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ABSTRACT

Researh in motivation and learning has demonstrated that differences in instructional practice influence the salience of learning and ability goals for students. This study considers several factors that may influence teachers' emphases in instructional practices--teachers' pedagogical beliefs, their achievement goals for their students, and their perceptions of the school culture--as predictors of instructional practice. Participating in the study were 117 classsroom teachers in 2 elementary and 2 middle schools. All were given surveys to complete which included items on teachers' goals for their students, and teachers' pedagogical beliefs, perceptions of their school's culture, and instructional practices. Consistent with the literature, findings suggest that goal stresses manifested in teachers' instructional practices are strongly related to teachers' pedagogical beliefs and to the achievement goals they hold for students, and that teachers' perceptions of their school's dominant values, beliefs, and goals influence their behavior. A copy of the survey instrument and 44 references are included. (LL)

Teachers' Goals, Beliefs, and Perceptions of School Culture as Predictors of Instructional Practice

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Recent research in motivation and learning has demonstrated the importance of the goals students pursue in achievement settings. Students' perceptions of which goals are emphasized in an achievement setting may foster or hinder the adoption of adaptive patterns of learning. While investigators have examined several sources of students' perceptions of the goals of achievement including parents (Ames & Archer, 1987; Bempechat, 1989), peers (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986), and the school culture (Maehr & Fyans, 1989), many studies have pointed to the importance of teachers' instructional practice (Ames, 1990, Ames, 1987; Ames & Ames, 1984; Blumenfeld & Meece, 1988; Meece, 1991). This study extends that research by considering specific factors that may influence teachers to emphasize different goals in their instructional practice.

The achievement goals students adopt have implications for their motivation and engagement in learning. Attention has centered on two contrasting classes of achievement goals. "Ability" goals emphasize relative performance and comparative ability. "Learning" goals stress improvement, understanding, and development of skills (Ames & Ames, 1984; Dweck & Elliot, 1984; Maehr, 1989; Nicholls, 1984).[1]

When ability goals are salient, students interpret the purpose of learning as demonstrating their own ability relative to others. Because they are oriented toward comparing the outcome of tasks, they are more likely to choose tasks that will display their competence and avoid tasks at which they may fail. When ability-focused, students are more likely to view mistakes as a threat to self-esteem and self-worth (Covington, 1984). When they do fail or make mistakes they are more likely to succumb to "learned helplessness" (Elliott & Dweck, 1988).

In contrast, when learning goals are salient, students concentrate on the process of learning and the development of skills. Instead of proving their ability, learning-focused students seek to improve on their own past performance. Learning-focused students are less likely to view failure as a threat to self-esteem (Diener & Dweck, 1980). In addition, learning-focused children see a positive relationship between effort and ability (Nicholls, 1984). As well, when learning goals are operative, students are more motivated, persist longer, take on more challenging tasks, are less debilitated by mistakes and failure, and use higher-level thinking skills than when ability goals are salient (Ames & Archer, 1988; Diener & Dweck, 1980; Elliott & Dweck, 1988; Golan & Graham, 1990; Meece, Blumenfeld & Hoyle, 1988; Nolen, 1988; Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990).

Within classrooms, teachers influence the goals students pursue through their instructional practices (e.g., Ames, 1990; Ames, Maehr, Fisher & Archer, 1989; Meece, 1991, Nolen & Haladyna, 1990). For example, teachers vary on how they react to mistakes and failure, whether they use competitive or cooperative games and tasks, how they group students, what they attend to as the basis for giving awards and privileges, and whether they encourage students to monitor their own progress and to make choices about what they study. These differences in practice convey the achievement goal orientation that is valued in the classroom and by doing so can make different goals salient (Ames, in press).

