

The Relationship Between Teacher Management Communication Style and Affective Learning

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An examination of the relationship between Teacher Management Communication Style (TMCS) and affective learning revealed that TMCS and affective learning were significantly positively correlated. TMCS and nonverbal immediacy were also positively correlated, as were nonverbal immediacy and affective learning. A multiple linear regression analysis performed on these data showed a substantial multiple correlation ($R = .45$, $F(2, 94) = 11.63$, $p < .05$) between affective learning and both TMCS and nonverbal immediacy. While nonverbal immediacy had a substantial impact on affective learning when controlling for the effect of TMCS, TMCS did not impact affective learning when controlling for the effect of nonverbal immediacy. Finally, higher frequencies of a student's class attendance was associated with increased affective learning, while the number of students enrolled in the class, teacher type, and student age did not impact affective learning.

KEY CONCEPTS teacher management communication style, affective learning, nonverbal immediacy, leadership, decision-making

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Affective learning, one domain of learning identified by Bloom (1956), is defined as "an increasing internalization of positive attitudes toward the content or subject matter" (Kearney, 1994, p. 81). Affect ranges from selective attention and emotional response to behavioral commitment and internalization of ideas (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964). Furthermore, affective learning leads to motivation to learn and to use what is learned after the student has left the classroom. This potential of affective learning to influence behavior subsequent to the formal instruction years deems researching affective learning important.

Variables such as nonverbal immediacy, verbal immediacy, teacher power use,

and perceived teacher communicator style have been shown to impact the affective learning domain (Andersen, 1978; Andersen, Norton, & Nussbaum, 1981; Christophel, 1990; Gorham, 1988; Gorham & Zakahi, 1990; Kearney & McCroskey, 1980; Nussbaum & Scott, 1979; Plax, Kearney, McCroskey, & Richmond, 1986; Richmond, Gorham, & McCroskey, 1987; Richmond & McCroskey, 1984; Sanders & Wiseman, 1990). Related to these constructs, but drawn from the organizational literature, are the concepts of Management Communication Style (MCS) (Richmond & McCroskey, 1979) and employee satisfaction. A supervisor's MCS may range from being very superior-centered (superior makes all the decisions and tells them to subordinates) to being very subordinate-centered (subordinates take part in almost all the decision-making). As the superior's MCS becomes more subordinate-centered, employee satisfaction tends to increase (Richmond & McCroskey, 1979; Richmond, McCroskey, & Davis, 1982).

Viewing the teacher as the superior and students as the subordinates, organizational concepts such as MCS and subordinate satisfaction should operate in the classroom in much the same way as they do in the workplace. For example, compared to teachers with less student-centered styles, teachers with more student-centered leadership and decision-making styles should generate more student affective learning, the instructional setting's analog to employee satisfaction. The research on collaborative learning lends support to this reasoning. Collaborative learning models suggest that learning is enhanced when students take an active role in their education and assume greater responsibility for their educational development (Mallinger, 1998). Involving students in course-related decision-making is one way in which they may take a more active role in their education.

This study was motivated by the potential for teachers' leadership and decision-making styles to impact student affective learning, affective learning's ability to influence behavior beyond the classroom, and the positive outcomes associated with collaborative learning (Mallinger, 1998; Thomchick, 1997). Specifically, the relationship between teacher management communication style (TMCS) and student affective learning is examined here. As alluded to previously, applying organizational concepts to the classroom setting seems plausible when the classroom is considered an organization.

CLASSROOM AS AN ORGANIZATION

Richmond and McCroskey (1992, p. 2) define an organization as "an organized collection of individuals working interdependently within a relatively structured, organized, open system to achieve common goals". Based upon this definition, the college classroom may be viewed as an organization. Teachers and students are both working toward the same goal — learning — and both need each other for that goal to be achieved. This process takes place within a structured higher education system, which is organized and open to communication from individuals outside the educational system. Given that the classroom is an organization, the extension of concepts relating to organizations, but not yet tested in the classroom, is warranted. The organizational concept of Management Communication Style (MCS) is one such concept not yet applied to the classroom environment. MCS is related to the concept of trait-like communication behaviors, but was developed from the organizational literature on leadership and decision-making styles, both of which are discussed in the next section.

