DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 391 198 CS 509 142

AUTHOR Shulman, Gary M.; And Others
TITLE Assessment of the Learner Empowerment Measure.
PUB DATE Nov 95
NOTE 33p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (81st, San Antonio, TX, November 18-21, 1995).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; Communication Research; Construct Validity; Factor Analysis; Higher Education; Interpersonal Communication; *Student Attitudes; Student Evaluation of Teacher Performance; *Student Motivation
IDENTIFIERS Affinity Seeking Strategies; *Student Empowerment

ABSTRACT

A study refined a valid and reliable measure to measure learner empowerment and determined construct validity by correlating learner empowerment with the related variables affinity-seeking (an interpersonal communication construct), motivation to study, and learning. Subjects, 340 undergraduate students enrolled in communication classes at a mid-sized midwestern university, were asked to think about the instructor they had immediately before their communication course when completing the Learner Empowerment Measure. Subjects reported on 241 male and 90 female instructors (with 9 unidentified), who represented a cross section of the university. Three dimensions of empowerment were replicated through factor analysis: meaningfulness; impact; and competence. Each of the three empowerment dimensions were positively and significantly correlated with each of two learning measures. (Contains 38 references and 3 tables of data.) (RS)

ASSESSMENT OF THE LEARNER EMPOWERMENT MEASURE

Gary M. Shulman

Marian Houser

Ann Bainbridge Frymier

Miami University

Gary M. Shulman (Ph.D., Purdue University) is a Professor in the Department of Communication at Miami University.

Marian Houser (M.A., Miami University) is a Visiting Instructor in the Department of Communication at Miami University.

Ann Bainbridge Frymier (Ed.D., West Virginia University) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication at Miami University.

Paper presented at the Speech Communication Convention in San Antonio, Texas, November, 1995.

Direct correspondence to either Gary M. Shulman or Ann Bainbridge Frymier at 160 Bachelor Hall, Miami University, Oxford, OH 45056

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was twofold: (a) to refine a valid and reliable instrument to measure learner empowerment; and (b) to determine construct validity by correlating learner empowerment with the related variables affinity-seeking, motivation to study, and learning. Three dimensions of empowerment were replicated through factor analysis: meaningfulness, impact, and competence. Each of the three empowerment dimensions were positively and significantly correlated with each of two learning measures.

The challenge for contemporary teachers is to figure out how to manage the classroom environment so that students feel intrinsically motivated to learn and perform high quality work. Yet, except for good grades, there are few extrinsic rewards available for teachers to use that students find meaningful. Similarly, contemporary managers have found that they have diminished extrinsic rewards available to them to use for effectively motivating employees to improve performance. The concepts of continuous quality improvement (Deming, 1982) and learning organization (Senge, 1990; Senge, Roberts, Ross, Smith, & Kleiner, 1994), for example, have influenced many organizations to successfully transform organizational member relationships. In fact, the quality improvement and learning organization paradigms closely dovetail (Senge, et al., 1994). A core concept in each of these paradigms is empowerment. Learning organizations require an energized and committed work force with empowered "employees who must learn to act in the interest of the whole enterprise" (Senge, et al., 1994, p. 11). In the widely acclaimed Baldrige National Quality Award criteria, empowerment is a major subject of attention in evaluating an organization's human resource development and management. This year the National Institute of Standards and Technology is piloting the application of Baldrige National Quality Award criteria in K-12 and post-secondary educational organizations. We extend the application of the quality paradigm from service and manufacturing organizations to education. This extension

assumes that all organizations, be they educational, governmental, or business, share many common characteristics and processes. We do not deny there are many differences between classrooms and other organizations, however teachers act as managers of the classroom, responsible for directing and guiding students' behavior just as managers manage offices and are responsible for directing and guiding subordinates' behavior. We propose, as do others (Hubbard, 1993; Luechauer & Shulman, 1992a,b) that education can benefit from these new paradigms that have demonstrated success in other organizational contexts.

Many of the factors contributing to a paradigm shift in how organizations are managed, also apply to higher education (Hubbard, 1993). Modern paradigms emphasize the need for empowered organizational members that continuously learn how to improve performance and adapt to ubiquitous changes in the environment. The perceptions of empowerment are determined by relational communication variables such as active listening, open communication, constructive feedback, trustworthiness, credibility, and immediacy. (Block, 1987; Frymier & Shulman, 1994; Luechauer & Shulman, 1993). Consequently, teachers lamenting that students today are not motivated may really be admitting that they do not know how to create an environment where students feel empowered (intrinsically motivated) to learn (Frymier & Shulman, 1994). Senge (1990) looks at businesses as learning organizations, where learning is valued as the

best source of competitive advantage. In the long run, the only sustainable source of competitive advantage is an organization's ability to learn faster than its competitors. Senge supports the importance of empowerment in the workplace, stating that empowered learners are vital to creating learning organizations because people, not organizations, are really responsible for learning. Unless the organizational members can learn, the organization cannot learn. We believe that students who experience empowerment will be better prepared for the learning requirements that they will face in contemporary classrooms and twenty-first century organizations.

There are many approaches to enhancing the teaching-learning process. The rationale for this research is that empowered students represent yet another way to increase learning. Thus, the purpose of this study was twofold: [a] to refine a valid and reliable instrument for measuring learner empowerment; and [b] to assess construct validity by correlating learner empowerment with affinity-seeking, motivation to study, and learning.

