, 1995)? Unless establishing links between different areas of content relates in some way to the student’s needs, interests, or goals, the relevance of learning any of the content may be lost.

**Stating How the Material Relates to People’s Lives.** A trend that emerged from the analysis of the novices’ relevance behaviors was a tendency to state how the lesson content related to people’s lives in general. The novice instructors explained to their students various reasons people might want to learn golf. For example, one of the novices told her student that golf is a lifetime sport, a way to achieve health benefits, and a potential business tool (using Donald Trump as an example). This teacher’s student recalled the teacher discussing the benefits of learning golf, stating,

> From the very beginning, when she walked in, she [said], “Hello, this is what golf is, you can use it and it’s a great thing to do and then she explained to me how many people play golf…we talked about how important it is in the business world…she also said it’s a lifetime sport” (S2PI).

By stating how others benefit from learning golf, the novices may have hoped to increase the chance that their students would appreciate the advantage and versatility of the sport in people’s lives. Yet, demonstrating how others benefit from golf is different from pinpointing how the individual student will benefit in light of his or her personal and/or professional goals. The novices cast a broad net to capture reasons other people would want to learn golf, perhaps because these teachers knew little about their students and hoped that the student would find personal relevance in at least one of the reasons offered. As with the other trends in the novices’
relevance behaviors, stating how golf relates to the lives of other people falls short of specifically communicating the relevancy of the content for the person taking the golf lesson.

Research on communicating relevance in teaching unequivocally shows that making content relevant for students positively influences how students perceive and interact with the content (Chesebro & Wanzer, 2006). However, no studies have endeavored to discriminate between different types of teacher relevance behaviors and determine if some of these behaviors are more effective in their influence and why. The findings from the present study suggest that certain relevance behaviors, as used by the novices, communicate the relevance of the content for the student more or less indirectly. Such instructional messages may miss their target and do little to establish links between the content and the student’s motivation to learn it.

**Experts**

Communicating the relevance of golf content to students on a personal level constituted a major theme in the experts’ instructional communication. The analysis of the experts’ relevance behaviors revealed four trends: using student experiences to demonstrate or introduce a concept, explicitly stating how the material relates to the student’s goals, using examples to make the content relevant to the student, and explicitly stating how the material relates to the student’s future. The first three of these trends match items on Frymier and Shulman’s (1995) relevance scale, but the last trend represents a new behavior set for the communication of content relevance.

*Using Student’s Experiences to Demonstrate/Introduce Concept.* The largest trend in the experts’ relevance behaviors was using student experiences to introduce or demonstrate golf concepts. It was clear in analyzing the experts’ relevance behaviors that these teachers not only remembered what their students told them during the lesson opening, but also found ways to use
that information to illustrate personal relevance for the student. A multitude of examples were
evident to support this trend. In examining just one of the experts’ lessons, in which the teacher
learned her student’s experiences included playing the flute in a marching band, baton twirling,
dancing, and snow skiing, the following teacher behaviors were observed: relating the posture of
a stretching exercise to holding a baton, equating the nine iron in learning to play golf to the
bunny slope in learning to ski, comparing the beat in music to the pace of a golf swing,
explaining that the golf swing is fluid like a graceful dance performance, demonstrating how
addressing the tee is like addressing the marching band director, comparing the grip pressure for
holding a golf club to holding a flute with relaxed fingers, and emphasizing the importance of
being responsive to the motion of the golf swing in the same way a skier responds to the terrain.

The experts’ interviews were replete with examples and stories of how the teachers used
their students’ experiences to communicate the relevance of golf content. As stated by one
expert, “I would do my best at all times to use points or analogies that maybe are related to them
personally, as far as other sports that they’ve played or hobbies or activities that they have
or…maybe related to their work” (E3PI). Another expert said,

Most every golfer has played some other sport and the principles of motion are pretty
much the same in a lot of sports, including golf. Dynamic balance, the release of your
hands and forearms, rotation of your trunk, and so getting a person to realize that their
golf swing is very similar to a lot of other motions they’ve made in other sports, they’re
just setting up a different way and their equipment has changed. I think I’m pretty good
at finding out what other sports they’ve played and using those analogies to help them
become a better golfer (E2PI).
One of the expert instructors told a story to illustrate how one way she made content relevant for a student she had previously taught:

I had one gentleman one time, he was so heavy-handed with his grip pressure and it turned out that he did a lot of intricate work in his business [and] it took a very light touch to do what he did. So I associated his understanding, something he already knew how to do in his everyday work, and we applied it to golf (E1PI).

The experts’ students also discussed this trend in the their teachers’ communication behaviors. In the words of one student, “At first I was hitting the ball to the right a lot and then…[my teacher] related the swing of the golf club to a thing that I’m familiar with, [which is] spinning the ball from water polo. You have to put a curve on it” (S2PI). The student whose teacher’s relevance behaviors are described at length above recalled instructional messages that she found relevant from her lesson, explaining, “[My teacher] would use examples…I played the flute in high school and she would show me how she would hold the flute and showed me that when you hold the flute, you hold it loosely and not tight and the same thing goes for a golf club” (S1PI).

With no research identifying degrees of effectiveness for different teacher relevance behaviors, it is impossible to state with any certainty that connecting new ideas to a student’s present frame of reference is any more desirable than using teacher experiences to illustrate the importance of the content to the student. What is certain, however, is that the former approach to communicating content relevance is more direct and more student-centered. Hence, the teacher who uses student experiences as a platform to connect golf and its relevance to student learning is arguably illustrating more clearly how the content is meaningful and personally relevant for the student as an individual.
Explicitly Stating How the Material Relates to Student’s Goals. Aside from student experiences, the expert teachers also tapped into another dimension of the student’s background to convey the relevance of golf to the student. Each teacher learned about her student’s personal and professional goals at the beginning of the lesson and then repeatedly tied the lesson content to these goals in her instructional communication. As stated by one of the experts in her interview, “I think I’m pretty good at being able to relate and maybe stay relevant with what the person needs and what they want and what would help them” (E3PI). Another expert said, “I try to find one main thing and I try to relate that back to what [the student] told me they want or what they don’t want…I always relate it back to something specifically they told me that they needed to get better at or improve” (E4PI). One of the experts spoke at length about using the student’s goals to guide her instruction:

Certainly [for me it’s] going in and asking them what the goal would be for the lesson here today and hen keeping that as a thread throughout the whole lesson…I think it’s being, ‘Here’s what you’ve come here to accomplish, here’s what I hear you saying and wanting to walk away with here today so that you feel successful, so here’s what we’re going to do, here’s our game plan, here’s what you’re doing, here’s what I think will improve it, and here’s how we’re going to change it (E1PI).

The videotape data revealed several examples of this behavior trend. Perhaps the most pronounced example was when one expert had her student, who was an experienced golfer, use mental imagery as a vehicle toward confirming the goal he said he wanted to achieve in golf. The teacher told her student to close his eyes and imagine having accomplished this goal. She then had him describe to her what it felt like being in that context and respond to the question, “Was it worth all the work it took to get there” (E4PI)? When he affirmed that it was, the
teacher had him open his eyes and she began the lesson, focusing without deviation on the core element she believed he needed to change in taking the first step toward reaching his goal.

The incentive offered to the students who participated in this study was a free golf lesson. As the teacher, it would be easy to assume that this was the primary, and possibly the only, factor that played a role in bringing the student to the lesson tee. The expert golf instructors did not make this assumption. Rather, they delved deep to locate their students’ interests and ambitions, finding that receiving a free golf lesson was, in fact, the least important incentive for the students’ participation. Notably, the goals of the students who took a lesson with the novice instructors were never revealed. The result was that each novice lesson seemed to follow a similar instructional direction, whereas each expert lesson unfolded along a distinctly unique path.

*Uses Examples to Make the Content Relevant to Student.* In an earlier section of this paper, an identified trend in the experts’ behaviors that was discussed was their use of examples to be clear. Many of these examples also functioned as relevance behaviors, connecting the subject matter of golf to common experiences and ideas with which the students would likely be familiar. Some examples of this behavior trend from the teachers’ lessons included comparing golf clubs to people in terms of variety, comparing a comfortable pre-swing posture to bent (as opposed to stiff) knees when walking, demonstrating the importance of breathing before swinging by talking about letting the air out of a balloon, comparing using a tee in the fairway to using training wheels on a bike, using the concept of a frame to talk about the proper stance and swing, comparing the shoulder rotation in the swing to turning a steering wheel, and citing professional players as examples of good technique.
The experts and their students discussed this behavior trend in their interviews. For example, one expert said about her use of relevancy behaviors, “I will mention that good players or people who are performing their best will do it [a certain] way” (E3PI). This teacher’s student, who mentioned to the teacher that he watched golf on television, recalled that his teacher had used as examples the professional players he had told her he watched. In his words, “she mentioned a couple of fellow’s names…and how your leg should stay straight at impact and how it causes better contact and more consistency” (S3PI).

The wide range of examples cited by the experts to conceptualize golf content punctuated the extensive experience these teachers had in teaching the sport and working with a wide variety of students. As discussed in Chapter Two, research shows that experience and expertise are linked through the expert’s knowledge base. Experts characteristically possess a vast and intricately organized storehouse of knowledge relative to their domain of performance (Tan, 1997). Knowledge structures paramount to teaching include knowledge of content, of pedagogy, of instruction specific to the content (i.e., “pedagogical content knowledge”), and of students (Shulman, 1986). Based on this research, it is reasonable to assume that the experience of the expert golf instructors provided a network of metaphors, analogies, and examples, which was efficiently organized and primed for rapid access during instruction. In teaching golf for many more years than the novice teachers, the experts quite possibly had at their advantage schematic links between golf content, instruction, and content unrelated to golf that the novices had not yet drawn.

Explicitly Stating How the Material Relates to Student’s Future. One of the trends that emerged in the experts’ instructional communication represented a set of relevancy behaviors not included in Frymier and Shulman’s (1995) operationalization of the construct. These behaviors
centered on making the content relevant to the student’s projected future beyond the scope of expressed student goals or interests. In communicating the future relevance of the content for the student, the experts seemed to serve as ambassadors for the sport. For example, one expert explained to her beginning student the importance of improving the short game with respect to shooting a lower score in the future. Even though the student did not indicate whether she planned to play golf in the future, the expert constructed a future context for the student to consider. The other experts engaged similar behaviors, such as telling the student what equipment she would need to buy as a beginning golfer, emphasizing the importance of practice for improvement, and explaining how the student could use the lesson content to play on a golf course.

This behavior trend was less pronounced than the others, but it seemed important to mention in light of recent research examining the lesson closing behaviors of expert sport instructors in tennis and golf (Webster, Connolly, & Schempp, in preparation). The study found that a routine closing behavior of experts who work with beginning students is encouraging future student participation in the sport. As part of this practice, the teachers offered specific drills for practice that fit the student’s lifestyle in terms of budget and time. In the present study, a desire to promote continued engagement with the sport was evident in the experts’ instructional messages indicating the relevance of the content in the student’s potential golfing future.

Though in its nascent stages, research exploring the nature and role of communicating content relevance in the teaching-learning process holds great promise (Chesebro & Wanzer, 2006). The findings from the present investigation are consistent with the emerging literature on relevancy as an instructional goal in teaching. Many of the relevance behaviors identified in previous research were present in the instructional communication of the golf instructors.
However, two new types of behaviors fitting the construct emerged, as well. First, the novices demonstrated the relevance of the content by illustrating for the student the different ways other people use and benefit from golf in their everyday lives. This behavior trend was consistent with the novices’ other relevance behaviors, which, for the most part, indirectly communicated the relevancy of the content for the student.

The second new type of relevance behavior emerged in the experts’ communication. On several occasions, these teachers demonstrated how the lesson content would benefit the student as a future learner in golf. Teacher messages in this trend were not based on the students’ goals or interests, but rather the teachers’. Like the novices’ relevance behaviors, this trend, as well as using general examples to communicate relevancy, represented more of an indirect than a direct approach to making content personally relevant. On the other hand, the experts’ relevance behaviors also formed trends representing a direct approach to communicating content relevance. By linking the content to student experiences and goals, the experts specifically indicated how the subject matter related to the student. Overall, these findings parallel previous research on the expositive discourse of expert and novice classroom teachers, which showed that experts “evoked contents already known by the pupils that were in turn confirmed by direct investigation [whereas] the novice teachers displayed few signs of such activity” (Sanchez, et al., 1999, p. 47). The authors went on to state, “Only one [novice] evoked some contents but did not manage to establish the necessary relationship with ‘the new’ and there was no confirmation that the contents were shared” (p. 47).

A distinction between direct and indirect teacher relevance behaviors suggests the possibility that not all instructional messages designed to communicate content relevance play the same role in terms of their effectiveness and influence. As was noted earlier, instructional
messages that illustrate direct links between the content and the student likely lead to student perceptions that the content is personally meaningful and relevant. These perceptions may develop with less conviction or even not materialize at all if the teacher fails to explicitly state the significance of the content with respect to student experiences, interests, or goals. In Chapter Eight, the impact of the experts’ and the novices’ relevance behaviors on student perceptions of learning are discussed. Nevertheless, the findings from this study indicate that further operationalization of teacher relevance is needed to better understand the different types of behaviors that communicate relevance and their role, when used in combination or independently, in student learning.

Teacher Listening

In comparison to the constructs of immediacy, clarity, style, humor, and content relevance, teacher listening constitutes the least researched and least understood dimension of instructional communication. Despite being understudied as a construct, listening has emerged as an important part of the teacher’s role (Clark & Peterson, 1986). Student messages affect teachers in many ways and influence the instructional process (Mottet, Beebe, & Fleuriet, 2006). How teachers interpret and respond to student messages has implications for the direction and outcome of each lesson.

Since student messages clearly reach teachers and influence instructional decisions, listening is a teacher function that deserves increased empirical attention, hence it’s inclusion in the conceptual model applied to the present study. As defined by Purdy (1997), listening is “the active and dynamic process of attending, perceiving, interpreting, remembering, and responding to the expressed (verbal and nonverbal) needs, concerns, and information offered by other human beings” (p. 8). Listening is jointly discussed in the related literature in both cognitive and a
behavioral terms, which makes the construct difficult to operationalize. For the purposes of the present study, the stages of the listening process as defined by Purdy (1997) were used to guide the analysis of teachers’ listening behaviors and strategies. The Experts’ and the novices’ listening behaviors are discussed below and these teachers’ listening strategies are discussed in Chapter Seven.

Listening emerged as the seminal characteristic distinguishing expert from novice teaching from a communication perspective. For the experts, listening operated as the main artery through which other instructional communication behaviors found their place and served their function. Fifty-three listening behaviors were identified for the experts and 21 were identified for the novices. Notably, the majority of the novices’ listening behaviors were identified not in the videotaped lessons, but in the teacher interviews, which mostly elicited data with respect to teaching experiences unrelated to golf instruction. With one exception in the expert data, trends in the teachers’ listening behaviors were identified as fitting the different stages of the listening process, as defined by Purdy (1997). An interesting finding was that a similar number of attending, perceiving, and interpreting behaviors were noted for the novices, but the experts attended and perceived a great deal more than they interpreted. This finding suggests that the novices stretched, whereas the experts condensed, the evidence they gathered from their students to formulate conclusions.

**Novices**

The novice teachers perceived, interpreted, remembered, and responded to student communication messages and cues during instruction. Attending behaviors were not evident in the novice data. Because the novices did most of the talking during their lessons, most of the student cues these teachers listened to were nonverbal.
Perceiving. In their interviews, the novices discussed a total of eleven cues that they typically noticed in their students’ instructional communication when teaching. These cues generally represented three main areas of focus, including student body language (i.e., head nods, facial expressions, signs of physical tiredness), the number of questions asked by the student, and student eye contact. For example, on novice said, “I look for visual cues, if their face looks like their slightly confused or if they’re lost” and “I scan the room with my eyes while I’m talking back and forth to see what students are actually looking at me and paying attention” (N3PI). Another of the novices stated, “If you say something to [the student] and their face is in deep concentration…you can kind of tell that they’re running through it in their mind” (N4PI).

Though the novices were probed in their interviews to elaborate on student cues they perceived when teaching, these teachers failed to identify many specific examples. This suggests the possibility that the novice teachers were not acutely aware of student behaviors during instruction and may have focused more on other elements of the instructional context. Importantly, the novices’ instructional communication was virtually devoid of attention behaviors associated with listening, which presumably affected their scope and depth of perception.

Interpreting. Eleven interpretations of student behavior were found in the novices’ instructional communication. Interpretations were primarily made with respect to the student’s level of confidence in performing the skill, level of comfort, willingness to buy into the teacher’s instruction, willingness to continue participation beyond the instructional setting, level of enthusiasm for the activity, level of understanding, level of effort, level of alertness, and level of skill progression. For example, one novice explained that she interpreted student head nods to indicate understanding of the teacher’s instructions. Another novice discussed how student’s
facial expressions could suggest different things, though she did not elaborate what specific facial behaviors she meant. In her words, “they [could look] slightly confused or maybe a little frustrated because they don’t quite understand or maybe a little nervous because they don’t think they can do it” (N3PI).

The range of interpretations in the listening behaviors of the novice teachers seems overextended in comparison to these teachers’ apparent dearth of perceptual acuity. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the perception-interpretation ratio found in the novices’ listening behaviors suggests that conclusions were drawn based on little evidence. In teaching terms, it seems the novices used few assessment tools in diagnosing student learning and performance. Several meanings were assigned to singular behaviors as the novices processed their students’ responses. Moreover, specific behaviors used to interpret perceptions and reach conclusions were not identified in the novice data.

*Remembering and Responding.* The student interviews and the videotaped lessons elicited data that illustrated the novices’ memory and response behaviors. Three different types of teacher response behaviors, as a function of listening, were identified by the students in their interviews. First, the students perceived that their teachers had listened to them, based on the fact that the teachers were able to appropriately answer the students’ questions during the lesson. For example, one student said about his teacher, “I think she was able to understand what I was asking. She gave a good answer in a way that I found appropriate” (S5PI). Another student said, “I had some questions and she gave me really good advice and really answered my questions” (S6PI) The other two teacher responses the students connected with listening included bringing up something the student had said earlier in the lesson and identifying aspects of the student’s skill performance that needed improvement.
Standing alone, the student interview data suggested the novices were responsive communicators, but combined with the videotape data, it became clear that teacher responses, though evident, were rare. Novice instructional communication was largely defined by sent, as opposed to received, messages. Therefore, triangulating the perspectives of the researcher, the teacher, and the student was particularly helpful in examining the novices’ listening behaviors.

In summary, the novice golf instructors engaged several listening behaviors, but fell short of meeting what some researchers suggest is necessary to listen effectively. For example, Imhof (1998) proposed that an ability of efficient listeners is to “take in and integrate input from a number of different sources” (p. 86). The breadth of the novices’ perception reached only so far as to glean information from student body language, level of interaction, and eye contact, indicating that a significant portion of student behavior was overlooked. Other abilities Imhof (1998) identifies with efficient listening include the ability to control attitudes and motivation, the ability to control focus of attention, the ability to activate and restructure cognitive schemata in a flexible manner, and the ability to employ metacognitive strategies in order to ensure encoding and retention of material. None of these abilities were evidenced in the novices’ listening behaviors.

Perhaps the finding deserving the most attention is that the novices discussed interpretations they made concerning their students’ lesson behaviors, but based these interpretations on limited evidence. The interactive nature of the different stages of the listening process implies that inadequacy in one stage may lead to a chain reaction, which results in reduced teacher effectiveness. Research examining differences between more and less effective teaching should examine the possibility that teaching effectiveness depends in large measure on listening efficiency.
Experts

All five stages of the listening process were identified in the experts’ instructional communication behaviors. In their interviews, the experts discussed what they did to effectively attend to student communication, what they perceived about the student, and how they interpreted student messages. The teacher interviews, the student interviews, and the videotaped lessons provided evidence demonstrating the experts’ behaviors with respect to remembering and responding to student communication.

Attending. The first stage of the listening process as defined by Purdy (1997) is attending to the expressed verbal and nonverbal behaviors of another person. In the present study, attention was defined as behaviors the teachers intentionally enacted to monitor student behavior and glean information from the student. Eleven different attention behaviors were identified in the experts’ instructional communication. These included preparing to listen, staying quiet while the student is speaking, listening without bias, clearing the mind of thought, opening up all senses, making eye contact with the student, listening to everything the student says, listening without interrupting, writing down what the student says, asking questions, and pausing when giving instruction to get the student’s reactions. With respect to staying quiet while the student is speaking, one expert said the following:

Sometimes it’s telling myself to shut up. I enjoy talking, but I need to let the student get everything out that they need to verbally communicate with me before interjecting or interrupting and sometimes I tend to jump in. So I do have to tell myself, ‘Be quiet, let them finish’ because everyone’s going to disseminate information at their own pace and sometimes it just takes some people longer to get the words out and I need to be patient at letting that happen (E1PI).
This teacher’s student recalled her teacher’s patience as a listener, indicating, “She listened to everything I had to say...she let me finish every time that I was going to say something” (S1PI). Another student said about his teacher’s attentiveness in listening,

she asked me questions about what my experience is with golf and she listened to my answers...she was doing this to ensure she didn’t re-teach me something I may have already known. And she actually watched me go through a full swing to see where my knowledge was...” (S2PI).