Ames (1992; in press) and Rosenholtz and Simpson (1984) have described several aspects of the classroom learning environment that influence how students approach and engage in learning by conveying different goals of learning. These aspects include the design of tasks; the distribution of autonomy, choice and responsibility in learning; the formation and stability of ability groups; and the type of evaluation and reward practices. Students' perceptions of teachers' goals

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[1] Researchers have used a variety of labels for these two goal categories. What we refer to here as learning-focused is elsewhere labeled as mastery (Ames, 1990), or task-involved (Nicholls, 1984) goals. What we label ability-focused is referred to elsewhere as performance (Dweck & Elliott, 1984; Ames, 1990), or ego-involved (Nicholls, 1984) goals.

appear to influence the goals students adopt or retain (Ames & Archer, 1988; Meece, 1991; Nicholls, Cobb, Wood, Yackel, & Patashnick,1990; Nolen & Haladyna, 1990).

The classroom goal stress has been linked to students' goal orientation in several studies. In a study of 176 eighth through eleventh graders, Ames and Archer (1988) found that awareness of the importance of using learning strategies alone did not predict the employment of strategies. Rather, students who perceived the classroom as stressing learning goals were significantly more likely to employ "good" learning strategies. In addition, students' perceptions of a learning-focus in the classroom were positively related to their choice of challenging tasks, their attitudes toward class, and their attributions to effort after success. Furthermore, the effects of the perceived classroom goals were not dependent on students' self-perception of ability.

Nolen and Haladyna (1990) studied 281 students in 20 science classrooms in a racially mixed high school. During the fall of the school year, students' goal orientation and their beliefs about the value of study strategies in science were measured. In the spring of the same school year these constructs were again measured along with the students' perception of the science teachers' goals. Both the students' initial goal orientation and their perception of their teachers' goals were strong predictors of students' goal orientations in the spring. In addition, students' perception of their teachers' goals and students' spring goal orientations were both significant predictors of their beliefs about the value of study strategies in the spring. Neither students' perceived ability nor their attitude toward science was significantly related to their goal orientation or their strategy value beliefs.

Meece (1991) also investigated the relationship between instructional practice and student goal orientation. Five teachers who each taught two science classes and their 275 fifth- and sixth-grade students in a predominantly white suburban neighborhood participated in the study. For each class, fifteen lessons were observed. Six times during the observation period students completed a questionnaire assessing their goal orientation for the activity they had just completed. Classrooms of two of the teachers' were significantly more learning-oriented than two of the others. Meece found significant difference in instructional practice between high and low learning-oriented classrooms. In the high learning-oriented classrooms teachers, through their instructional practices "(1) promoted meaningful learning, (2) adapted instruction to the developmental levels and personal interests of their students, (3) established learning structures supportive of student autonomy and peer collaboration, and (4) emphasized the intrinsic value of learning (p. 280)."

Given that differences in instructional practice influence the salience of learning and ability goals for students, this study considers several factors that may influence teachers' emphases in instructional practices. Specifically, we examine teachers' pedagogical beliefs, achievement goals for their students, and perceptions of the school culture as predictors of their instructional practice.

First, we hypothesize that the achievement goals teachers endorse for their students will manifest themselves in teachers' instructional practice. Several recent studies have found a positive relationship between student goal orientation and student behavior (Ames & Archer, 1988; Nolen, 1988; Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990). We believe that there will be a similar relationship between teachers' goals for their students and teacher instructional behavior. Olson's (1981) study of implementation of a new science curriculum supports the hypothesis that teachers' educational goals for their students influence their instructional practice. Olson reported that the goals of the developers of the English Schools Council Integrated Science Project conflicted with those of the teachers who were asked to implement the project. The aim of the project was to develop "thinking ability" in students while the teachers saw their goal as getting students through their examinations. Because of their differing educational goals for students and language used to discuss instructional aims, teachers translated the curriculum innovation into familiar terms and familiar practices. Thus, "discussion" became "lectures" or "recitations," "intellectual skill development" became "examination rehearsal," "integrated design" became "a patchwork of specialized content," and

"criterion referenced assessments" became "norm based assessments." In the end, the implementation bore little resemblance to the intended innovation. Teachers modified their instruction to reflect their goals for students.

