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### ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the student characteristics that underlie high and low ratings of different aspects of an undergraduate course in educational psychology. Four hundred sixty students were given a number of inventories, scales, and surveys and a 22-item rating instrument covering course content, methods of instruction, and instructor. Principal axis factor analysis of the course evaluation instrument yielded 6 factors accounting for 72.69 percent of the variance. Factor scores were computed for each subject on each factor. Multivariate analyses of variance revealed significant differences on student background and personality variables between students having high and low factor scores for 4 of the 6 factors. Discriminant functions were employed to identify student characteristics that discriminate maximally between high and low factor scores. (Author/AF)



# 11 Student Press": Student Course Ratings as a Function of Student Variables Philip Weinstein and William T. Bramble · Introduction

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Numerous studies have measured the environmental "press" of different educational institutions. Pace and Stern (1958), Thistlethwaite (1960), Holland (1959, 1960, 1965, 1966), and Astin (1965) investigated the "press" of various colleges and universities. Moreover, the "press" of different secondary school curricula has been determined by relating subjective teacher evaluations to student variables (Barclay, 1967). Patterns of variables of successful and unsuccessful students differed in different academic areas, indicating the presence of a culturallytransmitted, curricular-related institutional "press" or bias.

On the other hand, to some extent the environment of a college is determined by the needs of the students it admits. Pace (1962) estimated that 30 percent of the total press can be accounted for by student variables. A "student press" exists and is especially evident on our more troubled campuses where administrators and faculty are perplexed in trying to deal with the reality and the spector of what is called "student power."

Traditionally, students are evaluated by their instructor, and the instructor, in turn, is evaluated by someone higher in the academic hierarchy. Only recently we have grasped the importance of the feedback loop between student and teacher (McKeachie, 1968, 1969). However, as enrollments soar and classes become larger and larger, opportunities for informal dialogue and flexible educational strategy are reduced. Student apathy and militancy may be seen as a product of our burgeoning educational system and its one-way communication of information. Considerable reliance is now being placed on the development of formal instruments to insure a minimum degree of two-way interaction. Though the full effects have not

yet been measured, students can now be said to possess a formal "pres."

upon the educational system. But before feedback of this nature should

be utilized in instituting changes in educational strategy, one must be

aware of the determinants of this student press, as understanding the

evaluator helps in understanding the evaluation. Correlations between instructor

evaluation and the personality characteristics of the evaluators were

studied by Rezler (1965) and Yonge and Sassenrath (1968). Moreover, it

should be noted that when an instructor is aware of the nature of differences

among his students, his teaching may be more effective (Sturgis, 1958).

This study, reflecting this new student-centered trend and realizing that student prejudices may affect the learning atmosphere or classroom climate and learning itself, explores student preferences and tries to determine patterns of student variables that are associated with evaluating different aspects of both course and instructor.

The study was conducted in the context of the introductory course, Human Development and Curriculum, in the teacher-education program at the University of Kentucky. A social-learning approach to the classroom, a departure from the traditional approach of educational psychology, emphasizing the principles and application of behavior modification, was introduced at the beginning of the prior semester and, as evidenced by previous student ratings and informal feedback, has met both opposition and approbation. To better comprehend the nature of this feedback, the sources of "student press" or bias were investigated. A wide range of student characteristics was explored-motivational, attitudinal, and demographic -- and believed capable of influencing course evaluations.



#### Method

A comprehensive student rating instrument was developed and administered. Ratings of course content, methods of instruction (video-lecture, films, or discussion sessions), instructor and an overall course item were included. The instrument, as administered, is presented in Appendix A. All 20 seven-point scales were utilized in the study, as was the 60-item adjective checklist. Positive and negative adjectives were scored separately. Ten instructors, teaching a total of 16 sections, were evaluated.

In two sessions 460 students were given a number of inventories, scales and surveys. Included in the testing were 53 test and other variables.

Measures such as Holland Vocational Preference Inventory (VPI), Liverant Goal Preference Inventory (GPI), Rokeach Dogmatism Scale, Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale and a demographic questionnaire were administered. Moreover, the Behavioral Survey, a behavioral measure consisting of forced choices between "required" articles and films that had either a behavioral or non-behavioral title and the Behavioral Science Scale, a short scale indicating acceptance or rejection of the behavioral sciences, were utilized. The latter two scales are presented in Appendix B and Appendix C.