As noted earlier in the chapter, questions constituted a major part of the expert teachers’ instructional communication. Between five and eight minutes were spent conducting a student interview at the beginning of each expert’s lesson. The experts wanted to know about their students’ previous golf experiences, personalities, sports backgrounds, hobbies, other life experiences, reasons for taking a golf lesson, personal and professional goals, physical limitations, and, when the student had golf experience, self-ratings as a golfer, average golf score, and strengths and limitations as a golfer.

In conducting the student interview at the beginning of the lesson, the experts continued to probe students with follow-up questions that elicited from the student in-depth answers. For example, one of the experts found out that her student had skied before and asked the student to share that experience. Another expert asked her student to rate himself as a golfer and continued to probe the subject by having the student pick three or four things he needed to change in his game to get better. If one of the experts discovered their student had physical limitations or ailments, she asked questions about what the student specific questions about the condition and asked what the student had done or was doing in terms of rehabilitation.
The attention behaviors found to be characteristic of expert listening in teaching golf parallel evaluations of adequate listening behavior in previous work on listening in instructional settings (Imhof, 1998). For example, Imhof (1998) states that efficient listeners get to know the speaker and his or her specific perspective and also intentionally focus attention and block out distractions. Clearly, the experts came to their lessons prepared to listen. Each teacher gave her full attention to the student during the lesson opening and said very little except to ask the student questions. This characteristic of the experts’ instructional communication was all but absent from the novices’. Differences between expert and novice listening behaviors were less pronounced during the lesson body and lesson closure. However, as will be shown in Chapter Seven, the first several minutes of teacher communication, where listening either emerged as the dominant behavior or remained virtually unused, had profound implications for the remainder of the lesson.

*Perceiving.* Compared to the novices, the expert golf instructors perceived a great deal more cues with respect to student behaviors, reflecting increased dimension and scope of perception. Overall, the experts perceived 32 different student cues. In terms of verbal student input, the experts noticed characteristics related to voice (e.g., tonality, intonation, inflection), speech (e.g., pace, rhythm, fluctuation), language (e.g., use of humor, vocabulary), and level of interaction (e.g., student-initiated talk, amount of questions asked). One expert gave an example of how student language provided important cues for her as a teacher. In her words,

I can remember one lady getting out of the car and she’s rambling on and on and talking, talking, talking and she said, ‘All I need are three keys, that’s all I want.’ So, immediately, not having an agenda, not seeing her swing yet, I write down on my blank clipboard, ‘Three keys, she wants three keys.’...That’s how she wanted the information
delivered to her, just keys—one, two, three. So, people are going to tell you what they want (E2PI).

Perceived nonverbal student cues were extensive and included communication behaviors, as well as behaviors related to skill performance. Commonly perceived nonverbal communication behaviors included student body language (e.g., approach-avoidance behaviors, physical tension, head nods, posture), facial expressions (e.g., eye-contact, eye movement patterns, mouth expressions), breath (e.g., holding breath, breathing rate), energy level, and listening tendencies. In their interviews, the experts also stated that they perceived the consistency of student verbal and nonverbal language and the consistency of student words and actions. Regarding skill performance, the experts perceived patterns in student behaviors (e.g., pre-shot routine, golf swing), changes in behavior patterns (e.g., increased repetition of new patterns), grip pressure, balance and rhythm in the golf swing, and ball flight.

An identified characteristic of experts in the literature is acute perceptual capacity (Tan, 1997). Recent research comparing expert and novice tennis instructors found that experts perceived the instructional environment differently from novices and identified more skill relevant cues from the broad scope of contextual information available (Woorons, 2001). Similarly, the expert golf instructors perceived a wide range of cues that focused on the student and student performance. In listening to their students, the expert instructors perceived a wealth of information that was largely missed by the novices.

**Interpreting.** Ten different interpretations of student messages and behaviors were identified in the experts’ instructional communication, mainly as a result of conducting the student interview at the beginning of the lesson. Based on the extensive student information they gathered, the experts determined the presence of limiting beliefs in their students, the main skill-
related problem to be addressed, the newness of golf content for their students, and their students’ learning styles, sensory styles, personal and professional goals, motivations for learning golf, comprehension of instruction, comfort level, and personalities. The following is an example one of the experts provided to illustrate how her analysis of the student generally revealed to her a central problem in the student’s golf game:

...when you boil it all down and you do a whole analysis of their game, one of the problems could be that they can’t decide what club to use or what line to hit a putt on and I’ll ask them a series of questions and we’ll find out that the main problem is their just not decisive enough (E4PI).

One of the expert teachers discussed specific behaviors she used to interpret information gleaned from the student. She stated that, for her, interpreting involves “taking the words and the nonverbal communication...to a deeper level” and “thinking about...the meaning behind the words [and] listening and not taking words as the only level of communication” (E3PI). To give an example, she said,

[the student will] tell me something about a swing or something that he’s experiences right now and in my mind, I’ll connect it to an experience that he’s had on the golf course with his friends and I think I just glean more meaning relative to his communication by connecting the two subjects (E3PI).

In comparison to the novices, the experts interpreted student cues in quantitatively similar, but qualitatively different ways. Although the expert instructors reached a similar number of conclusions as the novices based on their perceptual activity, the experts’ conclusions reflected a denser and deeper perceptual focus. The experts combined the information they gathered from multiple sources of student behavior to assess both trait and state characteristics of
the student. For example, the student’s learning style, sensory style, and personality constitute
trait characteristics that are permanently embedded as part of the student’s being, whereas the
student’s goals, motivation to learn golf, and comfort level constitute state characteristics that are
ephemeral and contextually-based.

Fundamentally, it seems that differences between expert and novice interpretive behavior
can be conceptualized in terms of ratio and content. With many more perceptions (32) than
interpretations (10) as a function of expert listening, the ratio of perceptions to interpretations is
low. As was noted earlier, the number of perceptions and interpretations for the novices was
equal (11/11), making the perception-interpretation ratio a direct correspondence. From a
content perspective, the experts’ interpretations reflected a much fuller and richer processing and
analysis of student cues than the novices’.

*Remembering and Responding.* In the case of the experts, data from the teacher
interviews, the student interviews, and the videotape data were helpful in bringing to light the
teachers’ response behaviors as part of the listening process. Students of the expert teachers
identified some of the same behaviors that students of the novices did in describing teacher
responses to student communication and performance. For instance, the experts’ students
recalled that their teachers responded quickly and appropriately to student questions. However,
the students also recalled other teacher response behaviors indicating the teacher had listened,
including use of the student’s name during the lesson and making eye contact when the student
was speaking.

In their interviews, the experts spoke at length about ways they responded to the
information they gleaned from their students. The expert who gave the example of a student
whose main problem (as identified by the teacher) is not being able to make decisions described in detail the steps she would take to help the student:

I’ll have them do things like keep a log of every day for say a month. Anytime something comes up or somebody says, ‘Do you want to do X or do you want to do X,’” [I’ll] just have them always try to make the decision first—just practice being decisive. And I’ll have them do that not just at the golf course or at the range, but everywhere. Or...if somebody’s having trouble with confidence, I’ll have them do things that normally would be very uncomfortable for them (E4PI).

The same expert teacher indicated how she typically responded to student communication suggesting discomfort or anxiety, stating,

I usually just try to back off a little bit and reestablish rapport and reestablish clarity as to their purposes and their goals and then my opinion of what’s necessary for them to help them do that...I’ll step back and get them to feel comfortable again, just relax, maybe take a break, stretch a few times, get a drink of water, just break their pattern of what’s going on inside their head, [such as] negative thoughts—everybody has a running dialogue in their head...I’ll try to get them to back off, quiet their brain. Sometimes I’ll use images...there was this thing called Etch-a-Sketch, they’ll just ‘shake it out’ and take a deep breath. I’ll always come up with different images like that to help them refocus on what they want and what we’re really trying to do to help them get that (E4PI).

Another of the experts described her response to perceiving and interpreting low levels of student comfort:

If I sense that there’s some anxiety about what’s happening, I’m going to question them about if there’s something that they have doubt about or something that they don’t
understand. And in the same respect, I’m going to ask them, and this is kind of a way of building their confidence, but making sure that they know what they know, like ‘What do you know about this? What do you know you can do?’ Just find the difference between what they know and what they’re being challenged with (E3PI).

Considerably more evidence surfaced for the experts than for the novices describing teacher responses to student messages and behaviors. This finding is hardly surprisingly, given the more central function of listening in expert than novice teaching shown in present study. The experts listened more than the novices and were thus called on to respond more frequently. In comparison to the novices, only the experts described specific ways they responded to interpretations they made about their students.

Differences between experts and novices were particularly transparent in analyzing these teachers’ instructional listening behaviors. Listening emerged as the defining characteristic of expert instructional communication, but played only a minor role in novice teaching. Similarly, one of the only investigations of expert communication found that experts outperform non-experts on reading and interpreting students’ nonverbal behavior (Webb, Diana, Luft, Brooks, & Brennan, 2001). The researchers also found that experts were more confident about the judgments they made based on the information provided. Classroom experience was identified as the critical factor differentiating the expert and novice teaching performance.

In the present study, the role of attention in teacher listening stands out in addition to experience as critical to pedagogical expertise. Intentionally focusing on student behaviors seemed to set the stage for increased perception, clearer and richer interpretation, and more frequent and definitive responses on the part of the experts. This study’s findings suggest that the listening process was carefully coordinated by the expert teachers with purpose and attention
to detail. The novices seemed instead to gather information in a haphazard and fragmentary fashion, assembling pieces of information they had gathered through a kind of bricolage that resulted in shallow interpretations. These findings are echoed in the literature on expert performers, which shows that when experts are faced with new problems, they “engage in all sorts of effortful searching, evaluating, and reconsidering in the process of arriving at a main point, whereas [novices] settle on their main point in less than a minute of thought” (Bereiter & Scardamalia, p. 35).

One aspect of listening that was largely understudied in the present investigation was memory and its function in efficient listening. Purdy (1997) placed “remembering” as a stage between interpretation and response in the listening process. With listening as a major element of expert teaching, future research on expert teaching should further explore the role and nature of active teacher listening. Previous research indicates that experts have superior memories (e.g., Chase & Simon, 1973), and this may have significant implications with respect to listening in instructional environments.

Summary

The conceptual framework applied in the present study was useful in analyzing and highlighting differences between expert and novice teachers’ instructional communication behaviors. This framework drew from research in communication and instruction, based largely on the process-product tradition that characterizes much of the effective teaching literature. Each of the constructs selected for use includes teacher behaviors that play an influential role in effective teaching and student learning from a rhetorical perspective. This study’s findings indicate that such behaviors function as part of novice and expert teaching, as well, albeit to different extents and in different ways.
As shown in the preceding sections of this chapter, effective teaching behaviors were present in the instructional communication of both experts and novices. However, the range and versatility of the experts’ behaviors far exceeded the novices’. Furthermore, the central tendencies characterizing expert and novice communication differed markedly. In the case of the novices, behavior trends, such as giving explicit instruction, using a dominant communication style, and demonstrating content relevance by using personal experiences, indicated a tendency to communicate from the teacher’s perspective. Novice communication was characteristically pre-arranged, self-centered, indirect, and impersonal, despite conforming on the surface to conceptions of effective teaching.

In contrast, the experts were responsive to student immediacy and style behaviors, kept the amount of teacher talk to a minimum, communicated relevance using the student’s experiences and goals, and, most importantly, listened to the student. These behaviors, some falling under the umbrella of effective teaching and others standing alone as unique to pedagogical expertise, are linked by a tendency to communicate from the student’s perspective. Expert communication, therefore, was characteristically improvisational, student-centered, direct, and personal.

The communication behaviors found to be unique to expert teaching included mirroring student immediacy behaviors and gaining physical proximity to be immediate, physically positioning the student and using student language to be clear, matching student communicator style, and explicitly stating how the material relates to the student’s future (as envisioned by the teacher) to make content relevant. Previous studies have not examined teacher listening using the framework outlined in this investigation, so it is premature to conclude that expert teachers
are unique in any aspect of their listening behaviors. However, expert listening did differ from novice listening in that the experts used specific attention behaviors and the novices did not.

Two methodological concerns need addressing. First, a running theme in the findings was that the novices’ interviews produced inconsistent data when compared to the student interviews and the videotaped lessons. As was noted throughout the chapter, the teacher interviews were designed to explore the each instructor’s general teaching experiences. For the experts, these experiences were limited to teaching golf. For the novices, however, these experiences excluded teaching golf, except for the single lesson taught for the purposes of the study. Because the student interviews and videotaped lesson focused entirely on golf, it is suspected that inconsistent findings in the novice data were in many cases attributable to broader scope of the teacher interviews. As much as possible, the teacher interviews were used primarily to add dimension to the other sources of data in analyzing the novices’ instructional communication.

Second, there is clearly a need to study instructional communication from a relational perspective, especially in the context of expert teaching. This perspective differs from the rhetorical, or one-sided, perspective offered in the present investigation, in that it views communication as a transactional process. As stated by Mottet and Beebe (2006), “The relational perspective draws upon contemporary models of communication in which meaning is mutually created and shared between individuals” (p. 24). Expert instructional communication may be better understood from this perspective, as the student’s communication appears to have tremendous influence in the direction and content of an expertly taught lesson.

In the following chapter, the findings presented in Chapter Four and in this chapter are positioned against each other to reveal the relationship between teacher communication concerns
and behaviors at expert and novice levels. Perhaps the best way to conclude this chapter is to present a final quote from one of the expert instructors, which descends straight to the heart of expert instructional communication as it emerged in this study’s findings and is presented in the sections above:

…my world is fascinating, but I also find it very interesting to learn more from people and I become a better communicator as a result of meeting different people and learning to adapt my style of communication to them. If I only distributed information in one way, I wouldn’t be as effective with as many people as I am (E1PI).
In 1981, Staton-Spicer and Marty-White proposed a framework for instructional communication theory that has since been all but overlooked in research within the field. Based on previous work by Staton-Spicer and Bassett (1979), the authors suggested a model combining cognitive and behavioral elements of communication to demonstrate links between teacher concerns and classroom instruction. Their model represents a departure from the focus of most studies of communication and instruction, which centered on the process (i.e., teacher classroom behaviors) and product (i.e., teacher effectiveness and student learning) of teaching. The authors indicated that studies “have not made provision for, and have not taken into account, the teacher’s perspectives about the process” (p. 354) and argued that a full understanding of instructional communication necessitates a closer look at variables constituting the preoperational stage of teaching (i.e., teacher characteristics) and their relationship to process variables. In their study, Staton-Spicer and Marty-White (1981) found direct links between teacher communication concerns and behaviors.

Following the work of Staton-Spicer (1979; 1981), a question asked in the present study was “What is the relationship between the instructional communication concerns and teaching behaviors of experts and novices?” Detailed discussion of expert and novice communication concerns and behaviors is provided in Chapters Four and Five, respectively. In brief, Chapter Four presented evidence, which showed that both groups of golf instructors had specific
instructional communication concerns that could be conceptualized using Fuller’s (1969) stages of teacher concerns. The novices expressed concerns fitting each stage (self, task, and impact), but primarily gave thought to the task of teaching, whereas the experts indicated no self concerns, some task concerns, and mostly impact concerns (i.e., how their teaching impacts student outcomes). Chapter five discussed the various behaviors that characterize and distinguish the experts’ and the novices’ instructional communication, ultimately showing the experts to be more student-centered in their teaching than the novices. The purpose of the present chapter is to consider concern and behavior trends in combination to develop a more holistic portrayal of expert and novice instructional communication.

Overview

Follow-up interviews with each teacher were conducted to inquire about the relationship between her instructional communication concerns and teaching behaviors. Data analysis revealed a direct relationship between teacher concerns and behaviors for both the experts and the novices (see Table 6.1). Overall, the experts used twice as many instructional behaviors to address their communication concerns when teaching than the novices. In total, 26 communication behaviors were found to directly correspond to the experts’ concerns and 13 behaviors were found to represent the novices’ concerns. This finding is not surprising given the increased number of communication concerns and behaviors identified for the experts in comparison to the novices (see Chapters Four and Five). Evidence is provided below to demonstrate links between concerns and behaviors in expert and novice instructional communication.
Table 6.1

*Directly Related Communication Concerns and Behaviors for the Experts and the Novices*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Behavior(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Novices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearing credible to students</td>
<td>Refrain from conveying information that might be important to student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-monitoring instructional communication</td>
<td>Reduce dramatic body language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speak slowly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ask questions to gauge instructional clarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating clearly</td>
<td>Use analogies/metaphors to explain material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present material in small steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Give explicit instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating content relevance</td>
<td>Use own experiences to demonstrate importance of content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State how the material relates to other people’s lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting the student to understand the teacher’s instructional messages</td>
<td>Repeat instruction in different ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have student repeat main points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Look for student non-comprehension cues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating honestly</td>
<td>Ask questions about student’s goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern</td>
<td>Behavior(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take notes at beginning of lesson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reiterate student’s goals when teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reiterate personal belief about what it will take for student to reach goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating accurately</td>
<td>Cite examples from research when teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be careful to say only what is meant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide feedback intermittently</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Avoid false praise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have student self-rate performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathering information from the student</td>
<td>Ask lots of questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give student time to answer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t put answers in student’s mouth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Check for understanding</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Listen to identify student vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing student learning through getting to know the student</td>
<td>Establish rapport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invite student to communicate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Concerns and Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Behavior(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing student understanding of self to create ownership and confidence</td>
<td>Self-monitor instructional communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ask questions aimed at helping student develop a learning strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use student language</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hone in on student sensory awareness</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase student’s self feedback and decrease teacher feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a safe and comfortable learning environment for the student</td>
<td>Match student behaviors and orientations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Get student to talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use student language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Search for topic of commonality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listen for student likes and dislikes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Novices

The novice golf instructors identified and discussed specific behaviors they used when teaching to address their communication concerns. Some of these behaviors were also noted in Chapter Five as trends in the novices’ instructional communication, but others were communication behaviors that only one or two of the novices used (refraining from conveying certain information, reducing dramatic body language, speaking slowly, asking questions to gauge instructional clarity, using analogies/metaphors to explain material, repeating instruction in different ways, and looking for student non-comprehension cues). The researcher felt it was
important to note all behaviors, not just behavior trends, which were a direct manifestation of each concern in order to reach a more complete illustration of the concerns-behaviors relationship. Notably, it is likely that certain communication behaviors emerged as infrequently used among the novice teachers because these behaviors were linked to infrequently expressed concerns. Each novice concern and its corresponding instructional behaviors are discussed below.

Appearing Credible to Students

One novice teacher expressed a self-concern about appearing credible as a teacher to her students. In her follow-up interview, the teacher explained that this concern sometimes led her to refrain from conveying information to her students, even when she believed the information might be helpful to their learning. As stated by the teacher,

I don’t say certain things that probably need to be said because I am concerned that they are not accurate, even though maybe they are. I just leave it alone or leave it out and maybe it would have been helpful if I would have said things (N4FI).

The teacher added that, at times, she would decide to go ahead and convey information she thought would benefit the student despite believing that doing so might compromise student perceptions of her credibility. However, she would communicate such information with the following disclaimer: ”Maybe this is helpful to me, but I’m not sure if it will be helpful to you” (N4FI), which she suspected had the effect of making her students “less willing to use that [information] because they don’t know if [the teacher] really knows if it’s going to help them or not.”

The present study is the first to indicate a relationship between a concern about teacher credibility and communication behaviors that limit or assign bias to instructional messages. In
the only other study to examine the relationship between teacher communication concerns and behaviors, Staton-Spicer & Marty-White (1981) found that a college instructor new to the content he was assigned to teach expressed self concerns about his credibility and flexibility as a teacher. The instructor’s classroom behaviors reflecting his concern about teacher credibility included (a) attempts to be perceived by his students as personable and (b) self-disclosing remarks.

Although the novice teachers in the present study used immediacy and style behaviors that could be interpreted as attempts to be personable, there was no indication in the data suggesting that these behaviors were related to a self concern about credibility. As well, the novices did use self-disclosing behaviors, which primarily surfaced by way of self-deprecating remarks, but no evidence was found to support a relationship between such behaviors and a concern about increasing or protecting professional competence from the student’s perspective.