COMMUNICATOR AND LEADERSHIP STYLES

Communicator Style

Norton (1978) suggested that individuals have habitual patterns (styles) of communicating with one another, and varying styles have a large effect on the manner in which individuals are perceived in their communication environments. An individual's habitual pattern of communicating is known as his/her communication style. One's communication style may be constant in one context, but can change across contexts. The context of present concern is the organizational environment.

Leadership Styles

Within the organizational environment, one may encounter varying types of leadership styles. Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1958) suggested a seven-step continuum of organizational leadership styles ranging from extremely superior-centered to extremely subordinate-centered. Employees' participation in decision-making increases and the supervisor's sole authority in decision-making decreases as one moves toward the subordinate-centered end of the continuum.

Related to Tannenbaum and Schmidt's (1958) leadership continuum is McGregor's (1960) leadership types of Theory X and Theory Y. Theory X leadership is autocratic, whereas Theory Y leadership is democratic. Likert's (1961, 1967) participative decision management (PDM) theory extends McGregor's leadership types to a similar four-step continuum of management styles. System one, the exploitive authoritative style, is characterized by employees' low involvement in decision-making and avoidance of communication with superiors. System two, the benevolent authoritative, involves superiors still making most of the decisions, with a few decisions being delegated to subordinates. The third system, the consultative style, is characterized by employees' high participation in decision-making, though the major decisions are still made exclusively by management. The fourth system, the participative style, involves employees' high participation in decision-making and open communication among all organizational members.

Similar to the previous organizational leadership and decision-making styles and theories, and forming the basis of Management Communication Style, are the four styles of leadership suggested by the *Styles of leadership* film (1962): *tells*, *sells*, *consults*, and *joins*. As one moves from the *tells* to the *joins* orientation, decision-making becomes more participative throughout the organization. Sadler (1970) found that employees most frequently preferred the *consults* style and associated a high level of satisfaction with this style.

MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION STYLE

Upon examination of the previous leadership styles and their presumed relationship to communicator style, Richmond and McCroskey (1979) advanced the concept of Management Communication Style (MCS). A supervisor's MCS is a function of his/her own communication style and the management style imposed upon the individual by the organization (or chosen by the individual within the boundaries of the organization). Management Communication Styles are viewed as falling upon a continuum ranging from extremely superior-centered (in which the supervisor makes all decisions and simply reports them to subordinates) to extremely subordinate-centered (in which employees participate in virtually all decision-making). In addition, as one moves from the *tell* MCS through the *sell* and *consult*

orientations, toward the *join* MCS, interaction among superiors and subordinates increases.

MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION STYLE AND SATISFACTION

The type of MCS in which a supervisor engages has been shown to be predictive of subordinate satisfaction with various aspects of work. For example, Richmond and McCroskey (1979) found that employee satisfaction, especially employee satisfaction with supervision, increased as a function of a more subordinate-centered MCS. The obtained correlation between MCS and satisfaction with supervision was .46. The correlation between MCS and satisfaction with work was .28 and the correlation between MCS and satisfaction with promotions was .17.

In a related study, Richmond et al. (1982) found similar results with a sample consisting of teachers, supervisors in a manufacturing organization, bank managers, cashiers, tellers, and upper management employees in the federal reserve system. For all four samples, significant positive correlations were obtained between MCS and satisfaction with supervision. With the teacher and banker samples a significant positive correlation was also observed between MCS and satisfaction with work. In addition, significant positive correlations were observed between MCS and satisfaction with promotion for the banker sample and MCS and satisfaction with coworkers for the teacher and service sample. Overall, as MCS became more employee-centered, employee satisfaction increased.