A principle axis factor analysis of the matrix of intercorrelations of the 22 course evaluation items yielded six factors accounting for 72.69 percent of the total variance. Factors were interpretable in terms of course organization and reading materials. Brief descriptions of each factor follow.

- I. Practical Audiovisual Presentation Factor. Once-a-week demonstration and application of theoretical principles.
- II. Instructor Factor. Discussion sessions that meet twice each week with the same instructor.



- III. Videotaped Lecture Factor. Once-a-week lecture presented by senior faculty.
- IV. Readings Factor. Sundry articles that supplement materials in the textbooks.
- V. Traditional Educational Psychology Text Factor. Traditional topics such as growth and development, intelligence, learning, and testing are presented.
- VI. Social Learning Text Factor. Modern behavioral approach to class-room control and learning.

The items on the evaluation form which loaded 0.200 or higher on the six factors and the percent of variance for each factor is presented in Table 1. Factor scores were calculated for each subject on each factor.

FACTOR STRUCTURE OF THE EVALUATION INSTRUMENT FOR 460 STUDENTS

SPRING 1970

FACTORS	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Factor Name and Percent of Variance	Practical Audio- visual Presentation Factor 28.86%	Instructor Factor 11.88%	Videotaped Lecture Factor 10.27%	Readings Factor 8.79%	Traditional Educa- tional Psychology Text Factor 7.16%	Social Learning Text Factor 5.72%
Variables with Loadings Over 0.200	15 .9211 16 .9002 14 .8398	18 .9326 17 .9056 19 .8312 20 .4515 21 .3681	18801 27734 43762 32953	128868 118437 138067 202566	68903 88722 108409 202711 52563 92037	7 .8783 5 .8277 9 .7998 20 .2614

To determine the combination of student variables that would maximally discriminate between high and low factor scores, discriminant function analyses were utilized. Ten by two (instructors by levels of factor score) multivariate analysis of variance designs were employed to investigate the differences between instructors on each factor. The computer program developed by Finn (1968) was used to analyze the data.

### Results

The F-ratios for the multivariate tests of equaltiy of mean vectors, with the instructor differences removed, were significant in four of the six analyses. (Table 2). Student variables were found to discriminate

Table 2

HIGH AND LOW FACTOR SCORES-
MULTIVARIATE TESTS OF EQUALITY OF MEAN VECTORS

(df = 16 and 239)

_	Multivariat	:e
Factors	F-ratios	P
I. Practical Audio-visual Presentation	1.4969	<0.1014
II. Instructor III. Videotaped Lecture	2.1597	<0.0070
IV. Readings	1.6052 1.1007	<0.0652 <0.3550
V. Traditional Educational Psychology Text VI. Social Learning Text	1.2247	<0.2247
TOTAL MENTING TEAC	1.8685	<0.0241

levels of the Practical Audiovisual Factor, the Instructor Factor, the Video-taped Lecture Factor and the Social Learning Textbook Factor.

Step-down F's indicated that the differences were caused by a limited number of specific student variables. Table 3 represents the summary table for those analyses.

The Social Scale (VPI) differentiated high from low scores on the Practical Audiovisual Presentation Factor (I). The needs for Academic Achievement and Love and Affection (GPI), the Social and Artistic Scales (VPI) and Grade Point Average showed differences between levels of the Instructor Factor (II). The Infrequency (VPI) and Social Desirability Scales (Marlowe-Crowne) and the need for Academic Achievements (GPI)

distinguished high from low scores on the Videotaped Lecture Factor III, as did the Masculinity, Infrequency, Conventional and Intellectual Scales of the VPI and Grade Point Average for the Social Learning Text Factor (VI). Note that in the preliminary analysis of the data all but 16 personality variables were eliminated.