In Chapters Two and Four the concerns of beginning teachers as represented in the related literature were discussed. These concerns typically center on teacher credibility (Borich & Fuller, 1974), which suggests that beginning teachers tend to question the adequacy of their content knowledge. Staton-Spicer & Marty-White (1981) found that an instructor’s self-concerns manifested in communication behaviors that other research, including the present study, would conceptualize as teacher immediacy. Importantly, there is some evidence indicating that students’ perceptions of a teacher’s credibility are sustained and preserved through teacher immediacy behaviors (Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998). However, the novice golf instructor in the present study did not state that she used approach behaviors to address her concerns about credibility. She indicated, rather, that she held back from conveying important instructional messages, despite feeling she was compromising student learning in doing so.
Although nothing in the literature discusses the effectiveness of communicating apprehensively, it would seem that this behavior would do more to harm a teacher’s credibility than to help it in the eyes of the student.

*Self-monitoring Instructional Communication*

One of the novice golf instructors expressed a concern about her ability to self-monitor her instructional communication. As shown in Table 6.1, three communication behaviors were enacted to address this concern. These included (a) reducing dramatic body language, (b) speaking slowly when giving instruction, and (c) asking students questions to gauge instructional clarity. The novice teacher explained in her follow-up interview that she made an effort while teaching to pay attention to her body language, which she felt tended to be too dramatic (e.g., overdone gesticulations). She believed her body language distracted her students and added noise rather than clarity to her “audio” (N3FI) communication. The teacher also noted that she had a habit of speaking too quickly and was trying to maintain an awareness of her speech patterns to gain control and slow the pace of her verbal instruction. The third teacher behavior arising from the novice’s concern about self-monitoring her instructional communication was seeking student feedback. Asking her students questions helped the teacher to gauge her instructional clarity. It should be emphasized that asking questions to monitor instructional clarity, which stemmed from a teacher concern about self in the present study, is different from asking questions to check for student understanding, which represents a teacher concern about the impact of his or her teaching.

A study by Schempp, McCullick, Busch, Webster, & Mason (2006) found that expert golf instructors self-monitor their communication more than any other aspect of their teaching. In the present investigation, the finding that one of the novice golf instructors expressed a
concern about monitoring her instructional communication implies that some novice teachers realize the importance of this skill in becoming a better teacher. Notably, none of the experts expressed a concern related to self-monitoring their communication. This makes sense if experts are adept at self-monitoring, as their aptitude obviates the need for a concern about improving how well they are able to track their communication behaviors. Thus, because experts already focus a good deal of their attention on their instructional communication, it is likely that only novices and perhaps other non-expert teachers are predisposed to harbor a concern about developing the ability to effectively self-monitor this aspect of teaching.

Communicating Clearly

It was noted in Chapter Four that the majority of the novices’ communication concerns centered on the task of teaching clearly. Direct links were drawn between this concern and several teacher behaviors, including (a) the use of metaphors and analogies to explain material, (b) demonstrations, (c) step-by-step presentation of lesson content, and (d) explicit instruction. Demonstrating, presenting material in small steps, and giving explicit instruction were identified as trends in the novices’ instructional communication (see Chapter Five) and are discussed throughout the related literature as important clarity behaviors of effective teachers (e.g., Hines, Cruickshank, & Kennedy, 1985; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986). For one novice teacher, however, using metaphors and analogies allowed her to skirt the task of giving explicit instruction and explaining content in detailed terms (which she considered above her level of content knowledge) to produce clear instructional messages. In her words, “it’s a simple way to get the student to see eye to eye with me” (N1CQ). In her follow-up interview, the teacher recalled using an analogy during her golf lesson for the study, stating,
[I didn’t know] specifically why you would need your arm in a specific place to produce the skill. I just knew you have to use your whole body to get the ball into the air, you can’t just use your arms, you can’t just use your shoulders. So my analogy with that was you can’t use just your back and your arms to pick up a watermelon. You normally take the watermelon and if you’re trying to throw it really far, you’re going to use your whole body weight to swing it from the back to the front” (N1FI).

The study by Staton-Spicer and Marty-White (1981) found that the task concerns of a college instructor related mainly to (a) teaching abstract concepts concretely and (b) finding the right approach to teaching. One of the ways the instructor addressed the concern of teaching abstract concepts concretely (referred to by the instructor as “clarifying” (p. 361)) was by using examples. However, his examples were shown to be literal as opposed to metaphorical illustrations of the content he was teaching. Some research does indicate that expert golf instructors use metaphors when teaching (St. Pierre, 2001), although the findings from the present study indicate that these teachers use metaphors more to make content relevant than to increase instructional clarity. While other teachers might use metaphors to be clear, it appears this behavior could best suit the needs of the novice teacher, whose lack of content knowledge makes achieving instructional clarity through alternative methods (e.g., explaining the content in detail) difficult to accomplish.

*Communicating Content Relevance*

Three behavior trends fitting the content relevance construct were identified in the instructional communication of the novice teachers (see Chapter Five), two of which were found to directly correspond to one novices’ concern about making content relevant to students. These were (a) using personal experiences to demonstrate the importance of the content and (b) stating
how the material relates to other people’s lives. As stated in Chapter Four, the novice teacher who expressed a concern about communicating content relevance found it difficult to identify for her students the reasons why learning particular lesson content was important. She indicated in her follow-up interview that she addressed this concern in her teaching by either pulling from her personal experiences or generalizing to other people’s lives to demonstrate the importance of lesson content. For example, she stated that she would commonly use her experiences as a university cheerleader to demonstrate the importance of strengthening various muscles groups to students she taught in a weight training class. She also indicated that she would explain how muscular strength benefits people in their everyday lives (e.g., performing daily functioning tasks).

An important distinction was made in Chapter Five concerning the types of relevance behaviors enacted by experts and novices in the present study, namely that the experts communicated content relevance to students more directly than the novices. It was shown that the experts used many listening behaviors to learn about their students, which enabled them to directly link lesson content to students’ experiences, interests, and goals. In contrast, the novices’ instructional communication was characterized more by teacher talk than by teacher listening. Thus, it is not surprising that a novice concern about communicating content relevance was found in behavioral manifestations reflecting limited knowledge of the content or of students.

Getting the Student to Understand the Teacher’s Instructional Messages

The most prominent impact concern expressed by the novice golf instructors was getting students to understand the teacher’s instructional messages (see Chapter Four). This concern emerged as different in nature from a concern about communicating clearly in that it had more to
do with increasing student learning than improving performance of a particular teaching task. Novice instructional behaviors representing a concern about student understanding included (a) repeating instruction in different ways, (b) having students repeat the main points, and (c) looking for student non-comprehension cues. While having students repeat the main points surfaced as a trend in the novices’ instructional communication, repeating instruction in different ways and looking for student non-comprehension cues were behaviors used by one or two of the novice instructors. For example, one novice said that she repeated her instruction several times during a lesson, using different words to explain the same content each time so that her messages would reach students. Another behavior this same teacher discussed using was looking for non-comprehension cues in her students’ faces while giving instruction to determine the level of student understanding.

Enhancing student understanding was found to be an impact concern of the college instructor studied by Staton-Spicer and Marty-White (1981). However, in contrast to the findings from the present investigation, Staton-Spicer and Marty-White reported a wide variety of behavioral manifestations stemming from a concern about student understanding. In their study, a direct relationship was identified between this concern and ten behavior trends, which can be summarized as defining content, giving examples, restating the content in different ways, using comprehension checks, using organizers (i.e., stating objectives, using transitions, and reviewing), and creating visual displays of the content (e.g., drawing diagrams or writing terms on the chalkboard). Importantly, these behaviors reflect a general concern about student understanding, whereas the novices’ behaviors in the present study reflect a more specific concern about getting students to understand the teacher’s instructional messages. The difference lies in the fact that students may understand and remember the teacher’s messages, but
not grasp the meaning or nature of the content. Thus, teacher behaviors such as giving examples, stating objectives, reviewing, and creating visual displays appear to be manifestations of a concern about increasing student understanding of the content, whereas behaviors like repeating instruction in different ways and having students repeat the main points are more representative of a concern that students are able to recall the teacher’s words and behaviors.

To review, the novice golf instructors discussed using specific communication behaviors in response to their expressed teaching concerns. Some of these behaviors were also identified as trends in the novices’ instructional communication and some were used only by one or two teachers. However, by indicating all behaviors that manifested from each communication concern, the relationship between teacher concerns and instructional behaviors emerges more clearly. As stated in Chapter Four, the novices’ communication concerns principally centered on getting students to view and understand lesson content from the teacher’s perspective. Fittingly, this concern manifested in teacher behaviors that drew the student’s focus to the teacher and the teacher’s messages. Behaviors like demonstrating, giving explicit instruction, using personal experiences to demonstrate the importance of the content, repeating instruction in different ways, and having students repeat the main points seem to communicate that the teacher’s experiences with and understanding of the content are paramount to student learning.

Experts

As with the novices, specific instructional behaviors were linked to each of the experts’ communication concerns (see Table 6.1). However, as was noted in this chapter’s overview, the experts used more communication behaviors overall in addressing their concerns than the novices. Each teacher concern and its corresponding communication behaviors are discussed below.
An expert task concern discussed in Chapter Four was communicating honestly during instruction. This concern manifested in the experts’ teaching in at least four different ways, which included (a) asking questions about student goals, (b) taking notes at the beginning of the lesson during the student interview, (c) reminding the student about his or her goal(s) throughout the lesson, and (d) continually reiterating a personal belief about it will take for the student to reach his or her goal(s). These behaviors are captured in the following quote from one of the expert teachers:

I repeat myself and I keep trying to reiterate what [the student] said their goals were when we first started—I’ll always make notes—and along the way I’ll try to remind them of that. When they don’t get what they want, I try and ask them a lot of questions to find out what amount of time and effort and energy that they’ve really put in. So [it’s] getting them to recap more realistically and then to set goals. When they do get what they want, then I try to help them recognize what actions they took to help that (E4FI).

Conceptualizations of the knowledge base for teaching vary in the educational literature (e.g., Grossman, 1990; Shulman, 1986), but generally include knowledge of students, knowledge of content, knowledge of teaching, and knowledge of teaching the content. Based on the findings from the present study, the instructional communication of expert teachers takes shape through a cooperative interplay between several dimensions of pedagogical knowledge. To communicate honestly, the expert quoted above relied on her knowledge of the student’s goals, the student’s actions toward reaching those goals, and her knowledge of the learning process in relation to the subject matter. She integrated these knowledge components, two of which were
created earlier in the lesson and one of which was built over years of experience teaching golf, and formulated a judgment about the student’s developmental potential in golf.

*Communicating Accurately*

Research shows that experts possess a wealth of knowledge (Tan, 1997). Nevertheless, one of the expert golf instructors in the present study expressed a concern about communicating accurately, which she related to her knowledge of the content, to her ability to convey to the student that the information being communicated was valid, and to her ability to instill correct interpretations of the content in the student’s cognitive and motor learning. Communication behaviors the teacher enacted to address this concern included (a) citing examples from research to support her instructional messages, (b) communicating judiciously, (c) providing performance feedback intermittently, (d) avoiding false praise, and (e) asking the student to self-rate his or her skill performances.

In her follow-up interview, the expert first explained that she sometimes cited research when giving instruction to demonstrate the validity of her messages. This was done more to increase the student’s willingness to accept and embrace the information more than to convince the student of her credibility as a teacher. Second, the expert indicated that she increased the accuracy of her communication by speaking deliberately to ensure that she communicated intended as opposed to unintended messages when teaching. Third, she stated that she provided feedback only when she felt she had accrued enough information about the student’s performance to distinguish behavior patterns from behavior aberrations. Fourth, the expert made a concerted effort to avoid praising student performances that did not merit such recognition. Instead, she tried to reserve positive performance feedback for notable student accomplishments. Finally, the expert attempted to enhance her accuracy of communication by having the student
self-rate his or her skill performances based on intrinsic or sensory feedback. This enabled the expert to link what she observed in the student’s performance with the student’s understanding of the skill. In turn, the expert was able to increase the fidelity (i.e., accuracy) of her instructional messages to her student’s interpretations.

The behaviors used to address a concern about communicating accurately reflect some of the trends in the experts’ communication, namely keeping the amount of telling to a minimum, using student language, using student experiences to make content relevant, and attending to student communication. As with communicating honestly, the ability to communicate accurately stemmed in part from an understanding of the student. This finding is consistent with what was presented in Chapters Four and Five relative to the student-centered nature of expert instructional communication.

Gathering Information from the Student

Perhaps the most significant indicator of student-centeredness in expert teaching in the present study was a concern shared by all of the expert golf instructors about gathering information from the student. A direct relationship was found between this concern and five instructional behaviors, which included (a) asking questions, (b) giving the student time to answer the teacher’s questions, (c) avoiding the temptation to answer one’s own questions, (d) checking for student understanding, and (e) listening to identify student vocabulary. Asking questions was shown to be a trend in the experts’ instructional communication (see Chapter Five), particularly at the beginning of the lesson. In explaining how asking the student questions related to her concern about gathering information, one expert said in her follow-up interview,

At the beginning, [I’ll] ask [the student] what is their goal for the day, what would they like to walk away with understanding better. If this were on my lesson tee, I’d ask them,
“So how will you know that you received good value for your investment today?” That way I get an idea what brought them there (E1FI).

Another expert indicated that gathering information involved “taking in the information without necessarily formulating a response right away” and “wanting to understand where [the student] was coming from” (E3FI). In addition, the expert who is quoted above in regard to asking questions stated that it was equally important for her to avoid the temptation to “put answers in the student’s mouth” (E1FI).

In Chapter Five, listening was shown to be the hallmark of expert instructional communication. As indicated in previous chapters, research suggests that expert teachers are superior listeners in the classroom environment (Webb, Diana, Luft, Brooks, & Brennan, 2001) and are more adept than novices at gathering student information for instructional purposes (Sanchez, Rosales, & Canedo, 1999). However, the present study is the first to illustrate specific behaviors that enable experts to listen efficiently and glean important information from student communication.

The behaviors that were found to directly correspond to a concern about gathering information from the student included attending, interpreting, and responding behaviors that have been linked to efficient listening in previous research (Imhof, 1998). Some of these behaviors, such as asking questions, implementing sufficient wait time after questioning, and checking for understanding, are also evident in research examining effective teachers (Brophy & Good, 1986; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986). However, avoiding the temptation to answer one’s own questions and listening for students’ use of vocabulary are behaviors that appear to be unique to instructional expertise. Part of the reason why these behaviors are absent in studies of
Effective teaching may be because listening has not been explored as a teacher function in that line of inquiry.

Interestingly, the college instructor studied by Staton-Spicer and Marty-White (1981) asked questions and employed comprehension checks in response to an impact concern about student understanding, whereas these behaviors manifested through a task concern about listening in the present study. Thus, an apparent strength of establishing a concerns-behaviors relationship in a comparative context, as was done in this study, is that it demonstrates how instructional behaviors shared by different teachers can be enacted for different reasons.

Increasing Student Learning through Getting to Know the Student

It was noted in Chapter Four that a fundamental difference between the expert and the novice golf instructors was that the principal concern of the novices centered on the task of getting the student to know the content from their perspective, whereas the experts primarily focused on the outcome of increasing student learning through getting to know the student. The experts addressed this concern in several ways, most of which revolved around establishing rapport with the student to increase student comfort, get to know the student’s perspective in context, and develop an effective golf lesson. Some of the behaviors used to establish rapport included using engaging body language, such as not having arms crossed, having an “open demeanor” (E3FI), and making eye contact. Building rapport was directly linked to increasing student comfort and willingness to communicate. As stated by one expert,

In the interview, I will tell [the student] specifically that “this is not a monologue, it’s a dialogue. This is not about me, it’s about you and I need to get your feedback because I don’t know how it feels when you hit a great shot. You’re going to have to try to tell me or describe it to me.” I want them to know that I can help them with the ‘what’ and the
‘why’—the cause and effect—but they’re going to let me know when they perform something and have success at doing something better. They’re going to tell me how (emphasis added) (E2FI).”

This same expert teacher further explained that the student’s comfort and willingness to communicate were important factors in her instructional communication, as illustrated in the following quote:

I want to establish rapport and get [the student] to feel comfortable and get them to trust me so they will feel comfortable enough to tell me what they want. Once they tell me what they want I’ll adapt my teaching and behave in a way where I want them to understand what I’m trying to help them learn (E2FI).

Self-monitoring instructional communication was also identified by one expert as a behavior that manifested from a concern about getting to know the student. She indicated that as she listened to her students, she maintained a constant awareness of her own verbal and nonverbal language in an effort to match student behavior.

The behaviors found to be directly related to a concern about getting to know the student were consistent with trends identified in the experts’ instructional communication in Chapter Five. The experts employed a combination of immediacy behaviors (nonverbal immediacy), style behaviors (open and flexible styles), and listening behaviors (attending) to learn about their students. Although they were not specified by the experts in their interviews, it is likely that other behavior trends were related to a concern about getting to know the student, as well, such as asking personal questions and keeping the amount of telling to a minimum.

One of several lines of inquiry that focus on student communication in instructional communication research is student willingness to communicate (McCroskey & Richmond,
Studies show that even in instructional settings where student-teacher interaction might be increased, the majority of students in a given class tend to communicate very little. One implication of this finding is that the instructional conditions produced by most teachers are not sufficiently inviting or engaging for students. In contrast, the expert teachers in the present study utilized several behaviors that were intended to galvanize and sustain student instructional communication throughout the lesson.

**Developing Student Understanding of Self to Create Ownership and Confidence**

A unique concern of the expert golf instructors was creating feelings of empowerment in the student by developing the student’s understanding of self as a learner. As indicated by one expert, this concern had a great deal to do with making content relevant to the student:

> If it’s relevant to [the student], then it will stick. In golf, there are so many tips that come and go, but if it’s really going to be learned behavior or a learned skill it’s got to be relevant to what they want…listening is part of the process, but there’s no question that the bottom line is when the student walks away, do they have something that is truly theirs and not something that was just suggested to them. [If that happens] then the learning has taken place and the performance will show itself (E2FI).

Behaviors that represented this concern in the experts’ instructional communication included (a) asking questions aimed at helping the student develop a learning strategy, (b) using student language, (c) honing in on student sensory awareness, and (d) increasing student sensory feedback/decrease teacher feedback. With respect to asking questions, one expert said,

> As opposed to telling I’ll ask questions that help the student formulate their own strategies (and the questions are going to be guiding questions). I don’t necessarily know what the best strategy is for each student so I’m more interested in asking the questions
that they may need to ask themselves in order to formulate a strategy for their learning and performance (E3FI).

Using student language was identified as a trend in the experts’ clarity behaviors in Chapter Five and many of the experts’ communication behaviors discussed in that chapter might be categorized as honing in on the student’s sensory awareness (e.g., using a flexible communicator style, using student language, physically positioning student). In discussing her perspective on teaching and learning golf, one expert said that, for the student, “it’s a sensory awareness as to what is a ‘yes’ and what is a ‘no’” (E1FI). Another expert stated that she helped the student develop an understanding of self by slowly weaning the student off a reliance on her feedback as he or she became increasingly aware of sensory feedback in performing the skill.

Motor learning research supports what Magill (2001) has termed the “guidance hypothesis,” which indicates that with increasing practice, learning is best facilitated by a “fading schedule” of feedback. The provision of continued external feedback is believed to create a dependency that diverts the learner’s attention from important sensory feedback needed to make performance gains. Based on this research, it seems the expert golf instructors had good reason to be concerned about getting their students to take ownership of lesson content. The findings from the present study provide useful recommendations for addressing this concern.

Although the behavioral manifestations of a concern about developing the student’s understanding of self were closely tied to behaviors that the experts’ associated with making content relevant, none of these behaviors included those discussed as trends in the content relevance construct in Chapter Five. Surprisingly, the experts did not identify relating content to student experiences or goals as behaviors they used to help the student take ownership of the lesson content. As indicated in earlier chapters, the communication of content relevance
represents the newest of the teacher communication constructs in the conceptual model used in the present study. In Chapter Five it was shown that further study is needed to examine the impact of different relevance behaviors (e.g., direct versus indirect) linked to student perceptions of effective teaching. The fact that certain teacher behaviors, such as guiding the development of a student learning strategy and using student language, may also be associated with making content relevant punctuates the need to further conceptualize and understand the role of teacher relevance behaviors in the teaching-learning process.

Creating a Safe and Comfortable Learning Environment for the Student

A major concern of the expert golf instructors had to do with creating a safe and comfortable learning environment for the student. Behaviors that directly corresponded to this concern included (a) matching student behaviors and orientations, (b) getting students to talk, (c) using student language, (d) searching for a topic of commonality with the student, and (e) listening for student likes and dislikes. The experts identified an assortment of student behaviors and orientations that they matched through careful observation and listening early in the lesson. These included the student’s body language, pace of walking, pace of speech, voice tonality, eye contact, eye patterns, special distance, and when possible, rhythm of breathing. As well, during the student interview, which every expert used to begin her lesson (see Chapter Five), the experts asked questions to get their students to talk about themselves. Each expert indicated in her follow-up interview that, during this time, other important information was gleaned from the student that could be used to increase the student’s level of comfort. Most importantly, the teachers searched for topics of shared interest between themselves and their students and learned about the student’s likes and dislikes.
Perhaps the single most important contribution of the communication discipline to the study of teaching and learning has been research on teacher immediacy, which unmistakably indicates that teaching is an inherently relational enterprise and that as such, learning depends in large measure on the teacher-student relationship (Civikly-Powell, 1999). Through whatever capacity the experts in the present study learned to cultivate and cherish the bonds they shared with their students, it was clear that these teachers valued the human element of teaching a great deal. They undoubtedly understood the powerful influence that immediacy behaviors can have on the student learning experience. This study points to several key instructional behaviors experts have found useful in creating a comfortable and facilitative student learning environment.