Second, we hypothesize that teachers' pedagogical beliefs are related to the instructional practices they use in the classroom. Specifically, teachers who hold learning-focused pedagogical beliefs will tend to use learning-focused instructional practices, while teachers who hold ability-focused pedagogical beliefs will tend to use ability-focused instructional practices. Building on Magoon's (1977) work on constructivist approaches to educational research, Deford (1985) argues that teachers are knowing beings and their knowledge forms a system of beliefs that directs their perceptions and behaviors. Similarly, Roehler, Duffy, Herrmann, Conley, and Johnson (1988) contend that it is teachers' network of beliefs or knowledge structures that most influence their instructional practice. When Mitchell (1980) interviewed and observed two groups of expert teachers who represented different theoretical frameworks for teaching reading, she found differences between the two groups' patterns of student-teacher interactions. Teachers' instruction reflected their beliefs about reading, learning, and instruction. Richardson, Andrews, Tidwell, and Lloyd (1991) interviewed and observed 39 upper elementary teachers. They found clear relationships between the teachers' beliefs about reading and reading instruction, and their classroom practices. The case of one teacher whose beliefs and practices were not congruent was investigated in more depth. The teacher reported being in a process of changing both her beliefs and practices. Interviews and observations indicated that changes in her beliefs were a precursor to a change in her instructional practice. Thus, we expect that pedagogical beliefs are an important predictor of teachers' day-to-day instructional practice.

Finally, we hypothesize that teachers' instructional practice will be influenced by their perceptions of the culture of the school. Just as students are affected by their perceptions of what is valued in the classroom environment, the work that teachers do is likely to be affected by their perceptions of the salient values in their work environment. By school culture we mean teachers' perceptions of the dominate values, beliefs, and goals within the school. These values may be communicated to teachers implicitly and explicitly through schoolwide policies, practices, and procedures. In particular, we are interested in the extent to which the culture experienced by teachers is related to the culture they create in their classroom through their instructional practices. Ryan and Stiller (1991, p. 130) argue that "the capacity of teachers to promote self-regulation and internalization of value for learning in students is inexorably intertwined with teachers' opportunity to regulate their own activities and thus to be innovative, creative and intrinsically motivated on a day-to-day basis." Collectively, school policy, practices, and procedures frame the organizational culture within which teachers work. Teachers may perceive the school culture as supporting effort, innovation, and improvement. As well, the school culture for teachers may be perceived as emphasizing competition, relative performance, and differential status among teachers.

Researchers have reported that school policies requiring that standardized tests be used to evaluate student performance and teacher effectiveness encourage "teaching to the test" (Corbett & Wilson, 1989; Frederiksen, 1984). When standardized tests are used as the primary measure of teacher and student competence, the goal of instruction and learning becomes oriented toward preparing students to score as high as possible on the test. Teaching test-taking skills and test content often takes precedence over learning in other domains.

Similarly, in a laboratory study, Deci, Spiegel, Ryan, Koestner, and Kauffman (1982) found that when performance standards were stressed, the undergraduates who served as "instructors" became significantly more controlling of their students. They used more directives, talked more, used more criticism and praise, and they permitted students less time to find solutions independently than "instructors" who were told to "facilitate students' learning." Flink, Boggiano, & Barrett (1990) replicated the study by Deci and his colleagues with fourth grade teachers and

small groups of the teachers' own students. They also concluded that when teachers are pressured to meet performance standards, they in turn become more controlling of their students.

Maehr and his colleagues (Braskamp & Maehr, 1985; Maehr, 1987; Maehr & Braskamp, 1986) have identified several dimensions of the school culture that describe the goal stresses experienced by teachers. We selected two of these dimensions as parallels to the emphases on learning goals and ability goals that students experience in the classroom. The first dimension, "accomplishment," represents a stress on effort, innovation, and improvement by teachers. The second dimension, "power," emphasizes competition, relative performance, and differential status among teachers.

If the classroom environment a teacher creates for students reflects the school culture within which teachers work, teachers' perceptions of an emphasis on power in the school culture will be negatively related to teachers' use of learning-focused instructional practices and positively related to teachers' use of ability-focused instructional practices. As well, teachers' perceptions of an emphasis in the school culture on accomplishment will be positively related to learning-focused instructional practice and negatively related to ability-focused instructional practice.