Table 3

STEP-DOWN F'S AND PROBABILITY LEVELS FOR FOUR SIGNIFICANT FACTORS

		FACTO	RS	
VARIABLES	I	II	III	VI
1. Unit Test Grade 2. Grade Point Ave. 3. Love & Affect. 4. Acad. Achieve. 5. Intellectual 6. Social 7. Conventional 8. Enterprising 9. Artistic 10. Self-control 11. Masculinity 12. Infrequency 13. Soc. Desirability 14. Behav. Sci. Scale 15. Behavioral Survey	2.3407, p<.1273 1.2965, p<.2559 0.0023, p<.9614 1.8590, p<.1739 0.0092, p<.9238 8.2811, p<.0044 1.9268, p<.1664 0.0753, p<.7841 0.1812, p<.6708 2.2657, p<.1335 1.5194, p<.2188 0.9223, p<.3380 0.7845, p<.3768 2.1179, p<.1469 0.1846, p<.6679	2.6780, p<.1030 3.2593, p<.0722 4.7536, p<.0302 4.9849, p<.0265 0.0166, p<.8976 4.6677, p<.0317 0.3058, p<.5809 1.8843, p<.1711 8.2815, p<.0044 0.0602, p<.8065 0.3428, p<.5589 0.7473, p<.3883 0.4556, p<.5004 0.8521, p<.3570 0.0634, p<.8015	1.6910, p<.1946 1.8102, p<.1797 0.6483, p<.4216 2.7059, p<.1012 0.6921, p<.4064 2.1744, p<.1416 0.1376, p<.7111 0.0283, p<.8666 0.0749, p<.7846 0.4151, p<.5201 0.0268, p<.8701 7.7067, p<.0060 5.0214, p<.0260 0.1606, p<.6891 1.2051, p<.2733	0.0458, p<.8307 3.9683, p<.0475 0.1546, p<.6946 2.1813, p<.1409 3.2751, p<.0716 3.0955, p<.0798 2.0998, p<.1486 0.1814, p<.6706 1.3980, p<.2381 2.3073, p<.1301 3.9270, p<.0487 4.6345, p<.0324 0.0008, p<.9769 0.3890, p<.5335 0.6416, p<.4241
16. Class	0.0817, p<.7753	0.5794, p<.4474	0.8010, p<.3718	0.9896, p<.3210

Classification or assignment of students into high or low factor groups is possible, since standardized discriminant function coefficients are provided (Table 4). The Social Scale (VPI), Unit Test Score, Self-control (VPI), Academic Achievement (GPI), Masculinity (VPI), Intellectual (VPI) and the Behavioral Science Scale provided large lambda weights for the first significant factor, the Practical Audiovisual Presentation Factor; Artistic (VPI), Love and Affection (GPI), Academic Achievement (GPI) and Grade Point Average



for the second, the Instructor Factor; Infrequency (VPI), Unit Test Score, Social Desirability (Marlowe-Crowne), Grade Point Average and Academic Adhievement (GPI) for the third, the Videotaped Lecture Factor; and, Social (VPI), Masculinity (VPI), Self-control (VPI), and Infrequency (VPI) for the fourth, the Social Learning Text Factor. The between-blocks instructor effect was significant for all six factors and all interactions were non-significant. (Table 5).

Table 4 STANDARDIZED DISCRIMINANT FUNCTION COEFFICIENTS ( $\lambda$  Weights of 0.300 or Greater)

FACTOR I*	FACTOR II*	FACTOR III	FACTOR VI*
Practical Audiovisual Presentation	Instructor	Videotaped Lecture	Soc. Learning Text

### VARIABLES AND WEIGHTS

<sup>\*</sup> Reverse signs to classify as high on a factor



Table 5

# BETWEEN-BLOCKS INSTRUCTOR AND INTERACTION BETWEEN INSTRUCTOR AND FACTOR SCORES

# MULTIVARIATE TESTS OF EQUALITY OF MEAN VECTORS

(df = 144 and 1904.5657 for between-blocks and interaction)

Paston		NSTRUCTOR EFFECT		FECT, ELIMINATING N EFFECTS
Factor	F-ratio	P	F-ratio	P
I II IV V VI	1.3205 1.3176 1.3233 1.3107 1.3013 1.3097	<0.0082 <0.0086 <0.0078 <0.0098 <0.0116 <0.0100	1.0278 0.9058 0.9724 1.0617 0.9563 1.0060	<0.3958 <0.7777 <0.5774 <0.2970 <0.6290 <0.4643

### Discussion and Conclusion

Table 4 shows that different student characteristics can be used to distinguish high and low evaluators of four aspects of the course in educational psychology. Students who gave a high rating to the practical audiovisual presentation were found to have greater social interests, high test scores, more need for academic achievement and a tendency toward sponaneity as contrasted with over-control. Those who rated the instructor higher than their fellow students had higher grade-point averages, more need for academic achievement and love and affection, and little artistic interest or temperament. High raters of the videotaped lectures scored higher on the standardized classroom test; however, they had earned lower grade-point averages than the low scorers. Moreover, high scorers tended to have typical popular vocational preferences, and when questioned, tended to respond with a socially acceptable reply. Those students that evaluated the social learning text higher scored lower on the scales of social and masculine interests and self-control, and had typical, popular vocational preferences. A similar description may, of course, be delineated for low scorers on all four factors.