Overall, the experts’ communication concerns were matched by a relatively large number of instructional behaviors (see Table 6.1). As many as five communication behaviors were found to directly correspond to some of the experts’ concerns. Since data analysis produced a high number of expert communication behaviors (see Chapter Five), the fact that the experts used several behaviors to address each of their concerns is not surprising. Nor is it surprising that the experts’ communication behaviors stemming from their expressed concerns manifested as predominantly student-centered, based on the findings discussed in Chapters Four and Five. Concerns leading to the most (five) expert behaviors included communicating accurately, gathering information from the student, and creating a safe and comfortable learning environment for the student. The implication from this finding is that expert teaching, as seen from a communication perspective, is defined in large part by these instructional concerns.
Summary

The concerns-behaviors relationship was supported in the present study as a useful framework for understanding the instructional communication process. Specific instructional behaviors were identified as directly related to the expressed communication concerns of both the expert and the novice golf instructors. The experts used an increased number of behaviors (26) to address their concerns in comparison to the novices (13). Moreover, the relationship of concerns to behaviors for both groups confirms the analyses of expert and novice communication concerns (see Chapter Four) and behaviors (see Chapter Five) in that it highlights a central division between expert and novice teaching from a communication perspective. The student-directed nature of expert instructional communication serves as a thread connecting this chapter to those preceding it relative to this study’s findings. It is clear that a major pattern of expert instructional communication in the present study consists of eliciting student disclosure in search of avenues toward effective teaching. Conversely, the novices mainly focused their thoughts and behaviors on themselves to deliver their understanding of content to the student via secure messages that would not be lost in translation.

Establishing a relationship between teachers’ communication concerns and instructional behaviors helps in conceptualizing instructional communication as a rhetorical process. From an illustration of such a relationship, teaching emerges as a purposeful activity, wherein presage variables are shown to be inextricably linked to process variables. Differences between teacher concerns illuminate how teachers who use similar or even the same instructional behaviors as one another do so for different reasons. What is missing from this picture, however, is a portrayal of the decision-making process that functions in dictating which communication behaviors teachers enact and how these behaviors are implemented over the course of a lesson.
In the next chapter, the communication strategies of the experts and novices are illustrated and discussed with the intent of adding new insight into the relationship between presage and process variables in teacher communication.
CHAPTER 7

EXPERT AND NOVICE INSTRUCTIONAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

The study of communication in instruction primarily reflects an interest in teacher behaviors that students characterize as effective and perceive as helpful to their learning. A number of studies have also attempted to demonstrate the effectiveness of various communication behaviors on student learning through experimental research designs (e.g., Chesebro, 2003; Frymier & Houser, 1998; Kelly & Gorham, 1988). In combination, these two approaches to instructional communication scholarship have considerably broadened the knowledge base on effective communication in teaching. However, little is known about teachers’ intentions in using various communication behaviors. As indicated in previous chapters, research by Staton-Spicer and Marty-White (1981) first demonstrated the relationship between teacher concerns and behaviors from a communication perspective. The findings from the present investigation support the usefulness of applying a concerns-behaviors framework to the study of instructional communication.

While the relationship between concerns and behaviors represents one link in the instructional decision-making process, research on teacher cognition shows that teachers base their instruction on more than just concerns. In particular, expert-novice comparisons in teaching illustrate that expert instruction is rooted in the development and implementation of strategies that are mostly absent in novice teaching (Housner & Griffey, 1985; Sanchez, Rosales, & Canedo, 1999). For example, Housner & Griffey found that experienced physical education teachers planned for instruction and taught on more of a contingency basis than inexperienced
physical education teachers. In addition, the researchers found that experienced teachers were more responsive to individual student needs and more improvisational during instruction than inexperienced teachers (Griffey & Housner, 1991; Housner & Griffey, 1985).

A study of expert and preservice teachers’ instructional communication related to expository discourse produced similar findings, in that experts’ discourses were shown to rely much more heavily than preservice teachers’ on interactive and evaluative processes in context (Sanchez, et al., 1999). Furthermore, expertly constructed discourse reflected an understanding of human resources for memory and learning. Specifically, Sanchez et al. found that the experts communicated no more than three main ideas and then supported and recapitulated these ideas in different ways to demonstrate relationships in content. As stated by the authors,

It should be noted that the idea is not to merely recapitulate but to do so in a strategic way…Expert teachers seem to operate from a very simple principle: they do not allow there to be more than three different ideas without globally reconsidering the overall significance of all of them” (p. 52).

Following expertise literature highlighting differences in expert and novice teachers’ strategies in planning, interactive decision-making, and instructional communication, the purpose of this chapter is to discuss findings with respect to the fourth question asked in the present study: “How do the communication strategies of expert and novice golf instructors differ?” Data collected through stimulated recall and the instructor follow-up interviews were analyzed and triangulated to answer this question. Strategies were understood to reflect communication goals and corresponding instructional behaviors and were conceptualized at two levels of instructional communication: the micro level and the macro level. Communication strategies the instructors used during various instructional episodes (e.g., greeting the student, interviewing the student,
presenting lesson content, etc.) were classified as micro-level strategies. Communication strategies at the macro level represented the instructors’ overarching communication plan for an entire lesson, or what the instructors’ aimed to accomplish as communicators from the beginning to the end of a lesson. Macro-level strategies were derived from an examination of relationships between micro-level strategies.

Overview

Substantial differences were evident in the communication strategies of the expert and the novice golf instructors at both the micro- and the macro-levels. At the micro level, the experts and the novices indicated primarily different instructional communication goals. In some cases, the experts and the novices indicated similar goals, but were still shown to use different instructional behaviors in relation to these goals. As was found with respect to teacher communication concerns and behaviors, the experts’ used a more student-centered approach to teaching than the novices’. At the macro level, clear patterns of interaction emerged among the experts’ micro-level communication strategies, revealing an overarching communication plan. Relationships between novice communication strategies were less developed.

As will be shown, several of the experts’ and the novices’ communication goals were the same as or were similar to these teachers’ communication concerns, which are discussed in Chapter Four. However, conceptualizing instructional communication as behaviors based on communication goals (as opposed to concerns) did produce findings that highlight another dimension of the teacher communication process. The findings indicate that a relationship exists between a teacher’s communication goals and instructional behaviors, illuminating the influence of presage variables in teaching beyond what is shown by an examination of teacher concerns and behaviors. Differences between expert and novice communication strategies at both the
micro and the macro levels are presented below and discussed against the backdrop of research and theory in the study of expertise.

Micro-Level Communication Strategies of Experts and Novices

In their follow-up interviews, both the expert and the novice instructors identified communication strategies they used during various instructional episodes throughout a lesson. Differences emerged with respect to the volume and nature of expert and novice micro-level strategies. Overall, more (11) communication goals were identified for the experts than for the novices (eight) (see Table 7.1). As well, the experts’ strategies were comprised of goals and behaviors that were, in most cases, more student-centered than the novices’.

Notably, three of the experts’ communication goals paralleled the novices’ (build rapport with student, facilitate student enjoyment, and build student confidence). However, as shown in Table 7.1, the behaviors used by the experts’ in reaching these goals were based to a greater extent on information gathered from the student than the novices’. Another point of interest in comparing the expert and the novice data is that the findings across the stimulated recall interviews and the follow-up interviews were consistent for the experts, but not for the novices. That is, the experts identified communication strategies they used in teaching that were consistent with what these instructors actually did in teaching their videotaped golf lessons. In contrast, the novices failed in their videotaped lessons to engage several of the strategies they claimed to use when teaching. The implication from this finding is that when faced with new content, teachers may abandon their usual communication strategies and experience increased difficulty in interactive decision-making.
Table 7.1

*Expert and Novice Micro-Level Instructional Communication Strategies (i.e., Goals and Corresponding Behaviors)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Behavior(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Novices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build student comfort/confidence in relation to the content</td>
<td>Present material in small steps; repeat instructional messages; use multiple forms of communication; and give positive verbal feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate student enjoyment</td>
<td>Repeat instructional messages; use multiple forms of communication; and use humor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build rapport/increase student perceptions of teacher approachability</td>
<td>Use student’s name; converse with student to find common interest; use humor; and be nonverbally immediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get on student’s level</td>
<td>Ask student questions to gather information about her/his background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convey the main points</td>
<td>Demonstrate and check for student understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide corrective skill feedback</td>
<td>Demonstrate correct skill performances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate clearly the first time information is conveyed*</td>
<td>Give concise instruction*; use “age-appropriate” vocabulary; speak clearly (e.g., slowly and articulately)<em>; look for student comprehension/non-comprehension cues; present material in small steps</em>; continuously check for student understanding; solicit questions from student; review material at intervals throughout the lesson; and use humor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Behavior(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase student comfort*</td>
<td>Be nonverbally immediate*; use a confident communicator style; use humor (primarily self-deprecating)<em>; and give positive verbal feedback</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experts</td>
<td>Build rapport*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ask student questions to gather information about student’s learning style*, goals*, likes and dislikes, and “limiting beliefs”; ask student questions to identify a topic of common interest; ask student questions to get the student talking*; and adapt to student behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help student become the best she/he can be</td>
<td>Identify student’s strengths in golf and life; and determine how student’s strengths can be used to improve golf performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build student confidence</td>
<td>Complement student frequently; identify and point out student’s strengths in golf and life; and use student language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspire student</td>
<td>Complement student frequently; identify and point out student’s strengths in golf and life; and use student language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help student accomplish her/his goals*</td>
<td>Ask student questions to identify her/his goals*; observe student’s behaviors; identify what needs to change in order to reach student’s goals*; identify and point out student’s strengths; explain to student why she/he is having performance challenges*; communicate to student the necessary strategies for making changes; allow student to experience changes in skill performance*; and seek validation from student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Behavior(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay more in a receive versus a transmit mode</td>
<td>Stay quiet when student is talking; nod to indicate listening behavior; display open body language; respond to student’s messages appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate student enjoyment*</td>
<td>Remind student that golf is just a game*; use positive language; ask student to identify when she/he has the most fun playing golf; use humor; respond to student’s messages appropriately; and be nonverbally immediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make content relevant to student’s goals</td>
<td>Listen to student; ask student questions; and identify student’s goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate accurately</td>
<td>Be careful to communicate only what is meant; give feedback intermittently (as opposed to after every practice trial); avoid giving false praise; and ask student to self-rate skill performances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate simply*</td>
<td>Focus on only one main point*; give feedback on student’s performance patterns (as opposed to aberrations in performance), and use student’s words*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapt to the student*</td>
<td>Use student’s words*; match student’s personality, tonality*, amount of talk, body language*, pace of speech, pace of walking, and rhythm of breathing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Signifies a goal or corresponding behavior shared by at least three instructors in a respective group (expert or novice).
Novices

Data from the instructor follow-up interviews indicated that the novices’ instructional communication was based on eight communication goals (see Table 7.1). In their interviews, the novices discussed using various behaviors to achieve these goals when teaching, although, as stated above, many of these behaviors were absent in the novices’ golf instruction (as evidenced through stimulated recall). Further discussion about inconsistencies between data collected through the instructor follow-up interviews and stimulated recall is provided at the end of this section of the chapter. Two of the novices’ communication goals were shared by at least three of the four instructors in the follow-up interview data (see Tables 7.1), as were several of the teacher behaviors found to correspond with these goals. Taken together, these goals and behaviors represented two trends in the novices’ micro-level communication strategies, including (a) communicate clearly the first time information is conveyed by giving concise instruction, speaking clearly, and/or presenting material in small steps and (b) increase student comfort by being nonverbally immediate and/or using self-deprecating humor. These trends, in addition to other notable communication strategies of the novices at the micro level, are discussed in more detail below (note that the novices’ goals are used as subheadings).

Communicate Clearly the First Time Information is Conveyed

In discussing their communication goals as teachers, three of the novices indicated that one of their aims was to communicate clearly the first time they conveyed information to students. As stated by one of the novice teachers,

I want to be able to feel out what the student needs from me and be able to the first time around in teaching totally teach them in a way that they don’t have to ask any more questions because they understand what they can do and they can do it (N2FI).
The most common behaviors the instructors used to meet this goal were giving concise instruction, speaking clearly, and presenting material in small steps. For example, the novice teacher quoted above said in her follow-up interview,

Speaking clearly would be the first thing that I would do. I would make sure that I had precise directions or instructions the first time—clear directions, very short—I wouldn’t go on for half an hour on how to dribble without going step by step by step and breaking it down because too much information too fast can make the kid not be able to understand what I’m talking about (N2FI).

Instructional clarity also emerged as a major concern of the novice instructors (see Chapter Four). However, the novices’ concern about clarity focused on being clear throughout the lesson, which was different from their goal to be clear the first time information is conveyed to a student. In addition, the communication behaviors that corresponded to these two presage variables were different with the exception of the presentation of material in small steps. These findings justify the need to examine strategies as a dimension of teacher communication. While certain communication behaviors were directly linked to the novices’ concerns, others manifested instead from specific communication goals. Thus, as stated in the chapter overview, studying instructional communication strategies helped in the present investigation to explain teachers’ instructional behaviors beyond the study of a concerns-behaviors relationship. Furthermore, the finding that novice concerns and goals served as the basis for presenting material in small steps indicates that some communication behaviors directly stem from more than one type of presage variable in teaching.
Increase Student Comfort

The second strategy trend identified in the novices’ follow-up interviews at the micro-level was to increase student comfort by being nonverbally immediate, using self-deprecating humor, or providing positive verbal feedback. Increasing student comfort was identified by three of the novice instructors as a communication goal when teaching. Relating this goal to her use of positive verbal feedback when giving instruction, one novice said,

[I want] to make [students] feel like they’re doing a good job and give them some feedback as to what can make them better and what they’re doing well already and what needs improvement. I usually say ‘Good job [or] I’m so proud of the way you’re doing that.’ That’s the main thing I do or maybe just tell them not to worry if they mess up something, that that’s going to happen, that nobody’s perfect at things to start with [and] it’s going to take practice and hard work (N4FI).

In studying novice instructional communication from a concerns-behaviors perspective, making students comfortable in the instructional environment did not emerge as a characteristic element of novice teaching. However, the findings relative to novice communication strategies suggested otherwise, indicating that the novice golf instructors aimed to increase student comfort through the use of several communication behaviors. Again, this implies that goals and concerns in teaching are distinctly different and both variables are essential to a complete framework in the study of teacher communication. The analysis of the novices’ communication strategies, as represented in the follow-up interview data, indicates that the importance of creating a comfortable learning environment for the student was not lost to the novices.

Several other novice communication strategies that emerged from the instructors’ follow-up interviews deserve mention, as well, even though only one or two of the novices’ discussed
using them. Perhaps the two most intriguing novice communication strategies were using communication behaviors to (a) build rapport with students and (b) try to understand and the student’s level of understanding, since these strategies were similar to some of those used by the experts. Although some of the behaviors the novices used to build rapport and explore the student’s level of understanding differed from those the experts used, it was surprising to find that the novices set goals that reflected more of a student-centered interest than was indicated by the other sources of data in the present study. The fact that the novices linked these types of strategies to their instructional approaches suggests that these teachers appreciated the central role of the student in creating optimum teaching-learning conditions. Furthermore, this finding indicates that the novices endeavored to engage such strategies as physical education teachers.

As noted earlier, however, stimulated recall data portrayed a contrasting image of the novices’ instructional communication strategies. In the context of golf instruction, the novices failed to engage several of the strategies they claimed to use when teaching, particularly those reflecting more of a student-centered focus discussed above. For example, although strategies related to instructional clarity (e.g., conveying the main points by demonstrating; providing corrective skill feedback by demonstrating) were overwhelming present in analyzing the stimulated recall interviews, the novices rarely, if ever, engaged strategies such as building rapport by using students’ names or getting on the student’s level by asking questions to gather information about the student’s background. Novice golf instruction reflected more of what educational research refers to as a “custodial” as opposed to a “humanistic” approach to teaching (Agne, 1992). As stated by Agne, “Teachers assuming an extremely custodial orientation can be expected to be highly controlling…develop highly impersonal relationships with students…and exercise one-way communications directed from themselves to their students” (p. 122).
It is likely that the same methodological issue is to blame for these contradictory findings as indicated with respect to inconsistencies across the novices’ concerns questionnaires or telephone interviews and these teachers’ videotaped golf lessons (see Chapters Four and Five). That is, the focus of one data collection method was much broader than the other. In their follow-up interviews, the novices were asked about their communication strategies when teaching in general, whereas stimulated recall interviews were conducted with a specific focus on the communication strategies the novices’ used to teach golf. Thus, one conclusion that might be drawn is that the novices used different communication strategies when teaching relatively familiar versus unfamiliar lesson content. Alternatively, the novices’ self-perceptions of their instructional communication strategies may have deviated from what they actually did when teaching.

In summary, the study of novice instructional communication strategies at the micro level was helpful in illuminating a facet of the teacher communication process hitherto untapped by the examination of concerns and behaviors in teaching. While some of the novices’ communication goals paralleled their concerns, several of these teachers’ goals reflected areas of focus, such as the teacher-student relationship and the student’s level of comfort within the instructional environment, that were not evident, or at least not well represented, in the data that was analyzed with respect to the other research questions asked in the present study. Furthermore, the relationship of goals and instructional behaviors helped to illustrate links in the preoperational and process stages of teaching that otherwise would have remained hidden.

A particularly important finding was that the novices’ communication strategies, like their concerns and behaviors, seemed to change in light of the lesson content. Novice communication strategies in relation to teaching physical education, at least from the perspective
of the novices’ themselves, emerged as distinctly different from novice communication strategies in teaching golf. A better understanding of the role of content knowledge in developmental expertise might benefit from further study comparing the instructional strategies that teachers use when faced with familiar versus unfamiliar lesson content.

**Experts**

A total of 11 micro-level communication strategies were identified for the experts in the analysis of the follow-up interviews. As indicated earlier, the experts’ strategies reflected the student-centered instructional approach that was also found in these teachers’ communication concerns and behaviors discussed in Chapters Four and Five, respectively. Unlike the data relative to the novices’ strategies, a consistent portrayal of the experts’ communication strategies emerged from follow-up interview data and stimulated recall data. Thus, the experts discussed using communication strategies when teaching that were consistent with what they actually did in their lessons for the study. This was probably because, unlike the novices, the experts’ teaching experiences and videotaped lessons were both golf-related.

Several trends were evident in the experts’ micro-level communication strategies. These included (a) build rapport by asking the student questions about her/his learning style and goals and asking the student questions to get her/him talking; (b) help the student accomplish her/his goals by asking the student questions about her/his goals, identifying what needs to change for the student to reach her/his goals, explaining to the student why she/he is having performance challenges, and allowing the student to experience change in skill performance; (c) facilitate student enjoyment by reminding the student that golf is just a game; (d) communicate simply by focusing on only one main point and using the student’s language; and (e) adapt to the student by using student’s words, matching the student’s tonality, and matching the student’s body
language. The experts’ strategy trends are further discussed below (again, note that the experts’ communication goals are used as subheadings). Like the findings reported above for the novices, data relative to the experts’ micro-level communication strategies lent new insight into the teacher communication process.

*Build Rapport*

All of the expert instructors indicated that they had a goal to build rapport with their students through their instructional communication. In discussing the importance of building rapport with the student when teaching, one of the experts stated,

> By building that rapport there’s a sense of trust which then allows me to lead [the student] along their route of self-discovery. If I don’t have that rapport then it would be more challenging for me to lead them to where I think it would be helpful for them in terms of accomplishing the goal that they’ve set forth (E1FI).

To build rapport, the experts primarily asked questions to gather information about their students’ learning styles and goals, as well as to get the students talking about themselves. For example, one expert said in her follow-up interview,

> [Asking questions] is part of building rapport because by taking in all that information you can really get to know them quickly because you can start to recognize patterns in people and it also helps you know how far you can challenge the student or take the student early on (E4FI).

As discussed in Chapter Five, each expert instructor spent several minutes at the beginning of her lesson asking questions and conversing with her student. Data collected through stimulated recall directly after each expert golf lesson revealed that these teacher behaviors were used to build rapport. For example, one expert indicated that she spent time at
the beginning of the golf lesson asking her student questions so that she could get the student to trust her. In her words, “I want him to be able to trust me—to me, that’s what rapport is all about—I want him to be able to trust what I’m about to tell him” (E3SR). In discussing their intent behind asking the student questions at the beginning of the lesson, two of the other experts said, “First I’m trying to establish rapport and make him feel comfortable, get him talking, because I want to establish a connection…I’m trying to lead him into this interview that I do to gather more information from him” (E2SR) and “I want to put the student at ease and build some rapport with her as an individual first” (E4SR).