Methods

Subjects

One hundred and seventeen classroom teachers in two elementary and two middle schools participated in this study. The schools are located in a largely "blue collar" district in a suburb of Detroit. At the elementary level, three of the classroom teachers were male and 39 were female. At the middle school level, 36 of the classroom teachers were male and 39 were female. All of the teachers in each school were given surveys to complete. Years of teaching experience ranged from one to 33 with a median of 19 years. The elementary school teachers completed surveys in the late fall and the middle school teachers completed surveys during the late winter of the same school year. They were assured that their answers would be confidential. Over 96% of the classroom teachers in the four schools returned their surveys. The surveys included items on teachers' goals for their students, teachers' pedagogical beliefs, teachers' perceptions of their school's culture, and teachers' instructional practice.

Measures

All measures employed five-point Likert scales. Unit weight scales were constructed guided by factor analysis and face validity. The reliability of each scale was assessed with Cronbach's Alpha. (See Appendix A).

The measure of Teachers' Achievement Goals for Their Students was adapted from the work of Ames and Maehr (1988). We identified two dimensions, ability-focused goals (5 items, alpha = .77) and learning-focused goals (5 items, alpha = .73). Likert scale endpoints were "one of the least important" and "one of the most important," indicating the importance teachers placed on each of the twelve goals for their students. Examples of ability-focused goal items are, "completing assignments without mistakes" and "getting high scores on tests." Learning-focused goal items included "attempting very challenging tasks or projects" and "focusing mainly on their own improvement."

The measure of Teachers' Pedagogical Beliefs was adapted from the work of Maehr and Midgley (1990). We identified two constructs, ability-focused (7 items, alpha = .74) and learning-focused (8 items, alpha = .60) beliefs about approaches to instruction. Likert scale endpoints were "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree" indicating how teachers felt about a variety of pedagogical beliefs. Examples of ability-focused pedagogical beliefs include items such as "competition in

school is an important preparation for life," and "special privileges should be given to students who do the best academically." Examples of learning-focused pedagogical beliefs include "if it were up to me I would grade solely on effort" and "students shouldn't worry about failure."

The School Culture measure was adapted from work by Maehr and his colleagues (e.g., Braskamp & Maehr, 1985). Likert scale endpoints were again "strongly disagree" and "strongly disagree." Two of the dimensions identified were employed in this study. Accomplishment (8 items; alpha = .83) measures a perceived school stress on effort, innovation, and improvement. Power (7 items; alpha = .78) measures a perceived school stress on relative status, power, and competition.

The measure of Instructional Practices in the Classroom assessed teachers' actual classroom practices in terms of learning-focused and ability-focused goals. It was adapted from the work of Ames, Maehr, and Midgley (Ames & Archer, 1988, Ames & Maehr, 1988; Maehr & Midgley, 1990). The endpoints of the Likert scale were "not at all true in my classroom" and "very true in my classroom." The scale measuring ability-focused instructional practices (7 items, alpha = .73) included items such as "I try to teach in a way that minimizes the number of mistakes students make," and "I point out those children who do well academically as a model for the other students." The scale measuring learning-focused instructional practices (7 items, alpha = .61) included items such as "I use cooperative academic activities or games with mixed ability level groups," and "I encourage students to suggest topics to study."

Results

To assess the relationships between teachers' instructional practice, achievement goals for students, pedagogical beliefs, and perceptions of the school culture, zero-order correlations were run. The results are summarized in Table 1. Both learning-focused goals ($r = .41$, $p<.001$) and beliefs ($r = .42$, $p<.001$) were positively and significantly related to learning-focused instructional practice. The power dimension of school culture had a significant negative relationship with learning-focused instructional practice ($r = -.20$, $p<.05$).

Teachers' perception that the school culture stressed accomplishment was positively and significantly related to both learning-focused ($r = .17$, $p<.05$) and ability-focused instructional practice ($r = .16$, $p<.05$).