It is not our purpose to introduce complex interpretations of all significant findings until they are replicated; however, several points are worth noting about the variables on the Instructor Factor. When a need is met, or rather when an individual is reinforced, the applier of the reinforcement and others present may become conditioned reinforcers and the behavior, physical characteristics, and *role* of the conditioned reinforcers may develop SD value (Staats and Staats, 1963). This was found to be true in an academic situation. Lott, Bright, Weinstein and Lott (1970) found that college students with a high need for academic achievement acquired significantly greater liking for a person who was present when they made high test scores than for a person



who was present when they performed poorly, whereas low-need subjects did not show a reliable difference in their liking for those two persons. Thus, the possibility exists that subjects who have a higher need for academic achievement and achieve higher grades see instructors as having greater S<sup>D</sup> value and evaluate them accordingly. Students with higher Artistic scores are more original and unorthodox. They probably do not see the instructor as an actual or potential reinforcer for this need and would tend to rate him lower. Accordingly, students with more need for Love and Affection and who give a higher instructor rating are assumed to have found the appropriate reinforcement in this course.

One other significant finding should be noted. Students that scored higher on either the Audiovisual Presentation Factor or the Videotaped Lecture Factor had higher scores on the course examination. This supports Janes' (1964) unexpected discovery that a relationship exists between examination grades and preference for televised instruction.

The fact that student evaluation of course components is related to student characteristics provides educators with new strategies for understanding, evaluating and utilizing student feedback. Educators may now determine who is saying what about a given course. Moreover, a student may be assigned to sections of a course that are designed specifically to suit him. Further research seems desirable.

### APPENDIX A

# STUDENT RATING INSTRUMENT

INSTRUCTOR \_\_\_\_

		Stud	ent Eval	luation			
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Further	Comments:		 	 	
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Any other comments about the course in general:

Thank you for your assistance. We will use this information to make whatever changes are necessary to adapt the course to your needs and interests.





17.

# APPENDIX B

Name	Student Survey	Instructor
Time your section meets _		
you to indicate on the fo would like to see include cluded on the required re	llowing lists of readin d for future use. The ading list and films mo REMEMBER, YOU ARE CHOO	our needs and interests we are askin as and films those items which you readings most chosen will be in- est chosen will be ordered for Wednes OSING READINGS AND FILMS WHICH YOU WI
We are trying to contact name on this form so that		is survey, so please include your off the student list.
Readings: Please check t	en (10) items	
1. The Authentic Te. 2. The Reinforcemen 3. The Technology of the Authentic Te. 3. The Technology of the Authentic Te. 5. Personality Prob 6. Teaching Teacher 7. How Teachers Can 8. Modifying Interp 9. Maximizing Auther 10. The Scientific Tellity	acher: Sensitivity and t Menu: Finding Effect of Teaching. Service Approach to Changing lems and Personality Great Store Reinforce Student Meet Childrens' Emotions Through Teacher: Controlling Beacher: Controlling Beacher: Controlling Beacher: Tearning Through Wanate Destructive Behavichniques for Improving riment in Fostering Mening. Store Who Love Life ing Machines to Facility of Tantrum Behavioral Eriment in Beh	Awareness in the Classroom. Eive Reinforcements.  Tantrum Behavior in the Classroom. Fowth in the Classroom. Participation. Fowth and Needs. Fowth Modeling Procedures Fowtionships in the Classroom. Fowtharior Using Social Learning Theory. Fowtharth. For in the Classroom. For in the Cla
Films: Please check four	(4) items	
		•
Please check one of the f	ollowing two	
	ing the Mentally Retard with the Retarded Chil	



### BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Please indicate agreement or nonagreement with the following quotations by writing yes or no in the margin.

1. "Although science may be able to understand and control some things in the physical world, it can never hope to understand and control human action."

2. "Since man has a soul, it is immoral to study him by scientific methods."

3. "The willingness of the scientist to reject traditional beliefs may lead to confusion and disorder."

4. "Since every person is different, it is impossible to establish scientific laws of human action."

5. "Scientific methods should be applied to human problems like



conveniences."

segregation and poverty as well as to machines and modern



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