In the previous section of this chapter, novice golf instruction was linked to a “custodial”, as opposed to a “humanistic” orientation toward teaching (Agne, 1992). Conversely, the tendency to build rapport on the part of the expert instructors is representative of a humanistic approach, which Agne explains is characterized by teacher behaviors that serve to “develop personal relationships…with students” (p. 122). Agne proposes that care for the student is the expert teacher’s “edge”. The findings from the present study with respect to the expert golf instructors’ communication concerns, behaviors, and strategies certainly support this proposition.

Help the Student Accomplish Her/His Goals

Another strategy trend at the micro level of expert instructional communication was using communication behaviors to helping the student accomplish her/his goals. As stated by one expert, “I want to know what triggered [the student] wanting to be there on the lesson tee with me so that I can better guide the information that I’m going to give them” (E1SR). The most common behaviors that were used to reach this instructional objective included asking the student questions about her/his goals, identifying what needs to change for the student to reach
her/his goals, explaining to the student why she/he is having performance challenges, and allowing the student to experience change in skill performance.

Each expert instructor gathered information about her student’s goals related not just to golf, but also to life in general. In her stimulated recall interview, one expert stated. “My goal is always to get to know them as an individual and the golf is secondary” (E1SR). She explained, as did the other experts, that acquiring information about student goals outside of the golf context helped them to understand more about the student’s personality, interests, and patterns of behavior, which in turn revealed key aspects of the students’ performance that could be improved. As stated by one expert,

Along the way, we’re discussing not just their golf swing but what that swing entails and how they get that swing and how they improve it and that might be anything from being more fit to having a better routine to having better focus. It’s not just the swing, but it’s everything that encompasses being able to make a swing or a better swing or even what makes them or allows them to do bad swings, as well (E4FI).

After identifying the critical factors that needed to be changed to help the student reach her/his goals, each expert created practice conditions that allowed the student to experience these changes and understand their value firsthand. For example, one expert said in her stimulated recall interview, “I was trying to get a couple of drills that would give him an overall sense of what he needed in his swing…he’s not really having to think about it…my theory is people need to become the change through the drills” (E4SR). This approach to being clear represents a fundamental difference between the experts and the novices discussed in Chapter Five, which is that the novices endeavored to channel key points through their understanding of the content.
whereas the experts encouraged their students to understand these points from their own perspective.

In Chapter Five, gathering information about student goals was identified as a major trend in the experts’ instructional communication with respect to listening and was specifically coded as an interpretive behavior because developing an understanding of what the student wants to accomplish requires that information gleaned from the student is processed by the teacher. It was shown that the experts used this and other interpretive behaviors to a much greater extent than the novices. The findings from the analysis of the experts’ micro-level communication strategies indicates that the experts’ processed a great deal of information in listening to the student as part of a strategy to communicate more effectively in teaching.

Facilitate Student Enjoyment

Although both the experts and the novices expressed communication goals related to facilitating student enjoyment, this goal only emerged as part of a strategy trend in the experts’ instructional communication. More importantly, the expert behaviors found to correspond to this goal, were more student-centered than the novices’. In describing how she facilitated student enjoyment through her instructional communication, one expert said,

I keep [the student] on task with what have they experienced that’s been a lot of fun…Fun has different meanings for different people and I’ll ask them, ‘How will you know when you’re having fun at playing this game?’ Often times they relate it to hitting good shots and I’ll turn that around and say, ‘Well, what if you had fun first, would the good shots follow?’ So it’s exploring what fun means to them’ (E1FI).

The most common behavior used to facilitate student enjoyment was reminding the student that golf is just a game. One expert said in her follow-up interview, “It’s a matter of
reminding [the student] that this is a challenging, fun game and it’s an opportunity to ‘create’ as opposed to ‘execute’ a skill” (E3FI). The experts indicated that many of the students they taught approached golf as something that is daunting and frustrating rather than inviting and challenging. As teachers, the experts felt it was their job to convey the fun aspects of playing golf and reframe students’ negative orientation toward the game into a positive one.

As with developing communication strategies that were defined by student’s goals, the experts’ conveyed that golf should be fun based on the student’s conception of what made golf enjoyable. To do this, the experts’ again needed to be effective listeners, particularly with respect to information processing. Without being able to accurately interpret what elements of golf enticed the student to continue playing the game, communicating messages that helped to facilitate student enjoyment would be a difficult, if not an impossible task. Unfortunately, this study was not designed to investigate expert and novice information processing in depth. The cognitive structures and/or behaviors that function in expert listening in regard to the interpretation of received messages require further investigation.

Communicate Simply

The expert golf instructors indicated in their follow-up interviews and also in their stimulated recall interviews that one of their most important goals as communicators was to get their instructional messages to make sense to the student in the simplest way possible. As stated by one expert, “It’s being able to establish a strategy or a plan that I can help them as quickly as I can and in a way that they can walk away and take it with them” (E2FI). Two behaviors emerged as most frequently used by the experts to achieve this communication goal: Focusing on only one main point and using the student’s words. As discussed in Chapter Five, although the experts used a wide variety of communication behaviors, these behaviors all focused on
conveying a single key message. In regard to using the student’s words, one of the experts explained in her stimulated recall interview that she used the phrase “swing out of your shoes” to describe her student’s golf swing because the student had used that phrase himself. She indicated that this teacher behavior reflected one of her communication strategies, stating, “I used his words just for level of communication because if I use his words I know he knows what I’m talking about…That’s why I would use that phrase with him—because it has meaning to him” (E3SR).

The experts’ behaviors that corresponded with a goal to communicate simply again punctuate the central tendency of expert instructional communication as represented in the present study. That is, expert golf instruction principally emerged as the product of highly effective teacher listening. To be clear, the experts sought to gain insight into the student’s developing knowledge of the content and communicate from the student’s perspective of the learning process. Like this study, other research with expert golf instructors has shown that experts focus on a limited number of key messages, but also communicate these messages in a variety of ways (Schempp, McCullick, St. Pierre, Woorons, & You, et al., 2004). As stated by Schempp et al., “instead of providing students with a breadth of information, the expert teachers found ways of repeating and reviewing the same information to their students throughout the lesson” (p. 65). However, the present study is the first to find that experts use student’s words as part of a strategy to communicate simply and clearly when giving instruction.

Adapt to the Student

A strategy engaged by all four expert golf instructors was to use various communication behaviors to adapt to their students. For example, the experts said in their follow-up interviews that they consciously used their students’ words not only to communicate simply, but also to
match their student’s level of understanding. One expert said, “I try to adapt to the way they can process what I’m saying [by] mainly just using their words” (E3FI). In her stimulated recall interview, the same expert teacher identified using this strategy during her videotaped golf lesson as a way to complement the student’s learning style. In her words, “When I got him to hear the ‘swoosh’ in the swing (he used the word ‘swoosh’ in [describing] the sound), I related that to feel [and] said, ‘Well, can you make that swoosh feel slower, like half speed, and he did and finally connected with [the ball]’” (E3SR).

Matching student tonality and body language also emerged as behaviors the experts frequently used to adapt to their students, although several less frequently used behaviors were also identified. These included matching the amount of teacher talk to the amount of student talk, matching the pace of teacher speech to the pace of student speech, matching teacher personality to student personality, and even matching the rhythm of teacher breathing to the rhythm of student breathing. The importance of using communication behaviors to adapt to the student is conveyed in the following quote by one of the expert teachers: “When we’re around people like us, we’re much more at ease and much more receptive. So my job is to get into [my student’s] world so they’re more in a receiving state” (E1FI). Similarly, another of the experts said, “You’re not only taking information—that’s kind of the first step—but the next thing is you find yourself just matching [the student] and later on you can lead them” (E4FI). Therefore, the experts saw adapting to the student as part of a larger strategy to increase the student’s willingness to listen to and accept the teacher’s instructional messages.

Several of the behaviors the experts used to adapt to their students were also found to correspond with an expert concern about creating a comfortable student learning environment (see Chapter Six). Hence, it appears that the goal of adapting to the student was related to a
concern about building a comfortable learning environment. The nature of this apparent relationship is beyond the scope of this study, although one would expect that teachers set instructional goals in response to their concerns. Future research should include the relationship between teacher concerns and instructional goals as part of the framework used to study communication in instruction. As with the other strategies identified for the experts, adapting to the student by using the student’s words and matching the student’s behaviors reflects highly developed listening skills on the part of the experts that were mostly absent in the novices’ instructional communication.

To summarize, expert micro-level communication strategies were characterized by student-centered goals and behaviors. The experts employed a “humanistic” (Agne, 1992) approach to golf instruction that focused on the teacher-student relationship and on gaining insight into the student as a person and as a learner. The experts strategically listened to their students and pieced together the information needed to effectively communicate as teachers. Thus, like the findings relative to the experts’ communication concerns and behaviors, an examination of expert communication strategies at the micro level points to listening as a critical skill in expert teaching that merits further attention and study.

Macro-Level Communication Strategies of Experts and Novices

Macro-level communication strategies represented the teachers’ global instructional communication plans for an entire lesson. A macro-level strategy illustrated the “big picture” or what was intentionally done from a communication perspective from the lesson opening through the lesson closure. Prototypical macro-level communication strategies for experts and novices emerged from data indicating relationships between different micro-level strategies and how these relationships underpinned an overarching communication plan for a lesson. The
prototypical expert macro-level strategy was grounded in richly developed relationships between certain micro-level strategies and others. These relationships served to illustrate the relevance of each micro-level strategy to pursuing a clear path as a communicator. Figure 7.1 presents a visual display of the different relationships that were found between the experts’ micro-level strategies and how these relationships underpinned an overarching communication plan for a lesson. As can be seen, this plan was defined by four distinct phases of instructional communication. Figure 7.2 presents a contrasting portrayal for the communication plan that emerged at the macro level for the novices. Fewer relationships between micro-level strategies were identified and a relatively undeveloped communication plan for the lesson was evident. Therefore, only the experts seemed to know where they were going and what they were trying to accomplish at all times as instructional communicators. The evidence from which the path models in Figures 7.1 and 7.2 were derived is presented below.

**Novices**

As shown in Figure 7.2, the novices’ micro-level communication strategies seemed to predominantly function independently of one another. That is, few clear patterns of interaction were evident among the novices’ strategies, suggesting a relatively undeveloped overarching instructional communication plan. Therefore, although the novices engaged micro-level communication strategies when teaching, they apparently did so more at random than with any preconceived design. For example, one novice stated in her follow-up interview,

> I don’t specifically say ‘this is my communication strategy’ when I’m preparing a lesson. I do think about while I’m preparing a lesson what am I trying to get across to this person, what are the essential things that they need for me to tell them or show them or communicate to them, but I wouldn’t say that I come up with a strategy” (N4FI).
Figure 7.1. Path model indicating a prototypical expert macro-level instructional communication strategy as revealed by relationships among micro-level communication strategies.
Figure 7.2. Path model indicating a prototypical novice macro-level instructional communication strategy as revealed by relationships among micro-level communication strategies. The abbreviation “FI” beside an arrow indicates a relationship found in the follow-up interview data (relating to the novices’ experiences in teaching physical education), but not in the stimulated recall data (relating to the novices’ golf instruction).
Some evidence was available from the follow-up interviews to support certain relationships among the novices’ micro-level communication strategies (see Figure 7.2). For instance, one novice said in her follow-up interview, “I think [I] establish a relationship in order for them to feel comfortable and then once they feel comfortable, for them to enjoy it” (N1FI). However, it should be remembered that the novices primarily discussed their experiences as physical education teachers in their follow-up interviews. When the novices were asked in the stimulated recall interviews to discuss their communication strategies in teaching golf, it became apparent that even these relationships were absent in the context of novice golf instruction.

One common strategy pattern did emerge in the novices’ follow-up interviews, which was implementing a communication strategy (or strategies) related to instructional clarity as a catalyst for increasing student comfort. As stated by one novice, “I really try to get the main ideas first and then I try to make the student feel comfortable because they’re not going to feel comfortable if they don’t have a clue what they’re doing. I think getting the main points across allows them to be comfortable” (N4FI). Another novice instructor contended, “The most important goal would be to be clear and precise the first time around so that the student feels comfortable and understands the very first time. That would be the first goal. The second would be being able to relate to them and still be the teacher” (N2FI). This second quote illustrates a point that was made earlier in the previous section of this chapter on expert and novice micro-level communication strategies, which is that the novices’ strategies reflected an interest in controlling the lesson (what Agne (1992) referred to as a “custodial” approach to teaching). Again, although this pattern in the novices’ strategies surfaced in the follow-up interviews, it was absent in relation to how the novices’ taught golf.
In one of the only studies of expert and novice instructional communication, Sanchez, et al. (1999) conceptualized teacher explanations as consisting of three dimensions, or episodes, including the given (i.e., what students already know), the new (i.e., lesson content), and evaluation (i.e., assessing the effectiveness of the communication process). The researchers found that the prototypical sequence of expert and preservice teachers’ expositive discourse differed, in that the experts engaged all three episodes within the discourse and the preservices teachers engaged only a single episode. Thus, whereas the experts evoked student ideas, connected these ideas to new ones, and evaluated the communication process, the preservice teachers “beg[an] their discourse immediately with the presentation of new ideas…[without] evaluating the development of the whole process” (p. 51). The findings from the present investigation produced slightly different findings with respect to novice instructional communication strategies.

Specifically, the novice golf instructors were shown instead to engage communication strategies that fit all three episodes of the instructional communication process, as defined by Sanchez et al. (1999). For example, each novice asked questions and gathered some information about her student at various stages in the lesson (the given), attempted to communicate lesson content clearly (the new), and checked for student understanding (evaluation). However, it should be stressed that the new was the only episode in which trends emerged in the novices’ communication behaviors and strategies. Similar to the preservice teachers studied by Sanchez et al. (1999), the novice golf instructors began to deliver golf content right from the start of the lesson and continued to focus on the clarity of their instructional messages more than any other aspect of their communication. In addition, Sanchez et al. (1999) indicated that “the new should be done in such a way that it will help the interlocutor to interconnect the different ideas
expressed in a linear and global fashion” (p. 39). As was discussed above, a global communication plan was virtually absent in the novices’ golf instruction, as were efforts to connect prior student knowledge with the lesson content (i.e., make content directly relevant to the student) (see Chapter Five).

Experts

In contrast to the novices’, the experts demonstrated both in their follow up interviews and their stimulated recall interviews that every teacher communication strategy at the micro level functioned in relation to others as part of an overarching communication plan. As shown in Figure 7.1, the prototypical macro-level strategy for the experts was based on a further developed and more cohesive network of relationships than the novices’. Thus, at the macro level, the experts’ communication strategies were shown to interact in a meaningful and focused way. Specifically, the experts began their lessons by building rapport with the student, then established lesson goals based on information gathered from the student, communicated golf content based on information gathered from the student, and ended the lesson by reviewing key points that emerged from the student’s learning and communication. The central purpose of this strategy is illustrated in the following quote from one of the expert instructors:

[The intent is] to allow the student to be in charge of the lesson, whether they know it or not. I want to empower them to really be guiding what happens as to how the lesson is evolving and I simply am helping them to pick the path along the way that helps them achieve their goal as quickly as possible” (E1FI)

The experts indicated that the most important aspect of their instructional communication strategies was building rapport with their students. For example, one expert said in her follow-up interview,
I would say build rapport is number one because once I build rapport, eventually I can have a much better chance of helping them [meet the other lesson goals], but if I don’t build rapport then I’m probably not going to see them again. [So] my first goal is to build rapport with them and to seek out a lot of information about them” (E4FI).

The importance of building rapport to an expertly delivered golf lesson was also transparent in watching the experts’ teach and in analyzing their stimulated recall interviews. As stated in Chapter Five, each expert teacher spent several minutes at the beginning of her lesson asking the student questions and finding common ground. This initial phase of the overarching communication strategy was pivotal in the experts’ instructional decision-making process, as illustrated by the student-driven nature of each subsequent phase (see Figure 7.1). Building rapport included at least three micro-level communication strategies: (a) staying more in a receive mode than a transmit mode, (b) adapting to the student, and (c) facilitating student enjoyment.

In the next phase, the experts used the information they gathered from the student to identify the appropriate lesson content for helping the student reach his or her goals. For example, one expert stated, “The second goal would be to help people really look at where they are and what lies between where they want to be and what they have to do to get it’” (E4FI). Using various communication behaviors to make golf content relevant to student goals, build student confidence, and help the student reach her/his goals were identified as micro-level communication strategies that were important to establishing lesson goals based on information gathered from the student.

This second phase reflected not only a well developed understanding of the student, but also an extensive and highly organized knowledge of golf. In selecting the appropriate lesson
content, the experts had to connect new and relevant information to what they had learned about the student’s current understanding of and experiences related to golf. Integrating knowledge of the student with knowledge of the content also entailed identifying student potential beyond the student’s expressed goals. This is exemplified in the following quote, in which one of the experts discusses her overarching communication plan for any golf lesson:

If I was to generalize it would be to find out where they are that day and then what needs to happen in terms of helping them leave the lesson tee feeling better and enthusiastic and ready to go play their game. It’s hard to generalize because everybody comes with different goals. But if I had to generalize, to determine what that student’s goal is for today and take them to that and maybe to something beyond that” (E3FI).

In the third phase of a prototypical expert communication strategy at the macro level, the expert golf instructors communicated golf content based on the information they had gathered from their students. Using the communication behaviors identified in Table 7.1, the experts communicated accurately, communicated simply, helped the student accomplish her/his goals, helped the student become the best she/he could be at golf, and worked to inspire the student as a learner during this phase of the instructional communication process. With respect to inspiring the student, one expert said in her follow-up interview,

Number three [as an overarching communication goal] would be to help inspire and motivate [the student] to continue on the process long enough to meet their goals…Inspiration and motivation help build and maintain confidence. Along that process you’re also helping them get to know themselves better, too, and how they work and what helps them play well and what helps them be happy and how they tend to start to feel bad…(E4FI).
In her stimulated recall interview, this same instructor indicated how helping the student accomplish his goals and inspiring him to continue learning were important parts of communicating lesson content during the lesson. She said,

I tried to get him really to envision his desire accomplished and I really tried to make sure that he was willing to do whatever it took to get what he said he wanted…[I was] just setting it up so he was pulled toward (and not pushed away from) wanting to change” (E4SR).

The final phase of an expertly taught lesson from a communication perspective included communication strategies that allowed the experts to review key points from the lesson using the student’s learning experiences and communication in context. For example, the experts closed their lessons by emphasizing words their students had used to describe their experiences engaging the content. During her stimulated recall interview, one of the experts stated, “I wanted [my student] to tell me, to review, how it felt to him so I could write down his feel words (I gave him a little piece of paper)” (E2SR). Therefore, the information gathered in the third phase of the instructional communication process that enabled the experts to effectively communicate lesson content resurfaced in the last phase. This type of review differed from the type used by the novices to close their lessons, which was based on messages the teacher had produced as opposed to the student (see Figure 7.2).

While keeping to this instructional communication path over the course of the lesson, the experts also varied the order and type of micro-strategies they used from one lesson to the next. As one expert put it, “I think that overall there is a pattern there, but within that pattern I think [it] varies with each student” (E2FI). Another expert explained, “With these many years of teaching I definitely have a strategy as to what I want to accomplish as a communicator. How it
transpires during the lesson will change constantly (E1FI)”. For example, the experts explained that while building rapport was always an essential first step in the communication process, facilitating student enjoyment, which was part of building rapport, might be introduced earlier or later in the lesson depending on the student. The expert instructor quoted above stated,

I think we fall into patterns that are comfortable as to how we will approach a lesson, but I think that building rapport, that has absolutely got to be right up there. [However] the fun part may happen a little earlier or later, depending on the individual (E1FI).

Another expert said, “I had a student the other day and I realized he was getting ready to play in a tournament and he was really pretty stressed about things so I had to get to the fun part pretty quickly or remind him again what he’s already told me about why he plays golf” (E3FI).

To review, data from the experts’ follow-up interviews and stimulated recall interviews were consistent, illustrating a clear and purposeful communication plan over the course of an expertly taught golf lesson. At the macro level, the experts’ communication strategies emerged as highly interrelated and relevant to one another. These strategies, though necessary to completing specific phases of the instructional communication process, were engaged in a flexible manner based on student needs. Thus, although each phase was presented in this chapter as part of a sequence, it should be stressed that this sequence represents patterns of expert communication, as opposed to a finite illustration of the phenomenon. Put another way, the experts’ overarching communication plan was in essence more fluid than fixed.