While most of this research focused on a more global perception of supervisor MCS, Downs (1992) investigated MCS in the more specific context of the performance appraisal interview. Downs' research indicated that subordinates' perceptions of MCS use during an appraisal interview and communication satisfaction with that interview were significantly and positively correlated ($r = .63$). In short, as MCS becomes more employee-centered, involving more subordinate participation in decision-making and more interaction among all organizational members, subordinate satisfaction increases.

MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION STYLE AND THE CLASSROOM

Though MCS and its relationship with satisfaction/affect has not been previously investigated within the organization of the classroom, Norton's (1978) notion of communicator style has been studied in this particular context. According to Sallinen-Kuparinen (1992), a teacher's communicator style, as defined by Norton (1978), is how a teacher verbally and nonverbally interacts "to signal how literal meaning should be taken, interpreted, filtered, or understood" (Norton, 1978, p. 99). Furthermore, teacher communicator style's effect on affective learning has also been examined.

Kearney and McCroskey (1980) reported that students' perceptions of teacher assertiveness, responsiveness, and versatility were positively correlated with affective (and behavioral) learning. In addition, a positive correlation between perceived communicator style and affective learning (*canonical* $r = .55$) has been reported (Andersen et al., 1981). Though MCS and its relationship with affective learning have not been studied within the classroom, the related construct of communicator style and its relationship with affective learning have been investigated. Based on the research indicating positive correlations between MCS and subordinate satisfaction and perceived communicator style and affective learning, the following hypothesis is put forth:

H: Teacher Management Communication Style (TMCS) and student affective learning will be directly related.

Students who perceive their teachers as employing more of a *join* MCS (participative decision-making, high interaction between teacher and students) will report higher affective learning regarding that teacher's class than will those students who perceive their teachers as using more of a *tell* orientation.

METHOD

Sample

Participants (N = 108) were drawn from undergraduate communication studies classes at West Virginia University. These participants reported on teacher behaviors and affective learning for a wide variety of content areas. Fifty-three males (49.1%) and 55 females (50.9%) participated in the study. The average age of participants was 19.8 years old (SD = 1.7), with an age range of 18 years to 26 years. Sixteen participants did not sufficiently complete the surveys, therefore they were dropped from analysis. Participation was voluntary and took place during regular class time. Minimal extra class credit was granted for participation.

Measures

Teacher Management Communication Style (TMCS). TMCS was measured using an adapted version of an instrument originally developed by Richmond and McCroskey (1979) to measure MCS. The TMCS measure is a 19-point continuum ranging from Tell (10) through Sell (16), through Consult (22), to Join (28). Descriptions of each MCS and the corresponding communication and decision-making behaviors (adapted to pertain to the classroom) were included. Participants were asked to circle on the continuum the MCS of the teacher of the class they attended immediately prior to the class in which data collection occurred. The MCS instrument has a test-retest reliability of .85 (Richmond & McCroskey, 1979) and .88 (Downs & Downs, 1989). Validity for the MCS measure has also been reported (Downs & Downs, 1989).

Affective learning. Affective learning was assessed using the Affective Learning Scale, a semantic differential scale originally developed by Scott and Wheelless (1975) and later revised by Andersen (1979). The participants were asked to complete the scale based on the class they attended immediately prior to the class in which data collection occurred. The alpha reliability estimates have ranged from a low of .86 to a high of .98 (Gorham, 1988; Kearney & McCroskey, 1980; Kearney, Plax, & Wendt-Wasco, 1985; Plax, et al., 1986; Richmond, 1990). Validity of the Affective Learning Scale has also been demonstrated (see Kearney, 1994).

Nonverbal immediacy. Nonverbal immediacy was also assessed because it has consistently been linked to affective learning (Andersen, 1978; Plax et al., 1986; Sanders & Wiseman, 1990). Nonverbal immediacy was measured by a 10-item revised version of the Nonverbal Immediacy Behaviors Instrument (Andersen, 1979; Richmond et al., 1987). The specific measure used in the present study was a 10-item revised version of the nonverbal immediacy scale used by McCroskey, Barracough, Fayer, Richmond, and Sallinen (1995). In the present study item nine of that scale was changed from "Smiles at individual students in the class" to "Frowns at individual students in the class." The nonverbal immediacy measure assesses students' perceptions of teachers' physical or psychological closeness by identifying approach-

avoidance behaviors. The original Richmond et al. (1987) instrument has a reliability ranging from .73 to .89 (Christophel, 1990; Gorham, 1988; Gorham & Zakahi, 1990; Richmond et al., 1987). Validity of that scale has also been demonstrated (see Kearney, 1994). An alpha reliability of .85 for American students for this revised version of the scale has also been reported (McCroskey et al., 1995).