Ability-focused beliefs ($r = .61$, $p<.001$) and goals ($r = .46$, $p<.001$) were positively and significantly related to ability-focused instructional practice. Significant, negative relationships were found between ability-focused instructional practice and both learning-focused beliefs ($r = -.27$, $p<.05$) and goals ($r = -.16$, $p<.01$).

To assess the relative impact of teachers' perceptions of the school culture, pedagogical beliefs, and classroom goals on instructional practice, we performed simultaneous regression analyses. All of the variables of interest were included, with learning-focused and ability-focused instructional practice as the dependent variables. We tested for all possible interactions and found no significant interactions. The results are summarized in Table 2. Pedagogical beliefs that reflect an ability-focus was the strongest predictor of ability-focused instructional practice ($\beta = .51$, $p<.001$). After accounting for the effect of ability-focused beliefs, none of the other variables were significant. Together the independent variables accounted for 40% of the variance in ability instructional practice.

When the regression was performed using learning-focused instructional practice as the dependent variable, learning-focused pedagogical beliefs was the strongest predictor ($\beta = .32$, $p<.01$). Both learning-focused goals ($\beta = 29$, $p<.01$) and learning-focused beliefs were significant

predictors after the other variables were taken into account. Together the independent variables account for 27% of the variance in learning instructional practice.

Discussion

Given the influence of instructional practice on the salience of achievement goals for students, the aim of this study was to investigate possible influences on teachers' learning-focused and ability-focused instructional practice. Our findings support the hypothesis that the goal stresses manifested in teachers' instructional practices are strongly related to their pedagogical beliefs, and to the achievement goals they hold for their students. These findings are consistent with previous research on the relationship between teacher beliefs, goals, and instruction in specific content areas (Mitchell,1980; Olson, 1981; Richardson, Andrews, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991).

We selected the power and accomplishment scales to measure the school environment as experienced by teachers because we assumed that they were analogous to measures of ability-focused and learning-focused environments experienced by students *and created by teachers*. Ability-focused environments emphasize competition, relative performance, and comparative ability for students. Similarly, power measures a perceived emphasis on competition, relative performance, and differential status for teachers. We hypothesized that the more teachers perceived the school culture as emphasizing competition and relative status for teachers, the more likely they would be to emphasize relative ability for their students. However, our results did not support this hypothesis, We found a perceived school stress on relative competition, relative performance and differential status for teachers does not channel teachers toward ability-focused instructional practices in the classroom.

While the power dimension of school culture is not associated with ability-focused practices, it does appear to inhibit learning-focused practices. That is, teachers who perceive the school as emphasizing competition and relative status for teachers are less likely to adopt practices that reflect learning goals for their students.

Accomplishment had been conceived of as a stress on teachers parallel to a classroom stress on learning-focused goals for students. Like a learning-focus stress for students, accomplishment emphasizes continuing effort and improvement for teachers. However, there appears to be a crucial difference between learning-focused environments for students and accomplishment-focused environments for teachers. A perceived emphasis on effort, innovation, and opportunities for learning for teachers is related to both learning and ability-focused instructional practices. Our results indicate that the kind of improvement that is supported is crucial element.

Perceiving that a school culture supports innovation, effort, and improvement for teachers may be a necessary but not sufficient precursor to teachers' employment of learning-focused instructional practice in their classroom. Like a Petri dish, a perceived stress on accomplishment may provide a favorable environment for the growth and development of teachers, but this environment alone does not determine what form the growth will take. For example, teachers may respond to a stress on accomplishment by instituting a new reward system giving M&M's to students with perfect scores on the weekly spelling test, or allowing "best" math students to use the computer. In other words, teachers can perceive that the school culture stresses accomplishment for them, and still adopt and employ practices that promote an ability orientation in students.

We asked teachers for their perceptions of the school culture as a work environment for themselves. We did not ask them if they perceived a school-wide stress on learning and improvement for students or if the school as a whole stressed competition and status among students. That is, we did not ask teachers for their perceptions of the school culture for students.

It may be that the goals teachers perceive as stressed for students in the wider school, are more predictive of their instructional practice than are their perceptions of the school culture for themselves.