Previous expert teaching research reports similar findings to those discussed above in regard to a prototypical expert communication strategy at the macro level. Sanchez et al. (1999) found that experts followed a similar instructional communication sequence to the one identified for the expert golf instructors in the present study. The findings from both studies indicate that
expert teachers communicate strategically to evoke student communication and elicit information about the student that is used to communicate effectively. In addition, the Sanchez et al. (1999) study and other research on instructional expertise (Griffey & Housner, 1991; Livingston & Borko, 1989) highlight the dynamic and improvisational nature of expert performances, as does the present investigation. As stated by Berliner (1986), “…experts are unusually sensitive to the characteristics of the situation in which their work is to be done” (p. 11).

Summary

In the previous chapter, it was shown that a complete understanding of teacher communication requires an examination of the relationship between presage and process variables in teaching. The findings reported in this chapter underscore the importance of bridging teacher cognition to instructional interaction in the study of communication and instruction. Moreover, these findings support the need to include teachers’ communication strategies as part of a framework for conceptualizing and investigating the instructional communication process. Teachers’ concerns and goals were found to be conceptually different in the present investigation, as the study of each produced disparate portrayals of teacher communication. Both the expert and the novice instructors indicated goals as communicators that were mostly different from their concerns. As well, some of the behaviors found to correspond with the instructors’ goals were also found to correspond with the instructors’ concerns, suggesting that a relationship between goals and concerns in communication might exist.

Several differences emerged in comparing expert and novice instructional communication strategies. First the experts engaged more (11) strategies than the novices (eight) at the micro level. This finding is consistent with previous expertise research (Housner & Griffey, 1985), in which the investigators concluded that experts had a larger number of
instructional strategies stored in memory than novices. Second, the communication strategies of the experts were more student-centered than the novices, supporting the findings reported in earlier chapters. Third, the prototypical communication strategies of experts and novices differed at the macro level. A network of relationships emerged among the experts’ communication strategies, indicating patterns of interaction that suggested a sequence of phases in the communication process. Relationships between the novices’ communication strategies were not as richly developed.

Representations of communication strategies in the follow-up interviews and stimulated recall were more consistent for the experts than for the novices. As noted earlier, this is probably due to the fact that the novices mainly talked about their communication strategies as physical education teachers during their follow-up interviews, whereas the experts talked about their communication strategies as golf instructors. Thus, one would expect that the experts would use these same strategies in teaching their videotaped golf lessons, whereas the novices would teach golf differently from the way they might teach other content in the physical education setting. An important implication from this finding is that teachers’ communication strategies change in relation to their content knowledge.

The study of expert communication strategies in teaching golf produced findings that resonate with those from other studies of instructional expertise. First, it was clear that the expert golf instructors employed well-rehearsed and focused plans to communicate effectively during instruction. This finding is consistent with research that shows expert instruction to be relatively automated and based largely on routines (e.g., Baker, Schempp, Hardin, & Clark, 1998). Second, the experts’ communication strategies were highly integrated, which mirrors findings from research exploring the knowledge structures of expert performers (Chase &
Simon, 1973; DeGroot, 1965). This research indicates that expert knowledge is organized in an efficient and interrelated manner. Third, the experts were shown to communicate in a similar fashion to expert teachers studied by Sanchez et al. (1999). The expert golf instructors first determined the given (i.e., gathered information from the student) and then linked the given to the new (i.e., established lesson goals, communicated clearly, and made content relevant to the student). Finally, flexibility and fluidity were evident beneath the overarching patterns of expert instructional communication. In engaging their communication strategies, the experts were responsive to their student’s learning styles, personalities, goals, and other information gathered over the course of the lesson. This finding demonstrates what previous research has already confirmed, which is that the knowledge structures of experts permit efficient storage of new information and rapid access to this information (Tan, 1997). Thus, characteristics of experts revealed in other facets of teaching were also exposed through an examination of the strategies experts use to communicate effectively.

The findings relative to four research questions have been presented and discussed, leaving one last question to be addressed. This final question concerns the product of teaching—student learning. The student perspective of teacher communication has served as an invaluable lens to instructional communication scholars who have endeavored to define effective teaching. Hence, this approach was used in the present study to investigate student perceptions of expert and novice instructional communication. In the next chapter, what students recalled the most about and perceived as the effects of expert and novice instructional communication is reported.
CHAPTER 8
STUDENT RECALL AND PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF EXPERT AND NOVICE INSTRUCTIONAL COMMUNICATION

Teacher effectiveness research spanning across the discipline of education reflects varied approaches to the study of teaching (Shulman, 1986; Floden, 2001). In contrast, communication scholarship on teaching and learning is shaped by a dominant paradigm, one that examines teacher effectiveness from the perspective of the student (Nussbaum, 1992; Scott & Wheeless, 1977; Staton-Spicer & Wulf, 1984; Waldeck, Kearney, & Plax, 2001). Part of the reason for this is that the communication perspective of teaching has principally defined effective instruction as student perceptions of which teacher messages and behaviors either foster or stunt learning. While few would argue that this perspective does not need to be broadened, most would also agree that students, who are the direct recipients of teacher communication, have served to significantly increase the knowledge base on effective communication in teaching.

In the tradition of instructional communication research based on student perceptions of teacher effectiveness, the final question asked in the present study was “What do students remember most about and perceive as the effects of expert and novice teacher communication?” Chapter Two discusses behavioral elements of teacher communication that increase student perceptions of teacher effectiveness, including behaviors related to teacher immediacy, clarity, style, humor, and relevance. No previous research has sought to uncover what students perceive as effective teacher listening behaviors. The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss findings from data analysis indicating teacher communication behaviors that students recalled
and linked to various learning outcomes two weeks following their golf lessons. This study represents the first effort to identify student perceptions of teacher effectiveness using a multidimensional framework that includes teacher listening. Furthermore, this is the first study to gain insight into the student’s perspective of the instructional communication process within the contexts of expert and novice teaching.

Overview

Students of the expert and the novice golf instructors recalled specific teacher communication messages and behaviors from their golf lessons and described various perceived effects of their teachers’ instructional communication. A comparison of each student interview with the corresponding videotaped lesson revealed that the teacher messages and behaviors recalled by the students were accurate. No differences emerged between the expert and the novice golf instructors in terms of making a lasting impact on student learning, at least not with respect to conveying key instructional messages related to skill performance. However, the experts’ students recalled from their lessons and ascribed their learning to a predominantly different set of teacher behaviors than the novices’ students. These differences, as well as other perceived effects of expert and novice instructional communication, are discussed in the sections below.

Student Recall of Expert and Novice Instructional Communication

In their interviews, the novices’ students recalled a total of 32 teacher communication behaviors and the experts’ students recalled a total of 37 (see Table 8.1). These numbers are significantly smaller than those reported in Chapter Five, which were derived from not only the
student interviews, but also the teacher interviews and the videotaped lessons. Despite the fact that the student interviews were conducted two weeks following each lesson, the implication from this finding is that student perceptions are useful in identifying some, but not all, teacher communication behaviors.

As shown in Table 8.1, both the experts’ and the novices’ students primarily recalled teacher behaviors in the constructs of immediacy, clarity, and relevance. This finding is not surprising in light of the related literature indicating the prominent role of these teacher behaviors in effective teaching and student learning, particularly with respect to the broad research bases on immediacy and clarity (Hines, Cruickshank, & Kennedy, 1985; Richmond, Lane, & McCroskey, 2006). Interestingly, the experts’ students recalled more teacher communication behaviors than the novices’ students relative to the constructs of immediacy, clarity, and style, but recalled fewer behaviors in regard to the communication of content relevance and listening. This finding is somewhat contradictory to the broader view of expert and novice instructional communication behaviors, as seen through data triangulation.

In triangulating the data, the experts were shown to have used an increased number of listening behaviors in comparison to the novices (see Chapter Five). In Chapter Five it was
noted that many behaviors associated with efficient listening are unobservable, such as those used to perceive and interpret student behaviors. This was evident in that the experts’ and the novices’ students recalled only attention and response behaviors with respect to their teachers’ listening. For example, one of the experts’ students recalled that her teacher let her finish speaking without interrupting, which might be categorized as an attention behavior. As well, two students who took lessons with novice teachers remembered that their teachers answered all of their questions, which would be categorized as a response behavior. Thus, the number of recalled teacher listening behaviors does not reflect several important phases of the listening process (e.g., perception) that distinguished expert from novice instructional communication (see Chapter Five).

Notably, instructional humor was recalled the least of any teacher behavior by the experts’ and the novices’ students. This makes sense, given the fact that teacher humor was not found to be a trend in the instructional communication of either the experts or the novices (see Chapter Five). It is also possible that in comparison to other teacher communication behaviors, humor leaves a relatively insubstantial impression on students’ memories.

Across student interviews, certain teacher communication behaviors were recalled more frequently than others. Table 8.2 indicates expert and novice communication behaviors recalled by at least three of the four students in each group. As can be seen, teacher behaviors that were most readily recalled by both groups of students were in the constructs of immediacy, clarity, and style. This finding is consistent with the extensive research from the fields of education and communication highlighting the importance of immediacy and clarity behaviors in teaching (e.g., Hines, Cruickshank, & Kennedy, 1985; Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998). However, only minimal
research has examined teacher communicator style and its influence in the teaching-learning process. Since style behaviors were among those that were recalled by the most students in both groups, the style construct may deserve increased attention in future research on teacher effectiveness.

There is a notable absence in Table 8.2 of commonly cited teacher behaviors across student interviews in the constructs of humor, content relevance, and listening. A viable explanation as to why no teacher humor behaviors stood out as more impression-leaving than others for either group of students is because so few of these behaviors were used by either the expert or the novice teachers in teaching golf. Regarding teacher listening behaviors, one reason why different students noticed primarily different teacher listening behaviors could be that multiple conceptions of listening as a process and as a skill exist. For example, even among scholars listening is a confounding construct with no general consensus of definition or theory
Witkin & Trochin (1997). As for the absence of trends in recalled teacher relevance behaviors for both groups, it is possible, and even likely, that different students found different relevance behaviors useful in learning golf. By definition, relevance is a perception that the content is personally meaningful (Frymier & Shulman, 1995). Since, in the present study, no relevance behaviors stood out as more effective than others in creating this perception, the influence of different approaches to communicating relevance may depend on certain characteristics of the learner and the nature of the teacher-student relationship.

Despite the fact that both groups of students mainly recalled teacher behaviors in the same three constructs (immediacy, clarity, and style), the novices’ students primarily recalled different teacher behaviors than the experts’ students within each of these constructs (see Table 8.2). That is, different immediacy, clarity, and style (except for a relaxed style) behaviors left a lasting impression on each group of students. This is likely due to the fact that the experts used predominantly different instructional communication behaviors than the novices (see Chapter Five). Moreover, even though the experts and the novices used some of the same communication behaviors when teaching, the most frequently recalled expert communication behaviors may characteristically produce a greater impact on student recall. Future research should aim to compare the nature and effectiveness of different communication behaviors in teaching.

It should be noted that two of the frequently recalled teacher clarity behaviors (providing corrective skill feedback and using general terms) were not identified as trends in the expert and novice teachers’ instructional communication in Chapter Five. Nor was a relaxed style found to be characteristic of the novices’ instructional communication across data sets, despite its recurrence in the student interviews. However, as previously indicated, the videotape data
confirmed that student recollections were accurate, though they did not always depict trends in the experts’ and the novices’ instructional communication.

Perceived Effects of Expert and Novice Instructional Communication

Across all student interviews, fifty-two different teacher communication behaviors and 30 corresponding student perceptions were identified. Students’ perceived effects of the most frequently recalled teacher communication behaviors are presented in Table 8.3. Instances where a dominant perception emerged in response to a teacher behavior are noted, as well. In most cases, a variety of student perceptions were linked to each teacher behavior. However, some recalled teacher communication behaviors evoked only one or two student perceptions. Each teacher behavior and its corresponding student perception(s) from Table 8.3, in addition to other notable behavior-effect links from the student perspective, are discussed in more detail below.

Providing Positive Verbal Feedback

Teacher feedback has a long tradition in research on effective teaching and skill learning in movement environments (Lee, Keh, & Magill, 1993). Magill (2001) indicates three purposes of feedback, which include providing the student with information needed to repeat correct movement patterns, providing the student with information needed to correct errors in performance, and providing information that serves to motivate the student. As shown in Chapter Five, the novice teachers primarily used positive verbal feedback as an immediacy behavior, which aligns most closely with the third purpose stated above. Although none of these perceptions emerged as dominant across interviews, the majority of student perceptions associated with this behavior reflected learning in the affective domain. For example, one student attributed his teacher’s use of positive verbal feedback during the lesson both to
### Table 8.3

**Frequently Recalled Expert and Novice Communication Behaviors and Corresponding Student Perceptions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Communication Behavior</th>
<th>Perceived Effect(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide positive verbal feedback (Novices)</td>
<td>Increased student confidence; increased student security in making errors; increased student comfort; increased student understanding of instruction; perception that teacher cares about student; perception that teacher is easy to work with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show nonverbal immediacy (Novices)</td>
<td>Increased student confidence; increased student comfort*, perception that teacher is credible; increased student immediacy behaviors; perception that teacher cares about student; perception that teacher is polite; perception that teacher is enthusiastic about teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask personal questions (Experts)</td>
<td>Increased student motivation to learn; increased student comfort*; perception that teacher cares about student; perception that teacher is easy to work with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate (Novices)</td>
<td>Increased student understanding of instruction*; perception that teacher is credible*; perception that teacher is confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present material in small steps (Novices)</td>
<td>Increased student understanding of instruction*; reduced student anxiety, increased student comfort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide corrective skill feedback (Novices)</td>
<td>Increased student understanding of instruction*; perception that teacher is credible; perception that teacher is a good listener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use general (non-golf-related) terms (Experts)</td>
<td>Increased student understanding of instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Communication Behavior</td>
<td>Perceived Effect(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically Position Student Use a relaxed communicator style (Novices and Experts)</td>
<td>Increased student understanding of instruction; increased student comfort*; increased student confidence, reduced student anxiety; increased understanding of the content; perception that teacher is confident; perception that teacher wants to learn from student; perception that teacher is enthusiastic about teaching; perception that teacher is credible; perception that teacher is easy to work with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a confident communicator style (Experts)</td>
<td>Increased student comfort; perception that teacher is credible; perception that teacher is confident</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates the dominant student perception(s) associated with a given teacher communication behavior.

increasing his level of comfort and eliciting a perception that the teacher cared about him as a learner. Other student perceptions associated with this behavior were found in statements like, “I felt very comfortable at the end, like this is something I could do in the future. I could continue with golf” (S6PI), and “she made me feel good about [my skill performance], not bad when I made a mistake [which] made me confident” (S5PI).

In discussing the importance of positive skill feedback when teaching, Schempp (2003) states that teachers should strive to “Catch students doing something correctly, and let them know it” (p. 117). Research in physical education suggests that positive feedback in combination with practice is positively correlated with increased motor performance outcomes (Silverman, Tyson, & Krampitz, 1992). While psychomotor learning was not a perceived effect of positive verbal feedback in the present study, the findings do suggest that this type of feedback can serve as a powerful motivational tool for teachers. Studies in educational psychology show that
student feelings of self-efficacy are linked to performance outcomes through student motivation in a variety of learning environments (Schunk, 2001). As stated by Silverman et al. (1992), “Perhaps...positive feedback motivates students to continue practice, permitting a greater number of total appropriate practice trials, instead of functioning to directly change skill performance” (p. 342).

**Show Nonverbal Immediacy**

Both the novice and the expert teachers abundantly used nonverbal immediacy behaviors (see Chapter Five) for a number of different reasons (see Chapter Seven). However, only the novices’ students later recalled these behaviors on a frequent basis, linking them to perceived learning outcomes. Seven perceived effects of teacher nonverbal immediacy behaviors were described in the student interviews from the novice group, with the most frequently cited effect being increased student comfort. For example, one student indicated his teacher’s nonverbal communication played a more significant role than verbalized messages in making him feel comfortable. In his words, “I can’t think of a specific word or specific phrase she said [that made me feel more comfortable]. I think it was not related to what she said, but the way she said it” (S5PI). Another student said, “I just remember feeling immediately comfortable because [my teacher] had a big smile on her face...” (S8PI).

As with providing positive verbal feedback, showing nonverbal immediacy in teaching led to student perceptions of increased affective learning (e.g., increased comfort, self-confidence, and affect for the teacher). These findings support previous teacher immediacy research, which unquestionably demonstrates that immediacy functions to increase student learning mostly in the affective domain (Richmond, Lane, & McCroskey, 2006). The relative lack of recalled teacher nonverbal immediacy behaviors by the experts’ students in comparison
to the novices’ students may be explained by the fact that the experts employed a wider range of immediacy behaviors than the novices. Despite instructional communication research stressing the increased impact of nonverbal as opposed to verbal teacher immediacy on student perceptions of teacher effectiveness and learning (Witt, Wheeless, & Allen, 2004), the present study indicates that some of the experts’ immediacy behaviors, such as asking personal questions, may mediate or override the effects of nonverbal immediacy.

**Ask Personal Questions**

Asking the student personal questions emerged both as a trend in the experts’ communication behaviors (see Chapter Five) and as a frequently recalled expert behavior in the student interviews. The perceived effects of this teacher behavior were varied, just as they were for the behaviors discussed above. However, as with nonverbal immediacy, asking personal questions mainly elicited a perception of increased comfort on the part of the student. For instance, one student said about her teacher, “I don’t know much about golf, but she made me feel comfortable with the situation [because] she asked me a lot of questions about my past, my sports history and stuff I did in high school and stuff that I was involved with at school here…” (S1PI). When asked about what made him feel comfortable taking a lesson with his teacher, another student responded, “She asked me questions” (S3PI).

The perceived effects of asking the student personal questions are consistent with those found to be associated with the novice immediacy behaviors discussed above. In fact, all teacher immediacy and non-immediacy behaviors recalled by the students in the present study were predominantly linked either directly or indirectly to affective learning outcomes. For example, two of the experts’ students recalled their teachers disclosing personal information and linked this behavior to perceptions of increased student confidence, teacher competence, and teacher
enthusiasm. These perceptions are likely to encourage student motivation and affect for the teacher. Conversely, another student, who also took a lesson with an expert, recalled that her teacher did not disclose much personal information, which she felt led to a perception that the teacher lacked some credibility. Despite this teacher’s expertise, her limited personal disclosure may have negatively impacted the student’s trust in the teacher and stunted the development of a strong teacher-student relationship. Notably, positive verbal feedback, which was principally provided in response to student skill performances, was the only teacher immediacy behavior that students credited with a perception of increased understanding of the content.

Demonstrate

The novices’ students recalled their teachers demonstrating skill concepts during instruction and perceived this teacher behavior as a major factor in increasing student understanding of the teacher’s instruction. One student said, “[My teacher] would go and stand in front of me and then show me the visual—the swing or stuff. That really helped me a lot more than just saying, ‘Hold the club this way.’ She would give me a physical example of what she wanted” (S7PI). As stated by another student,

I learned the most when she showed me exactly what to do…when she would get in front of me and she actually showed me that, ‘You should stand this way and you should be in the athletic position and you should grip like this and when she showed me everything I should be doing. I think that’s when I got the most out of it, just by watching (S6PI).

In addition to perceiving teacher demonstration as an important link to increased understanding, the novices’ students frequently attributed this teacher behavior to perceptions of teacher credibility. For example, one student recalled,
[My teacher] acted like a real golf player…When she was doing the full swing and her endings and her body movements, I think her movements were really like a golf player in my concept and it made me believe in her and it made me accept what she was trying to say to me, what she was teaching me (S5PI).

Another student said about her teacher, “she would demonstrate exactly what I should be doing and she knew all of the steps and she was really knowledgeable” (S6PI).

Physical education research emphasizes the importance of demonstrating (sometimes called “modeling”) in teaching for student learning (Rink, 2003). The findings from the present study confirm that teacher demonstrations are helpful in effectively communicating motor content to students. In fact, not only were demonstrations credited for perceptions of increased understanding of golf concepts and skills, but also a lack of demonstrations was blamed for suboptimal learning. One student noted that she felt she might have gained an even better understanding of the content if her teacher had more frequently demonstrated a full golf swing.

Previous research has not indicated a relationship between teacher demonstrations and student perceptions that the teacher is credible. This study is the first to illustrate such a link, which bears important implications for teachers. The teacher-student relationship is built largely on student trust in the teacher, as shown in the immediacy literature (Richmond, et al., 2006). A study by Thweatt and McCroskey (1998) essentially found that students who trusted their teacher also perceived the teacher to be credible. Therefore, teacher demonstrations may not only serve to increase instructional clarity when presenting motor content, but also to increase student trust in the teacher.
Present Material in Small Steps

A novice communication behavior that frequently surfaced in the student interviews was the presentation of golf content in small parts. This teacher behavior, which emerged as a trend in the novices’ instructional communication, primarily led to a student perception of increased understanding. For instance, when asked what aspect of her teacher’s communication helped her the most in learning golf, one student said, “We took it step by step—and they were all little steps—and then practiced the little steps before we even added on…[my teacher] broke down all the little pieces to make the one, good, whole golf swing” (S8PI). Another student credited this same teacher behavior for helping her understand the lesson content, saying, “we just had been working on adding more skills and tying everything, like how to balance your weight and how you should be standing and how you should be swinging and everything just kind of came together in the end” (S6PI).