RESULTS

Measures

The mean score on the affective learning scale was 107.6 ($SD = 23.7$, $N = 108$). The scores ranged from 36 to 140. Cronbach's alpha for the affective learning scale was .94. The mean score of the Teacher Management Communication Style (TMCS) scale was 18.8 ($SD = 5.4$, $N = 97$). The scores ranged from 10 to 28. The mean score on the nonverbal immediacy scale was 28.8 ($SD = 6.6$, $N = 108$). The scores ranged from five to 40. Cronbach's alpha for the nonverbal immediacy scale was .81. Table 1 summarizes these results.

TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations, Minimum Scores, Maximum Scores, and Alpha Reliabilities of Measures

Measure	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Alpha
Affective Learning	107.6	23.7	36	140	.94
TMCS	18.8	5.4	10	28	---
Nonverbal Immediacy	28.8	6.6	5	40	.81

SD = Standard Deviation, Min = Minimum Score, Max = Maximum Score, and Alpha = Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha.

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis predicted that Teacher Management Communication Style (TMCS) and affective learning would be positively correlated. Results indicate that TMCS and affective learning were indeed positively correlated at a statistically significant level ($r = .28$, $p < .05$). As TMCS became more student-centered, affective learning increased. The hypothesis was therefore confirmed.

Post hoc Analyses

Upon examination of the data, many relationships about which no a priori hypotheses had been made seemed likely to exist. Therefore, several post hoc analyses were conducted.

Significant correlations. Nonverbal immediacy and TMCS were positively correlated at a statistically significant level ($r = .43$, $p < .05$). As TMCS became more student-centered, teacher nonverbal immediacy increased. Nonverbal immediacy and affective learning were also positively correlated at a statistically significant level ($r = .43$, $p < .05$). As teacher nonverbal immediacy increased, student affective learning also increased. Finally, frequency of class attendance and affective learning were significantly correlated ($r = .41$, $p < .05$). Increased class attendance was associated with higher affective learning scores.

Nonsignificant correlations. Correlations were also computed between several other variables, though none of these correlations reached statistical significance. Correlating student age and affective learning ($r = -.01$), the number of students

enrolled and affective learning ($r = -.05$), and teacher type and affective learning ($r = .02$) did not yield statistically significant results. The correlations for affective learning appear in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Correlations between Affective Learning and TMCS, Nonverbal Immediacy, Frequency of Attendance, Student Age, Students Enrolled, and Teacher Type

	Affective Learning	
TMCS	$r = .28$	($p < .05, n = 97$)
Nonverbal Immediacy	$r = .43$	($p < .05, n = 108$)
Frequency of Attendance	$r = .41$	($p < .05, n = 108$)
Student Age	$r = -.01$	($ns, n = 108$)
Students Enrolled	$r = -.05$	($ns, n = 108$)
Teacher Type	$r = .02$	($ns, n = 108$)

Also nonsignificant were the correlations between Teacher Management Communication Style (TMCS) and the following: number of students enrolled ($r = -.17$), frequency of class attendance ($r = -.04$), and teacher type ($r = .03$). Table 3 displays the correlations between TMCS and these variables.