The literature on curriculum translation indicates that simply changing the conditions teachers work under will not lead to changes in teachers' practice; changes in teachers pedagogical goals and beliefs are also necessary. When the underlying assumptions of a mandated technique, method, program, or curriculum conflict with teachers' pedagogical beliefs teachers tend to translate the program into their existing theoretical framework often thwarting the intended outcomes. For example, Tobin (1987) concluded that teacher beliefs about how students learn and what they should learn were the most important factors in determining whether they implemented new mathematics practices. In a naturalistic study of twenty elementary teachers Shannon (1989) found that a structural change alone -- a reduction in class size -- supported but did not lead to expected changes in reading instruction. Because of their existing beliefs about reading instruction, particularly about the "scientific" nature and effectiveness of commercial reading materials, 90% of these teachers did not employ alternative instructional methods.

In the studies by Deci et al. (1982) and Flink et al. (1990), cited above, teachers were given goals for their students, and that in turn influenced their instructional practices. One group was told, "Your role is to facilitate the student's learning how to work with the puzzles. There are no specific performance requirements; your job is simply to help the student learn to solve the puzzles." These instructors were given learning-focused goals. The second group was told, "Your role is to ensure that the student learns to solve the puzzles. It is a teacher's responsibility to make sure that students perform up to standards. If, for example, your student was tested on the puzzles he (or she) should do well (p. 853)." [2] These instructors were given ability-focused goals for their students. The instructors who were given ability goals for their students were much more controlling of their students then those given learning-focused goals. Deci interpreted this to mean that the "imposition of standards was apparently perceived as more controlling by the teacher subjects, for they in turn were controlling with their students." (p. 858) However, it may have been that the second group did not perceive their "work environment" as more controlling; only that they had been given a different goal for their students. While it is likely that the goals promoted schoolwide for students, such as performance standards do affect the work environment of teachers, Deci and Flink's studies do not directly manipulate the emphasis on autonomy, innovation, creativity, or competition and comparison for instructors. They did not, for example, tell the instructors what methods they could or could not use, nor that their performance would be compared to that of other instructors.

Other studies have indicated that a stress on accomplishment in the school has desirable effects for teachers such as greater job satisfaction and commitment (Maehr, Smith, & Midgley, unpublished manuscript), lower burn-out (Friedman, 1991), and higher personal self-efficacy (Lee, Buck, & Midgley, 1992). However, it appears that beneficial environments for teachers do not necessarily translate into beneficial environments for students. This is not to imply that the school culture for teachers is unimportant. Outcomes such as teacher job satisfaction, burn-out, and efficacy should be of concern in and of themselves, and because of their relationship to teaching quality. What it does imply is that the school culture for teachers does not alone lead to beneficial outcomes for students. School reorganization plans, such as site-based management, may provide a more facilitative environment for teachers, but have little impact on the nature of instruction if they are not accompanied by a theoretical framework that stresses learning goals and works to influence teachers' pedagogical beliefs and goals.

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2 Flink's instructions differed only slightly from Deci's.

The point could be made that the teachers who participated this study teach in only four schools. However, our unit of analysis was not the school but the individual teacher. We assume that it is the individual's subjective construction of reality that is important. It is a teachers' perception of their school's dominate values, beliefs, and goals that can influence their behavior. It would be interesting, however, to study a larger number of schools in order to investigate organizational structures that influence teachers' perceptions of school culture. As well, future research needs to consider teachers' perceptions of both the school culture for teachers and the school culture for students in order to understand more fully the influence of school level goal stresses on practice. At present, we are developing and piloting scales to measure teachers' perceptions of the school culture for students.