The teacher effectiveness research points to the presentation of lesson content in small and related steps as a signature element of clear expository instruction (Hines, Cruickshank & Kennedy, 1985; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986). In their seminal work on teacher clarity, Bush, Kennedy, and Cruickshank (1978) examined the perceptions of more than 1000 students to identify the most important clear teacher behaviors, which included the presentation of material in small steps. The findings from the present study were consistent with previous research on teacher clarity and indicated that, among the clarity behaviors used by the novice instructors, presenting golf content in a step-by-step manner stood out as particularly effective. Notably, presenting material in small steps also led to student perceptions of decreased anxiety and increased comfort in taking a golf lesson. These findings suggest that, at least for the beginning
student, student comfort may be the primary function of presenting material in small steps and increased understanding of the content may be the secondary function of this behavior.

**Provide Corrective Skill Feedback**

Although both the expert and the novice teachers provided corrective skill feedback during instruction, this behavior did not emerge as a communication trend in either group. Despite this, corrective feedback was frequently recalled by the students as a teacher communication behavior and was linked to perceptions of increased understanding. In the words of one student,

> The little things that I had trouble with, [my teacher] would really take the time to fix. Whether it was just a technique thing that I missed out on or it was something I was not thinking about…she just took the time to show me those little things that I was doing wrong (S8PI).

In discussing what helped her to learn the main points from the lesson, another student stated, “[My teacher] would watch me as I was doing my swing and then she would tell me, ‘This time you didn’t pay as much attention to the ball.’ That really helped me, that she was correcting the things that I was doing wrong” (S6PI).

As noted earlier in this chapter, one purpose of teacher feedback is to provide the student with information that will help to correct skill performances (Magill, 2001). Silverman (1994) reviewed research on teacher feedback in learning motor skills, indicating that while early research on the topic produced results suggesting that feedback played a fundamental role in student learning, this research was conducted in laboratory settings and its findings are contradictory to some later studies conducted in applied settings (e.g. schools). In short, the effectiveness of feedback in motor learning may depend on the characteristics of the learner and
the task (Magill, 1994). The findings from the present study indicate that beginning golf students perceived teacher feedback, when used to correct errors in skill performance, as an effective communication behavior of the novice teachers that aided the learning process.

*Use General (Non-Golf-Related) Terms*

Students of the expert golf instructors recalled that their teachers had used general, as opposed to golf-related, terminology during instruction. The perceived effect this teacher behavior had on learning, from the students’ perspective, was an increased understanding of the teacher’s instructional messages. For example, one student indicated,

Some people might use big terms in their golf language, like words you wouldn’t understand if you weren’t familiar with golf. [My teacher] did not do that. She used common words to describe the things we were doing, [which] definitely helped with comprehension of technique (S2PI).

Another student explained that his teacher “tried to put [the instruction] in laymen’s terms [and] tried to keep it basic so that I could understand...she made the information processable” (S3PI).

As discussed in Chapter Five, a trend in the experts’ instructional communication was to use their students’ words to be clear when teaching. It seems this behavior was viewed somewhat differently from the students’ perspective. Although the experts used student language to be clear, the students seemed only to recognize that their teachers had used non-golf-related terms. The videotape data, however, indicated that what the students’ referred to as “laymen’s terms” were in fact words the students had used to describe their experiences engaging the content during the lesson. Therefore, students may not be well attuned to their own communication in the instructional environment, though it appears, nevertheless, that teachers who use student language when teaching can increase their instructional clarity.
Physically Position Student

A teacher communication behavior recalled by three of the experts’ students was using physical positioning to be clear during instruction. As would be expected, students who recalled this teacher behavior believed it helped them to understand their teachers’ instruction and develop an understanding of the lesson content. For example, one student indicated that his teacher helped him to learn the main point in the lesson (implementing core muscles to increase power in his golf swing) by “putting [him] in the proper posture and getting [him] to use [his] stomach muscles” (S4PI). Another of the experts’ students explained that physical positioning was helpful to him as a learner “because she knows how to do [the skill]. I don’t know how to do it. Even if she explains it to me, I’m quite confident that I wouldn’t know how to do it still” (S2PI). Other student quotes illustrating the usefulness of physical positioning as a clarity behavior in teaching are presented in the section on teacher clarity in Chapter Five.

Physical positioning was identified in Chapter Five as a trend in the experts’ instructional communication, a finding that is consistent with previous research on expert golf instructors’ instructional routines and rituals (Baker, Schempp, Hardin, & Clark, 1998). In their study, Baker et al. stated that physical positioning “permitted the student to ‘feel’ the proper position for activities such as the grip and the posture” (p. 277). Accordingly, the experts’ students in the present study indicated that physical positioning served to increase their kinesthetic awareness when performing a skill. As stated by one of the students quoted above, physical positioning helped him “just to feel the sensation [he] was looking for” (S4PI).

Use a Relaxed Communicator Style

All of the golf instructors used a relaxed communicator style when teaching, though communication behaviors fitting this construct only emerged as a dominant trend in the experts’
instruction. Even so, a relaxed style had a significant impact on students of both the expert and the novice teachers. A wide range of perceptions emerged that were associated with a relaxed teacher communicator style, as shown in Table 8.3. However, the most frequently cited effect of this behavior was increased student comfort. For example, a student who took a lesson with one of the novice teachers said in his interview, “I never felt that [my teacher] was getting frustrated with me...She stayed very, very calm...so I felt comfortable around her completely” (S7PI).

When asked if his teacher used humor during their lesson, one of the experts’ students recalled that his teacher was not necessarily funny, but was light humored, easy-going, and more disposed to laugh than be serious when giving instruction and feedback. As stated by the student, “We had a few laughs, but I don’t remember her telling any jokes...I think the fact that she sort of laughed just put me at ease and made me feel more comfortable” (S3PI).

Previous research has linked a relaxed communicator style to student perceptions of teacher effectiveness (Norton, 1983; Sallinen-Kuparinen, 1992). The findings from the present study indicate that relaxed style characteristics are perceived as effective because they help to create a comfortable learning environment. In chapter five, it was noted that some of the behaviors associated with a relaxed style are also associated with student perceptions of teacher immediacy. Thus, it is not surprising that students of both expert and novice teachers in the present study developed perceptions of increased comfort in response to teacher behaviors that communicated immediacy and a relaxed style. Notably, other student perceptions associated with a relaxed communicator style also paralleled perceptions engendered by teacher immediacy behaviors (e.g., perception of increased student confidence, perception that the teacher is easy to work with).
Use a Confident Communicator Style

In Chapter Five, the expert instructors were shown to consistently communicate using a confident communicator style. The behaviors that formed this teacher communication trend were frequently recalled by the experts’ students and linked to perceptions of teacher confidence, teacher credibility, and increased student comfort. For example, one student said about his teacher, “I would say she’s very confident. She never stutters or doubts herself, she speaks clearly, [and] she looks at you when she speaks” (S4PI). Another student who thought her teacher was confident stated, “[My teacher] had a really firm handshake when I first met her, so that made me feel—she seemed very assertive but at the same time very smooth” (S1PI).

Perceptions of teacher confidence seemed to be connected with perceptions of teacher credibility and student comfort. Although a confident style was not a trend in the novices’ instructional communication, one of the novices’ students perceived her teacher to be a confident communicator and felt that the teachers’ confidence increased her level of comfort. In her words,

[my teacher] always made eye contact, which was really comfortable because it made me feel more comfortable that she could look me in the eye and talk to me without getting nervous or stumbling over words or anything like that. That’s really important to me” (S8PI).

A student of one of the expert teachers linked his teachers’ confident communicator style to a perception that the teacher was credible, stating, “She’s confident about what she’s speaking about. You can feel that she knows what she’s doing” (S4PI).

It is interesting that despite not having any experience teaching golf, one of the novice teachers was perceived by her student as confident through her communication style. The links
drawn by the students between a confident teacher communicator style and perceptions of
teacher credibility and increased student comfort underpin the importance of using behaviors that
signal assuredness when teaching. As found in this study, some examples of teacher behaviors
that might signal confidence include holding eye contact with students, speaking without
stammering, and using a firm handshake when first meeting a student. Such behaviors may
mitigate any negative effects that inexperience and limited content knowledge may have on
students’ perceptions of the teacher. Beginning teachers may be able to gain students’ trust and
affinity through demonstrating confidence in their instructional communication.

The student perceptions discussed above represent perceived effects of the most
frequently recalled teacher communication behaviors. However, numerous other teacher
communication behaviors were recalled and linked to student perceptions on a less frequent
basis. In some cases, only one student recalled a particular teacher communication behavior,
linking the behavior to one or more perceived effects. For example, one of the novices’ students
recalled that his teacher talked about topics unrelated to golf at times during the lesson, which he
believed helped to create a more comfortable learning environment. This finding further
underscores the importance of teacher immediacy behaviors and their relationship to affective
learning outcomes. Another of the novices’ students recalled that her teacher talked a great deal
during the lesson, which led the student to feel the lesson had been impersonal. In the students’
words, “[my teacher] did a lot of the talking…If we could have talked more one on one…I would
get to know her more on a personal level and kind of just not feel that you’re with a stranger”
(S6PI). The same student also connected too much teacher talk with student comfort, saying,
“I’m sure [less teacher talk] would have made me more comfortable because I would feel like
I’m not going to embarrass myself, that this is someone that’s going to help me get better. I
wouldn’t feel that pressure that I have to do well.” These perceptions suggest some of the effects that a dominant communicator style might have on student learning.

The range of recalled teacher behaviors and associated student perceptions implies that different students respond to and perceive various aspects of a teacher’s instructional communication in different ways. This is enunciated by the fact that even where trends emerged in analyzing the experts’ and novices’ communication behaviors (see Chapter Five) students did not necessarily recall these behaviors. For instance, a common immediacy behavior of the experts was the disclosure of personal information, although this behavior was only recalled by two of the experts’ students. Similarly, an animated communicator style surfaced as a trend in the novice’s instructional communication, but was only recalled by two of the novices’ students. For some students, other elements of expert and novice communication were found to have had a more lasting and relevant impact on the learning process. Taken together, however, the findings do suggest that certain teacher communication behaviors clearly leave a more indelible mark on students’ minds and are perceived by the student to play more critical roles in their learning.

Summary

Instructional communication research is based on and defined by the perceptions of students in the classroom environment (Mottet, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2006). While it makes sense to solicit student perceptions to better understand how to conceptualize teacher communication, the findings from this study suggest that a broader focus must be brought to the study of communication and instruction. This focus must seek to envision the nature of teacher communication from the perspective offered by a range of methodologies, including but not limited to the perceptions of the learner. As noted earlier in this chapter, students in the present study recalled only about one third of their teachers’ communication behaviors, as identified
through multiple sources of data. Thus, a wealth of teacher behaviors used to communicate effectively may escape the student’s notice. Observational research methods and teacher interviews are essential in capturing teacher communication behaviors missed by the student during instruction.

In comparing the teacher behaviors recalled by the experts’ and the novices’ students, it is interesting to note that the novices’ students recalled approximately half of their teacher’s behaviors but the experts’ students recalled only about one fifth of the total number of expert behaviors identified in the analysis. Because the numbers of behaviors recalled by both groups of students were similar, these numbers may represent an estimated total volume of teacher communication behaviors that students are able to remember. It is also important to remember that the increased number of expert communication behaviors reflects the fact that the experts used multiple forms of communication to convey a single message (see Chapter Five). However, students are ultimately predisposed to remember only those teacher behaviors that had the greatest influence in their learning and success.

Clarity and immediacy behaviors were recalled more than other teacher communication behaviors. This finding resonates with the related literature, which emphasizes the strength of these communication constructs as forces in the teaching-learning process (e.g., Hines, et al., 1985; Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998). A turgid body of educational research exists on teacher clarity indicating unquestionable links between well-defined clear teaching behaviors and student learning (Chesebro & Wanzer, 2006; Hines, et al., 1985). As well, instructional communication research finds its longest and most promising tradition of scholarship in studies of teacher immediacy (Richmond, Lane, & McCroskey, 2006). Importantly, part of the reason these aspects of teacher communication have surfaced more than others is that student perceptions may
capture certain teacher behaviors better than others. In the case of teacher listening, for example, students will not be able to observe various behaviors enacted by the teacher to be an effective listener. Using Purdy’s (1997) definition of listening, efficient listeners must attend, perceive, interpret, remember, and respond to the verbal and nonverbal behaviors of another person. Beyond attention and response behaviors, students will miss what the teacher does or does not do to increase his or her listening effectiveness.

In addition to their prominent role in describing the nature of teacher communication, student perceptions also define current understandings of teacher effectiveness in the communication literature (McCroskey, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2002). The findings from the present study support the usefulness of this approach to defining effective teaching, indicating that certain expert and novice communication behaviors were perceived as influential by the majority of the students who participated in each group. Because the experts and the novices mainly communicated using different types of behaviors, it is not surprising that the experts’ and the novices’ students described different teacher behaviors as being most influential in their learning. It would be interesting to investigate what teacher communication behaviors and perceived effects students report when they are exposed to both expert and novice teaching. Some indications were evident in the data which suggested that the novices’ students may have preferred the instructional communication of the expert teachers. For example, one of the novices’ students, who recalled that his teacher had used physical positioning (a common expert behavior) once or twice early in his lesson, indicated that he might have learned more if the teacher had communicated this way more often. In his words, “she used physical contact to correct my positioning. I think maybe if she had done it more than she did, maybe it would help me a little bit more” (S5PI). Thus, perhaps certain expert instructional communication behaviors
would overshadow the perceived effects of teacher behaviors found to be most influential in the
context of novice teaching.

Overall, the findings relative to the question of what students remember about and
perceive to be the effects of expert and novice instructional communication indicate that certain
behaviors had a greater impact than others on student recall and student perceptions of learning.
The behaviors that stood out the most were related to what teachers said and did to be immediate
and to be clear. This finding simply amplifies what others have already stated, which is that the
extensive efforts of scholars to conceptualize and understand the effects of teacher clarity and
teacher immediacy have been worthwhile (Hines, et al., 1985; Waldeck, Kearney, & Plax, 2001).
However, the student’s perspective did not offer much insight into the dimension of teacher
listening and future research should explore ways to more effectively examine the teacher
listening process. As indicated in previous chapters, expert instructional communication took
effect primarily though teacher listening. The immediacy and clarity behaviors so frequently
recalled by the experts’ students were enacted as a direct result of a highly efficient instructional
listening process that, as illustrated by the findings presented in this chapter, was virtually
invisible to the student.

The conclusion of this chapter signifies that all of this study’s findings have been
reported and discussed. Having reached this juncture, it is important to reflect on what was
learned in the course of studying the instructional communication of expert and novice teachers.
A summary of the study’s findings and recommendations for future scholarship are provided in
the next chapter, the final leg of what has proven to be a remarkable journey.
CHAPTER 9
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to compare the instructional communication of expert and novice golf instructors. A conceptual model was drawn to frame teacher cognition and behavior from a communication perspective. Based on this model, five research questions, targeting presage, process, and product variables in teaching and learning, guided data collection and analysis. These questions included: (a) What are the communication concerns of expert and novice golf instructors? (b) How do the communication behaviors of experts and novices differ, (c) What is the relationship between the communication concerns and instructional behaviors of experts and novices, (d) How do experts’ and novices’ communication strategies differ, and (e) What do students recall the most about and perceive as the effects of expert and novice instructional communication with respect to their learning?

These research questions permitted the analysis to unfold in light of researcher, instructor, and student perspectives of the teaching-learning process as a communicative event. The findings relative to each research question were presented and discussed against the backdrop of research on instructional communication and research on expertise in teaching. In this final chapter, the findings will be summarized and recommendations forwarded for future scholarship aimed at unraveling the complexities of expertise and communication in instruction. The chapter is organized into five sections, each presenting a summary and offering recommendations with respect to a given research question.
Expert and Novice Communication Concerns

Communication concerns were identified for both the experts and the novices, indicating that both groups of instructors valued the role of communication in teaching. However, both quantitative and qualitative differences emerged in the analysis of expert and novice concerns. Overall, the experts expressed more (19) concerns than the novices (13). The primary focus of the experts’ concerns was on the impact of their communication on student learning, whereas the novices’ concerns mainly centered on the task of teaching. This finding is consistent with previous research on teachers’ concerns, which indicates that more experienced teachers are mostly concerned with student learning (e.g., Fuller, 1969; Fuller & Borich, 1974; Staton-Spicer & Bassett, 1979; Staton-Spicer & Marty-White, 1981).

Even though the novices also expressed a concern that was categorized as impact-related, a comparison of this concern with the experts’ impact concerns revealed a fundamental distinction separating the expert from the novice instructors. Namely, the experts impact concerns (e.g., increasing student learning through getting to know the student; developing student understanding of self to create ownership and confidence) reflected a different emphasis on learning than the novices’ (increasing student learning through getting the student to understand the teacher’s instructional messages). Whereas the novices were concerned about conveying their own perspective on and understanding of the content to the student, the experts’ were concerned with understanding the student so as to help the student understand themselves as learners in relation to the content.

From a theoretical standpoint, Fuller’s (1969) three-tier conceptual model of teacher’s concerns (self, task, and impact) was useful in interpreting and organizing expert and novice communication concerns in the present study. The expert-novice paradigm was also useful as a
framework for understanding the changing concerns of teachers with increasing experience. In terms of the methods used to collect and analyze concerns data, content analysis proved to be particularly helpful in differentiating expert from novice cognition, as well as in further conceptualizing the nature of teachers’ self, task, and impact concerns. Emerging trends revealed the underlying focus of the teachers’ concerns and highlighted the extensive and diverse range of concerns that might be categorized in a single tier.

A notable finding was that the novices’ expressed only two self-concerns, which seems to be inconsistent with previous studies indicating that beginning teachers typically harbor self-concerns more than task or impact concerns (e.g., Fuller & Borich, 1974; Staton-Spicer & Bassett, 1979). This finding suggests that future research examining teachers’ concerns should consider two methodological issues with respect to data collection. First, the methods used to solicit teachers’ concerns should be designed to maximize participant disclosure and produce data reflecting the fullest representation of concerns as possible. It is possible that the novice golf instructors felt embarrassed to admit certain self-concerns, such as those related to feelings of incompetence that have been reported in most previous research on the topic. Although the communication concerns questionnaire was a more discrete method than some of those used in the past (e.g., interviewing), other measures might be taken to increase participant comfort and candor (e.g., using an anonymous questionnaire over the Internet).

Second, in conducting expert-novice comparisons, researchers who choose to use an open-ended questionnaire to ask about teachers’ concerns, such as the one used in the present study, should be careful to design questions that target the instructional context through which important differences between experts and novices will emerge. Following Staton-Spicer & Marty-White’s (1981) design, the expert and novice golf instructors were asked about their
concerns related to their teaching and communication. However, this question does not specifically target concerns about teaching golf. Therefore, the novices concerns about teaching were mainly related to teaching school physical education. This could be another reason why the novices expressed fewer self concerns than might be expected, as they were thinking about their teaching and communication in relation to a context with which they were familiar. They were not considering their concerns when faced with new content and new instructional conditions.

**Expert and Novice Instructional Communication Behaviors**

The expert golf instructors used substantially more (177) communication behaviors when teaching than the novices (65). As well, the experts were more versatile in their employment of communication behaviors, demonstrating an ability to convey single messages in several different ways. At the heart of expert teaching was a tendency to communicate in a student-centered fashion. The experts communicated from the student’s perspective during instruction, whereas the novices communicated from their own perspective. Several of the different ways the experts’ communicated from the student perspective included matching student behaviors, using student words, and relating content to student’s goals. Most notably, the experts listened to their students through the use of an extensive range of behaviors, most of which were absent in the novices’ communication. Rather than striving to understand the student’s perspective as a learner, the novices made every effort to share their perspective of learning golf with their students. To do this, they used such behaviors as demonstrating, giving explicit explanations, and using personal experiences to demonstrate the importance of the content.

Both the expert and the novice instructors used communication behaviors that research in education and communication identify as effective (e.g., immediacy behaviors, clarity behaviors, etc.). However, it was discovered through content analysis that the experts used these behaviors
in different ways than the novices. For example, the experts and the novices both used immediacy behaviors when teaching, but the novices primarily provided positive verbal feedback and nonverbal behaviors to be immediate, whereas the experts primarily asked the student personal questions, disclosed personal information about themselves, and responded to the students’ immediacy behaviors to be immediate. Overall, it was concluded that novice communication was characterized by behaviors that were pre-arranged, self-centered, indirect, and impersonal. Conversely, the experts’ behaviors emerged as improvisational, student-centered, direct, and personal.