TABLE 3
Correlations between Teacher Management Communication Style (TMCS) and Frequency of Attendance, Students Enrolled, and Teacher Type

	Teacher Management Communication Style (TMCS)	
Frequency of Attendance	$r = -.04$	($ns, n = 97$)
Students Enrolled	$r = -.17$	($ns, n = 97$)
Teacher Type	$r = .03$	($ns, n = 97$)

Nonverbal Immediacy and TMCS's Effect on Affective Learning

To assess the effect of nonverbal immediacy and TMCS on affective learning, a regression analysis was performed on these data. This analysis produced a substantial and statistically significant multiple correlation ($R = .45, F(2, 94) = 11.63, p < .05$) between affective learning and both TMCS and nonverbal immediacy. Inspection of the standardized regression coefficients indicated that nonverbal immediacy had a substantial and statistically significant impact on affective learning when controlling for the effect of TMCS ($\beta = .39, t(94) = 3.76, p < .05$), but that TMCS had a non-significant impact on affective learning when controlling for the effect of nonverbal immediacy ($\beta = .12, t(94) = 1.10, ns$).

Analyses of Variance (ANOVA)

A oneway ANOVA with frequency of class attendance as the independent variable and affective learning as the dependent variable was conducted. The frequency of attendance variable contained three categories: always attend ($n = 60$), attend most of the time ($n = 42$), and occasionally/rarely attend ($n = 6$). The third category was derived by collapsing the original categories of occasionally attend ($n = 5$), rarely attend ($n = 1$), and never attend ($n = 0$). The ANOVA revealed a significant effect ($F[2, 105] = 10.94, p < .05$). A comparison of these differences revealed that

participants who always attend the class have higher affective learning scores ($M = 114.17$) than those who attend the class most of the time ($M = 103.21$) ($p < .05$), and these individuals who attend class most of the time have higher affective learning scores than those who attend the class occasionally/rarely ($M = 73.50$) ($p < .05$). In addition, frequency of attendance accounted for 17.2% of the variance in affective learning.

Three additional oneway ANOVAs were conducted with affective learning as the dependent variable and number of students enrolled, teacher type, and student age as the independent variables. The number of students enrolled variable contained four levels: zero to 30 students ($n = 30$), 31 to 50 students ($n = 27$), 51 to 100 students ($n = 14$), and 101 or more students ($n = 29$). This fourth category was derived by collapsing the original categories of 101 to 200 students ($n = 20$) and 201 or more students ($n = 9$). The ANOVA revealed no significant effect for number of students enrolled on affective learning ($F [3, 104] = 0.46$). The teacher type independent variable contained three levels: professor ($n = 60$), lecturer ($n = 14$), and graduate assistant/other ($n = 34$), the last of which was composed of the original two categories grad assistant ($n = 26$) and other ($n = 8$). There was no statistically significant effect for teacher type on affective learning ($F [2, 105] = 0.00$). Finally, the age variable contained five levels: 18 years ($n = 26$), 19 years ($n = 30$), 20 years ($n = 21$), 21 years ($n = 14$), and over 21 years ($n = 17$). Again, the ANOVA yielded no statistically significant effect for student age on affective learning ($F [4, 103] = 0.14$). Table 4 displays the ANOVA results.

TABLE 4
ANOVAs with Frequency of Attendance, Students Enrolled, Teacher Type, and Student Age as Grouping Variables and Affective Learning as the Dependent Variable

	Affective Learning	
Frequency of Attendance	$F(2, 105) = 10.94,$	$p < .05$
Students Enrolled	$F(3, 104) = 0.46,$	ns
Teacher Type	$F(2, 105) = 0.00,$	ns
Student Age	$F(4, 103) = 0.14,$	ns

DISCUSSION

Teacher Management Communication Style (TMCS) and affective learning were positively correlated at a statistically significant level, confirming the hypothesis. As TMCS became more student-centered (communication became more interactive between teacher and students and student participation in decision-making increased), student affective learning increased. This finding is consistent with the underlying philosophy of collaborative learning and with previous MCS research. As MCS becomes more employee-centered, employee satisfaction with supervision, work, and promotions increases (Richmond & McCroskey, 1979; Richmond et al., 1982), as does satisfaction with communication (Downs, 1992). Accordingly, as TMCS becomes more student-centered, student evaluation of course instructor, content, recommended behaviors, and likelihood of enrolling in a similar course also increases.