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Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Zero-order Correlations of Teacher's Instructional Practice, Pedagogical Beliefs, Achievement Goals and Perceptions of the School Culture

Composites	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Instructional Practice								
1. Learning Instr'l Practice	----							
2. Ability Instr'l Practice	.05	-----						
Pedagogical Beliefs								
3. Learning Beliefs	.42***	-.27**	-----					
4. Ability Beliefs	-.12	.61***	-.46***	-----				
Achievement Goals								
5. Learning Goals	.41***	-.16*	.37***	-.19*	-----			
6. Ability Goals	-.11	.46***	-.34***	.59***	-.04	-----		
School Culture								
7. Power	-.20*	-.04	-.22**	.04	-.18*	.01	-----	
8.Accomplishment	.17*	.16*	.02	.14	.16*	.16*	-.66***	-----
M	3.61	2.62	3.62	2.77	4.22	2.76	2.72	3.23
SD	0.58	0.69	0.49	0.66	0.50	0.76	0.73	0.89

n=117. *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table 2

Standardized Regression Coefficients and Adjusted R-Squares of Teachers' Perceptions of the School Culture, Pedagogical Beliefs, Achievement Goals on Instructional Practices.

Independent Predictors	Ability-focused Instructional Practice	Learning-focused Instructional Practice
	Beta	Beta
1. Power	-.05	.005
2. Accomplishment	.04	.12
3. Learning Beliefs	.01	.32**
4. Ability Beliefs	.51***	.09
5. Learning Goals	-.08	.29**
6. Ability Goals	.16	-.07
Adjusted R-Squared	.40***	.27***

n =117, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Appendix A: Items and reliability coefficients for all scales

Teachers' Achievement Goals for their Students

Ability-focused Instructional Goals Alpha = .77

Getting top grades in the class
Spending a lot of time studying facts or basic skills
Getting high scores on tests
Completing assignments without mistakes
Knowing who is doing the best and striving to do as well

Learning-focused Instructional Goals Alpha = .73

Focusing mainly on their own improvement
Attempting very challenging tasks or projects even if they are different from mine
Developing a lifelong interest in learning
Getting great enjoyment from learning
Choosing or initiating projects on their own

Teachers' Pedagogical Beliefs

Ability-focused Pedagogical Belief Alpha = .74

Grades are a necessity; students have to have a realistic view of their ability.
Competition in school is an important preparation for life.
Competition among students enhances learning.
Students should not be penalized for making errors. (recoded)
Parents should be told how their child is doing compared to others in the class.
Special privileges should be given to the students who do the best academically.
Contests between students are a useful way of increasing motivation.

Learning-focused Pedagogical Belief Alpha = .60

At risk students should be given assignments that require problem solving aptitude.
Grouping students by ability promotes learning. (recoded)
At risk students should be given assignments they can learn from even though they will have difficulty.
If it were up to me, I would grade students solely for effort.
Students shouldn't worry about failure.
Students should be encouraged to take academic risks.
It is better to give students work that is too easy than work that is too hard. (recoded)
At risk students should be given assignments that require creativity.

School Culture for Teachers

Power Alpha = .78

No teacher has more influence than another in this school. (recoded)
Power and influence count a lot around this school.
In this school some teachers have greater access to resources than others.
At this school it is important to do better than other teachers.
The administration in this school actively encourages competition among teachers.
The administration at this school shows favoritism to some teachers.
Teachers try to outdo each other in this school.

Accomplishment Alpha = .92

This school makes teachers want to work hard.
In this school, things are done the same way year after year. (recoded)
If someone has a good idea or project, the administration listens and supports it.
At this school teachers have many opportunities to learn new things.
This school supports instructional innovations.
Practical constraints severely limit teachers' ability to implement new ideas. (recoded)
This school has given up on some of its teachers. (recoded)
The administration at this school is always working to improve teaching.

Instructional Practices in the Classroom

Ability-focused Instructional Practice Alpha = .73

I give special privileges to students who do the best academically.
I try to teach in a way that minimizes the number of mistakes students make.
I tell parents how their child is doing compared to other children their age.
I display the work of the highest achieving students as an example.
I help students understand how their performance compares to others.
I point out those children who do well academically, as a model for the other students.
I use competitive academic games or contests.

Learning-focused Instructional Practice Alpha = .61

I encourage my students to take risks academically.
I encourage my students to monitor their own progress.
I give my students lots of choices.
I encourage students to ask other students to help them with their work.
I encourage students to suggest topics to study.
I tell students to view failure as an essential part of learning.
I use cooperative academic activities or games with mixed ability level groups.