Several of the experts’ behaviors were found to be unique in relation to previous research on teaching. These included (a) responding to student immediacy behaviors to increase student perceptions of teacher immediacy, (b) gaining physical proximity to the student to be immediate, (c) physically positioning the student to be clear, (d) using student language to be clear, (e) using a flexible communicator style, and (f) stating how the content relates to the student’s future to make content relevant. Since no other studies have investigated listening in teaching, it cannot be determined if the experts’ listening behaviors are unique or rare in comparison to the instructional communication of effective teachers. It is clear, however, that listening was the cornerstone of expert teaching in the present study, and it was through the listening construct that the most punctuated differences between experts and novices surfaced. The experts principally attended to their students’ communication with heightened acuity and processed a great deal more information than the novices in drawing conclusions about student needs.

The constructs drawn from instructional communication research, including teacher immediacy, teacher clarity, teacher communicator style/socio-communication style, teacher use of humor, and the communication of content relevance, provided a useful conceptual model for
the study of teacher communication behaviors in sport instruction. This model was also helpful in highlighting differences between the instructional behaviors of expert and novice teachers. Though it was not a construct represented in the instructional communication literature, teacher listening was added to the framework in this study because some research suggests that listening is an important task in teaching (e.g., Clark & Peterson, 1986). The findings from the present study indicate that not only is listening an important teacher function, but it is perhaps the most important skill set a teacher can develop.

Inconsistencies were noted in the data collected through the novices’ telephone interviews as opposed to the student telephone interviews and the videotaped lessons. Similar to the issue regarding the novices’ communication concerns, these inconsistencies likely stemmed at least in part from the inconsistent focus of these different data collection methods. The teacher interviews focused on the instructors’ teaching experiences in general, whereas the student interviews and the videotape data focused specifically on the golf lesson each instructor taught for the study. Hence, in their telephone interviews, the novices primarily discussed their communication behaviors when teaching physical education, not when teaching golf. While the data from the telephone interviews helped to show how teachers might change their instructional communication behaviors based on their familiarity with the lesson content, this was not a focus of the study. As stated above in the section on expert and novice communication concerns, future research comparing experts and novices should develop and use data collection methods that target instruction in the context under question.

Future research should also consider examining expert communication from a relational, as opposed to a rhetorical, perspective (Motttet & Beebe, 2006). The finding that experts strive to be effective through shaping their communication behaviors in response to student language
and behavior suggests that further study is needed with respect to exploring communication as a transactional process. Studies of instructional communication, particularly expert instructional communication, should examine both teacher and student communication in the instructional environment. From a relational perspective, the interactive nature of communication will come into clearer focus and new meaning might be ascribed to teachers’ communication behaviors.

Relationship between Communication Concerns and Behaviors of Experts and Novices

A direct relationship was found between the concerns and the instructional behaviors of expert and novice teachers from a communication perspective. Corresponding communication behaviors were identified for the communication concerns experts and novices expressed in their questionnaires. However, the experts used more (26) behaviors to address each of their concerns than the novices (13). Linking concerns with behaviors served to support the findings relative to teacher communication concerns and behaviors when analyzed independently of one another. Experts were again shown to use a more student-centered approach to teaching than novices.

Studying teacher communication as a two-step process by relating concerns with behaviors lent insight into why teachers communicate as they do. Differences between expert and novice teaching were further explored and better defined through this instructional communication framework. Thus, instructional communication as a rhetorical process came into clearer view as the instructors’ concerns were revealed.

Expert and Novice Instructional Communication Strategies

Given previous research indicating that expert teachers store and engage more and richer strategies than novices (Housner & Griffey, 1985; Sanchez, Rosalez, & Canedo, 1999), the communication strategies of the expert and the novice golf instructors were investigated. As was found in the data relative to the instructors’ communication concerns and behaviors, the experts
used more (11) strategies to communicate effectively than the novices (8). Over the course of a lesson, the experts’ strategies were found to be highly interrelated, suggesting a clear pattern of instructional communication. Positioned against previous expertise research (e.g., Chase & Simon, 1973), this finding seems to suggest that experts’ communication strategies in teaching may stem from sophisticated knowledge structures built over years of experience in the domain.

Relationships among the novices’ communication strategies were less developed. Essentially, the experts set course and maintained a clear path to be effective as communicators when teaching. They first spent several minutes building rapport with and gathering information about the student, then established lesson goals based on this newly acquired knowledge of the student, communicated lesson content from the student’s perspective, and finally closed the lesson by reviewing key revelations experienced by the student during the lesson. Novice instructional communication played out more at random than according to any overarching plan—the only constant found in the novices’ communication strategies was a design to convey lesson content as clearly as possible from the perspective of the teacher.

A particularly noteworthy finding that resonates with the related literature on expert teaching (e.g., Griffey & Housner, 1991; Livingston & Borko, 1989; Sanchez, et al., 1999) is that despite following a definite pattern of communication, the experts found ways to improvise and adapt to the changing needs of their students. Most importantly, these teachers used their advanced listening skills to gather important information about their students and subsequently structure the lesson based on this information. Listening continued to function as a compass throughout the lesson and guide the teachers’ interactive decision-making in a direction that always aligned itself with the global communication plan indicated above.
Conceptualizing and examining teachers’ communication strategies added dimension and increased insight into the teacher communication process. Many of the communication goals of experts and novices differed from these teachers’ communication concerns, which indicates that a complete understanding of communication in instruction cannot be derived without bringing to light both of these presage variables and considering their relationship to the instructional process. Some of the instructors’ communication goals also paralleled their concerns, which suggests that further inquiry is needed to explore the possible relationship between concerns and goals in teaching.

The inconsistencies found in triangulating data sets with respect to the novices’ communication concerns and behaviors also emerged in analyzing the novices’ communication strategies. Novice communication strategies emerged differently through the analysis of stimulated recall data in comparison to the analysis of the instructor follow-up interviews. Again, these two data sources were based on designs with different focuses. Stimulated recall was designed to focus on the instructors’ communication strategies used to teach the videotaped golf lesson, whereas the follow-up interviews were designed to focus on the instructors’ communication strategies used to teach any lesson. In their follow-up interviews, the novices’ primarily discussed strategies they used when teaching physical education, but they did not use these strategies when teaching golf for the first time. Thus, instructional communication strategies, like concerns and behaviors, seem likely to change in relation to a teacher’s content knowledge.

Student Recall and Perceived Effects of Expert and Novice Instructional Communication

The final research question asked in the present study was framed by a process-product model of teaching that has informed instructional communication scholarship ever since the
inception of the discipline. Teacher communication behaviors were examined from the student perspective to examine the impact of expert and novice communication behaviors on student recall and perceived learning. Students of both the expert and the novice instructors were able to recall specific communication behaviors their teachers used during their golf lessons. Certain expert and novice communication behaviors left more of a lasting impression on students than others, particularly those related to teacher immediacy and teacher clarity. This finding punctuates what other research has consistently stressed, which is that immediacy and clarity in teaching are essential to student learning (e.g., Hines, Cruickshank, & Kennedy, 1985; Witt, Wheeless, & Allen, 2004).

Students of the expert and the novice instructors linked the teacher communication behaviors they recalled to a variety of perceived effects in relation to their learning. However, certain effects emerged as constants in relation to specific teacher behaviors, suggesting what teachers can do to increase a number of learning outcomes, such as increasing student comfort and increasing student understanding of teacher instruction. There was some evidence that the novices’ students may have preferred taking a lesson from an expert teacher. These students indicated they might have learned more if their teachers had used different communication behaviors (e.g., physically positioning the student to desired movement forms), which, incidentally, were found to be commonly used by the experts. It would be interesting to investigate what communication behaviors are perceived as most effective from the perspective of a student who has taken a lesson with both an expert and a novice teacher. Notably, the experts’ and the novices’ students were all able to recall the key points from their lessons, which suggests that neither group of teachers was more effective in terms of instructional clarity.
Student perceptions were useful in helping to define effective teaching behaviors in the present study, as well as in identifying expert and novice communication behaviors that are especially impression-leaving. However, students only recalled approximately one third of the teacher communication behaviors that were identified through triangulating the student interview data with the teacher telephone interviews and the videotaped lessons. This discrepancy could be due to limitations in student memory and attention. Students may only be able to remember a limited amount of teacher behaviors and also may only be able to attend to a limited amount of contextual information during instruction. As well, students could not have recalled several teacher behaviors involved with listening, such as those associated with perceiving and interpreting student communication and behavior, because these behaviors are enacted internally and are not visible to others. Thus, student perceptions, while useful in highlighting certain aspects of teacher communication, may also miss other aspects that are essential to teacher effectiveness. The study of teacher communication must include the various perspectives of the participants involved in the research process (i.e., the student(s), the researcher(s), and the teacher(s)).

Taken together, the findings from present study highlight several key differences between expert and novice teachers’ communication (see Table 9.1). These differences underscore the definitive characteristics of expert and novice instructional communication in golf.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study offered an initial glimpse into the teacher communication process at two levels of expertise within the context of sport instruction. New light has been shed on the way teachers and researchers choose to think about and explore the potential of instructional communication as an avenue to effective teaching and student learning. The
Table 9.1

*Key Differences between Expert and Novice Instructional Communication*

- Experts harbored more concerns, used more behaviors, and engaged more strategies as communicators in relation to their teaching.

- Experts’ communication concerns mainly centered on listening well enough to help the student meet her or his learning needs. Novices’ were mainly concerned about clearly communicating their knowledge of golf.

- Experts communicated in multiple ways to convey a single message. Novices communicated in limited ways to convey many messages.

- Experts dedicated considerable lesson time to building rapport with the student. Novices dedicated most of their lesson time to taking care of business (i.e., teaching lesson content).

- Experts demonstrated more skillful listening when teaching than novices.

- Experts relied on information gathered from the student to shape their immediacy, clarity, style, humor, and relevance behaviors. Novices relied on their knowledge of the content, experiences as physical education teachers, and experiences as learners in relation to the content to shape their communication behaviors.

- Experts used more communication behaviors when teaching than the novices to address each of their communication concerns.

- Experts set communication goals that reflected the student-centered focus of their concerns and behaviors. Novices set goals that were mainly aimed at communicating what they knew and understood in relation to the content, although some novice goals reflected an intention to know the student better as a means toward increasing instructional effectiveness.

- Experts used behaviors when teaching golf to reach all of their communication goals. Novices used behaviors when teaching golf to reach their goals in regard to communicating clearly, but not in regard to developing an understanding of the student.

- Experts’ communication strategies were engaged to fulfill an overarching communication plan defined by four well-developed stages of instructional communication when teaching golf. Novices’ communication strategies were engaged to fulfill only one identifiable purpose when teaching golf: to be clear.
purpose of the study was not to prove that expert teachers are better than novices, but rather to understand the characteristics of expert and novice teachers’ instruction from a communication perspective. The findings indicated that experts and novices both strove to be better communicators when teaching, except in different ways. In essence, novices strove to be understood and experts strove to understand. It is this distinction that seemed to delineate expert from novice instructional communication at its most basic level.

In the introduction to this dissertation, the point was made that periodic reviews of a particular body of literature reveal the central findings of a discipline of study. At times, however, it is even more useful to consider the bases of knowledge from several disciplines in search of fundamental truths. The present study emerged at the intersection of two paths of scholarship, each led by different questions and yet in search of a common answer. Whether it is instructional communication or instructional expertise that is at the center of scholarly focus, the sustenance by which researchers continue their respective journeys is found in the hope that they might discover the essence of effective teaching. By bringing a communication perspective to the study of expert and novice teaching, this study offered a glimpse into the heart of teacher effectiveness. The image that emerged was not one of outstanding differences between experts and novices regarding the ability to use recommended practices in teaching or even to create perceptions of learning in students. Rather, the central divide separating expert from novice teaching was found in the ability to personalize instruction. The implication from this finding is that truly exceptional pedagogy has less to with effectively teaching content and more to do with effectively teaching students. Educationists searching for critical elements of teacher effectiveness may find direction in the study of human relationships.
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APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORMS
INSTRUCTOR CONSENT FORM

I, _________________________________, agree to participate in a research study titled "Instructional Communication in Golf" directed by Dr. Paul Schempp, Sport Instruction Research Laboratory, Department of Physical Education and Sport Studies, 300 River Rd., University of Georgia, Athens, GA. 30602, Tel: (706) 542-4210. I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty.

The following points have been explained to me:

1) The reason for this study is to examine the instructional communication concerns, behaviors, and strategies of golf instructors.

The benefits for me in this study include gaining an enhanced perspective of my instructional communication as an important part of my teaching. By sharing and discussing with the investigator my communication concerns, behaviors, and strategies, I can develop an increased awareness of the ways I think about and utilize communication for instructional purposes, which will help me to identify avenues toward advancing my teaching.

2) If I volunteer to take part in this study, the procedures are as follows:

I will (a) complete two questionnaires, one pertaining to my teaching background and the other pertaining to my communication concerns, (b) teach a 30-45 minute lesson while a researcher videotapes it (videotaping is required for purposes of data analysis; if the instructor wishes not to be videotaped, she should not volunteer to participate in the study), (c) answer interview questions about my instructional communication, as captured on video, through a 30 minute process of audio taped stimulated recall, and (d) answer questions about my instructional communication via a 30 minute audio taped telephone interview.

3) The discomforts or stresses that I may be faced with during this research are: None

4) Participation entails the following risks: None

5) The results of this participation will not be anonymous, but will be confidential. There will be no harmful use of the data collected in this study. Video and audio tapes will be used by the investigator, co-investigators and other members of the Sport Instruction Research Laboratory and will be permanently stored in the Sport Instruction Research Laboratory.

The investigator will answer any questions about the research, now or during the course of the project (706-542-4210; cweb@uga.edu).

I give my permission for the researchers to disseminate the results of the investigation as part of a dissertation study and defense, a published manuscript and/or a presentation at sport- and physical education-related conferences.

Circle one: YES / NO. Initial ________.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will retain a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

______________________________________________  ______________________  _________
Name of Researcher  Signature  Date

Telephone: ________________  Email: ____________________________

______________________________________________  ______________________  _________
Name of Participant  Signature  Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to Benilda Pooser, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu
STUDENT CONSENT FORM

I, _________________________________, agree to participate in a research study titled "Instructional Communication in Golf" directed by Dr. Paul Schempp, Sport Instruction Research Laboratory, Department of Physical Education and Sport Studies, 300 River Rd., University of Georgia, Athens, GA. 30602, Tel: (706) 542-4210. I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty.

The following points have been explained to me:

1) The reason for this study is to examine the instructional communication concerns, behaviors, and strategies of golf instructors.

   The benefits for me in this study include receiving a free golf lesson and gaining an enhanced perspective of my learning style within an instructional environment. Through my participation in this study, I will have the opportunity to learn something new about playing golf and about how a teacher’s communication is important in regard to my learning.

2) If I volunteer to take part in this study, the procedures are as follows:

   I will (a) receive a free 30-45 minute lesson from a golf teacher while a researcher videotapes it (videotaping is required for purposes of data analysis; if the student wishes not to be videotaped, she should not volunteer to participate in the study) and (b) complete a 30 minute audio taped follow-up telephone interview pertaining to my teacher’s instructional communication and its impact on my learning.

3) The discomforts or stresses that I may be faced with during this research are: None

4) Participation entails the following risks: None

5) The results of this participation will not be anonymous, but will be confidential. There will be no harmful use of the data collected in this study. Video and audio tapes will be used by the investigator, co-investigators and other members of the Sport Instruction Research Laboratory and will be permanently stored in the Sport Instruction Research Laboratory.

The investigator will answer any questions about the research, now or during the course of the project (706-542-4210).

I give my permission for the researchers to disseminate the results of the investigation as part of a dissertation study and defense, a published manuscript and/or a presentation at sport- and physical education-related conferences.

   Circle one: YES / NO. Initial ____.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will retain a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

Name of Researcher __________________________ Signature __________________________ Date __________
Telephone: __________________________
Email: __________________________

Name of Participant __________________________ Signature __________________________ Date __________

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to Benilda Pooser, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu
APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRES
Instructor Background Questionnaire

Name: _____________________________________________ Date: _______________

Employer’s Name: _________________________ Address: _______________________

City: _________________________ State: __________ Zip Code: __________________

Phone: ___________________ FAX: _______________ Email: ____________________

Date of Birth: ____________ Place of Birth: ____________________ Race: _________

Educational Background: ___________________________________________________

Number of Years Teaching Golf: ____Average # of Lessons per Week____

Average # of Hours per Week Teaching: ____less than 20____20-35____45+

Teaching Formats: ____individual lessons ____group lessons ____golf schools

Golf Instruction Certifications _______________________________________________

Teaching-related Honors/Awards (if any):______________________________________

What percentage of your lessons are: ____individual ____ group____ school

In the last three years, which books have been the most helpful for your teaching? ______

What other information sources do you find helpful in your teaching?_______________

Which conferences, workshops or seminars have you attended in the past 2 years: ______

Identify the most significant influences on your teaching:__________________________

Students of Note:__________________________________________________________

Describe your past golf playing experience: ____________________________________
Teacher Communication Concerns Questionnaire

Directions: Please answer the following (use back if needed):

When you think about your teaching and communication, what are your concerns?
APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS
Stimulated Recall Interview Protocol

1. What are you doing in this segment and why? What were you trying to convey to the student?

2. What were you noticing about the students? How were they responding?

3. Were you thinking of any alternative actions or strategies at that time? Did you consider alternative or multiple forms of communication (e.g., demonstrations, metaphors, questions)?
**Instructor Telephone Interview**

1. Think of a person you believe is a superb communicator. What characteristics does this person have that make her/him such an effective communicator?

2. How conscious are you of what you sound/look like when you are teaching?
   
   a. What aspects of your communication do you monitor?

3. What do you believe are your communication strengths as a teacher?
   
   a. What are your limitations?

4. A large part of communication is nonverbal. Describe the role your nonverbal behaviors play in your teaching.
   
   a. Do you think your students see you as approachable or distant? Explain.
   b. Do they see you as warm and caring or indifferent? Explain.

5. Discuss ways that you ensure that you are a clear communicator when teaching.
   
   a. Think back to the last lesson you gave. What did you say and/or do to get the main points across to your student?

6. We can easily identify Van Gogh’s paintings or Hemingway’s novels by their unique styles. Similarly, teachers have distinct communication styles when they teach. Describe the characteristics of your communication style as a teacher.
   
   a. What words would you use to describe your communication style when teaching?
   b. Give me an example from your teaching that supports the words you chose.

7. Describe the role humor plays in your teaching.
   
   a. Tell me about a specific time when you used humor when teaching.
   
   b. How was your use of humor helpful to the student? Was it at all harmful? If so, how?

8. When you are teaching, what do you say or do that makes the information you are conveying meaningful to the student?
   
   a. Give me an example from a recent lesson you taught.

9. Do you consider yourself a good listener when teaching?
   
   a. If so, what makes you a good listener (e.g., do you make eye-contact, encourage questions, answer questions, etc.)? If not, explain.
b. How do you know when students understand (or don’t understand) what you are telling/showing them?

c. What other aspects of the student’s communication do you listen to/monitor?

d. How do these student behaviors affect your teaching?
Student Telephone Interview

1. Describe your golf teacher.

2. What was it like taking a lesson with your teacher? How did she make you feel?
   a. What did she say or do to make your feel that way?

3. What are your most vivid memories of your teacher’s communication traits? What’s she like as a communicator?

4. Describe your teacher’s body language.
   a. What stood out the most?
   b. What other nonverbal behaviors did your teacher exhibit?

5. What were the main points your teacher wanted you to get from your golf lesson?
   a. What was she trying to convey more than anything else?

6. What did your teacher say or do that most helped you learn the main points of the lesson?
   a. What made these things helpful to you?

7. Was it easy to understand your teacher’s explanations/instructions? Why or why not? (e.g., did she speak clearly, use examples, demonstrate, use physical manipulation, etc.)

8. What words would you use to describe your teacher’s communication style? (Open, relaxed, impression-leaving, friendly, dramatic, dominant, etc.)
   a. Give me an example from your lesson to support each word you chose.

9. Was your teacher funny? If so, in what way(s)?
   a. Did her use of humor help you learn golf? If so, how?

10. Did your teacher say or do anything during the lesson that made a particular point especially meaningful to you? Explain.

11. Describe your teacher as a listener based on your experience taking a lesson with her.
   a. Give me some examples from your lesson to justify your answer.

12. What could your teacher have done to communicate more effectively with you?
Instructor Follow-Up Interview

1. In analyzing your communication concerns questionnaire, it seems that the biggest concern you have about your teaching and communication is __________. Is that correct?
   
   a. How does this concern manifest in your teaching? (What do you do or say when teaching to address this concern?)
   
   b. Other concerns you expressed in your questionnaire were __________. How do these concerns manifest in your teaching?

2. What are your goals as a communicator when you teach?
   
   a. If you had to rank order those goals, where would you put them from first to last in terms of priority?
   
   b. What do you intentionally do or say when teaching to reach each of those goals?
   
   c. Over the course of a lesson, do you feel there a typical order in which your communication goals must be met? If yes, explain.