Post hoc analyses revealed that teacher nonverbal immediacy and TMCS were significantly positively correlated. Higher teacher nonverbal immediacy is associated with higher TMCS. A possible explanation for this relationship is that higher levels of TMCS (e.g., asking for student input in decision-making) is a verbal component of immediacy. In addition, teachers perceived as nonverbally immediate are most likely

perceived as interested in their students. Interested teachers want to hear their students' views and ideas regarding decisions, thus, nonverbally immediate teachers are perceived as using a more student-centered TMCS.

Teacher nonverbal immediacy and affective learning also exhibited a significant positive correlation. As nonverbal immediacy increases, affective learning increases. While this relationship has been demonstrated numerous times (Andersen, 1978, 1979; Kearney et al., 1985; Plax et al., 1986; Sanders & Wiseman, 1990), it is of importance here because it provides validation for the revised version of the nonverbal immediacy scale used in the present study.

In addition to both TMCS and teacher nonverbal immediacy being positively correlated with student affective learning, the regression analysis revealed a substantial multiple correlation ($R = .45$) between affective learning and both TMCS and nonverbal immediacy. While nonverbal immediacy had a substantial impact on affective learning when controlling for the effect of TMCS, TMCS did not impact affective learning when controlling for the effect of nonverbal immediacy. Again, teacher nonverbal immediacy emerges as the most influential factor in student affective learning.

Frequency of class attendance and affective learning were also significantly correlated. The more often the student attended the class, the higher the student's affective learning. In addition, a oneway ANOVA with frequency of class attendance as the independent variable and affective learning as the dependent variable revealed a significant effect. The pattern of means indicates that those who always attend the class have the highest affective learning scores, followed by those who attend the class most of the time, and finally, those who attend the class occasionally/rarely. The positive relationship between attendance and affective learning may seem obvious - student likes the class, student goes to class. An alternative, however, is that attending the class often, giving the content and the instructor a chance, and familiarizing oneself with the content and instructor leads to liking the class and instructor more, and hence, more affective learning. The potential mutual causality of this relationship deserves further investigation.

Student age, number of students enrolled in the class, and teacher type were not related to affective learning. The oneway ANOVAs conducted with these revealed no significant differences. Student age, number of students enrolled, and teacher type cannot be expected to impact affective learning. This finding is important because economics warrant that relatively untrained instructors (e.g., graduate assistants) teach large introductory level courses. At the introductory level, affective learning is of the utmost importance because it drives behavioral choices (McCroskey, 1992), such as taking another course in the same subject. If students do not like this first introductory level course (likely to be taught by a graduate assistant and/or likely to be a large class), they will not enroll in courses of related content later on in their academic careers.

The results here indicate that neither the number of students in a class nor the type of teacher (graduate assistant, lecturer, or professor) impacts student affective learning. If these results can be replicated at other institutions, it may be that administrators and department chairs could rest assured that affective learning will not suffer by assigning inexperienced graduate assistants to teach and by offering classes in large sections. Neither appears to impact affective learning.

Also nonsignificant were the correlations between TMCS and the number of students enrolled, frequency of class attendance, and teacher type. The finding that

number of students enrolled and TMCS were not related suggests that being a student in a large class does not necessarily mean that the student will have no input in class decision-making. Students in large classes may be asked for their opinions on a regular basis. This is encouraging for students of large classes who may have the preconception that they will be "only a number" and will not have any control over class proceedings.

CONCLUSION

Because most long-term educational goals are based on appropriate student affective learning (McCroskey, 1992), examining the communication variables that impact affective learning is of great importance to the communication and education fields. The present study revealed that teacher nonverbal immediacy, student-centered Teacher Management Communication Style, and higher frequencies of student class attendance were associated with higher levels of student affective learning. Student age, number of students enrolled in the class, and teacher type did not influence student affective learning. These findings suggest that teachers should increase their own nonverbal immediacy, delegate decisions to their students, encourage communication between themselves and their students, and urge their students to attend class more often. Engaging in these behaviors should lead to increased student affective learning and, thus, increased student cognitive learning.

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