

Teacher Immediacy, Student-Instructor Relationships and the Development of Learner
Autonomy: A Longitudinal Study
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Although some scholars view learner autonomy as a disposition, it has been documented across all grade levels that this achievement orientation is amenable to change in individual classroom settings. In the present study, we monitored changes in learner autonomy based on verbal and nonverbal messages communicated by instructors to students (i.e., teacher immediacy) and the development of the student-instructor relationship. It was our prediction that highly immediate instructors would possess students who would eventually feel highly connected to them and such students would ultimately develop the confidence to become more autonomous learners. These predictions were tested via the assessment of teacher immediacy, student-instructor relationships and emerging learner autonomy in a single, randomly determined class over the course of a semester involving a collegiate sample ($N = 90$). Our presentation will focus on the study design, the specific methods used to assess the study variables, and some surprising insights to how learner autonomy changes for the better or worse based on instructor behaviors.