RELATED RESEARCH

Empowerment

The philosophy and practice of empowerment was popularized by the seminal work of Block (1987) who discussed it primarily in terms of the manager-employee relationship. Empowerment has more succinctly been conceptually defined as the process of creating intrinsic task motivation by providing an environment and tasks which increase one's feeling of self-

efficacy and energy (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990; Conger & Kanungo, 1988). More recently, Luechauer and Shulman (1993) offered a conceptual definition that they believed was applicable to both teachers and students in educational organizations as well as managers and employees in business organizations. They view empowerment as "the humanistic process of adopting the values and practicing the behaviors of enlightened self-interest so that personal and organizational goals may be aligned in a way that promotes growth, learning, and fulfillment" (p. 13). This definition suggests that a communication relationship is necessary to achieve an alignment of values and actions between those acting in an empowering manner and those feeling empowered. The concept of an alignment or overlap between individual goals and organizational goals adds a pragmatic element to the definition because it implies that empowerment means that individuals are not entitled to do anything they feel like without regard for the organizational context or goals of others. Alignment then is a process that seeks to establish congruence between the two distinct yet complementary elements of empowerment. This serves to remind us that discussions of empowerment should distinguish between behaviors that are empowering and self-perceptions of being empowered. The focus of this study is on the latter.

Because of the motivational base in all definitions of empowerment, we believe as does Glasser (1990), that the concept is as equally applicable to the teacher-student relationship as it is to the manager-employee

relationship. Shulman, McCormack, Luechauer and Shulman (1993) suggest that the role of empowering faculty is to create conditions that sustain student commitment to producing high quality work. This is consistent with the goals of all learning organizations. Communication is important to creating a shared vision for the empowerment relationship. In the classroom, empowering faculty strive to identify and remove factors that promote feelings of powerlessness in their students. In doing so, they replace them with structural systems and messages that foster student feelings of responsibility, personal meaningfulness, ownership, self-efficacy, and intrinsic motivation to learn.

Empowering faculty strive to create a learning environment where the desire to learn comes from factors inside (intrinsic) rather than rewards outside (extrinsic) of the student (Shulman & Luechauer, 1993; Luechauer & Shulman, 1993, in press; Shulman, Luechauer & Shulman, in press). Thomas and Velthouse (1990) conceptualized four dimensions of job or task empowerment: meaningfulness, competence, impact and choice. Perceptions related to these state (versus trait) dimensions of empowerment are determined by communication variables. In this conceptualization, empowerment provides a label for a non-traditional paradigm of motivation. Despite wide usage of the concept, only a preliminary empirically derived operational definition of learner empowerment is available (Frymier & Shulman, 1994). Frymier & Shulman (1994) relied on the four conceptualized

dimensions of Thomas and Velthouse (1990) to empirically operationalize empowerment. The present research seeks to build on these *a priori* dimensions and refine the exploratory work of Frymier & Shulman (1994) who developed a measurement of empowerment in the instructional context.

Meaningfulness considers the value of a task in relation to one's own beliefs, ideals and standards. The stronger a task fits into an individual's or group's value system, the more conviction will be brought to bear in accomplishing it. If the work is not meaningful now or deemed to be useful later, students will not be motivated to generate high quality work (Glasser, 1990). Competence means that the person feels qualified and capable to perform the necessary activities to achieve the goal. The feelings of empowerment are lessened when individuals lack self-confidence in their skills and feel intimidated by the task or goal. Empowering faculty accept McClelland's (1975) admonition that "... if [teachers] want to have far-reaching influence, they must make their [students] feel powerful and able to accomplish things on their own" (p. 263). Impact means that the accomplishment of a task is perceived to make a difference in the scheme of things. The more impact one believes he or she has, the more internal motivation he or she should feel. This conceptualization is derived from work in the areas of locus of control (Rotter, 1966) and learned helplessness (Abramson, Seligman & Teasdale, 1978). Choice refers to the degree to which

persons self-determine their task goals or methods for accomplishing them. This model predicts that greater choice contributes to feelings of increased empowerment (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

Conger and Kanungo (1988) believe that the empowerment concept provides a useful holistic sense of personal effectiveness in organizations. We argue that the classroom system is an organization and that the empowerment concept is as important to the teaching-learning process as it is to the functioning of other organizational processes. Moreover, empowerment has performance implications for both the teacher and students. Frymier and Shulman (1994) identified three of the *a priori* dimensions (meaningfulness, competence, impact) operating in the classroom context. In addition, student feelings of empowerment was positively associated with the teacher communication behaviors of verbal and nonverbal immediacy and relevance.

In summary, we placed the concept of learner empowerment in an intrinsic motivation paradigm. Intrinsic job motivation has been defined as "the degree to which a person wants to work well in his or her job in order to achieve intrinsic satisfaction" (Warr, Cook, & Wall, 1979, p. 133). We believe that this definition applies to the "job" of student which is to create quality learning. But empowerment is more than just intrinsic motivation. In addition to satisfaction it also includes a cognitive belief state of personal involvement and self-efficacy, or the degree to which the members of an

organization [or class] are willing and capable to engage in work [learning] (Kanungo, 1982). The construct of learner empowerment in the classroom is only relevant if it can be influenced by teacher behavior and ultimately influences the quality of learning.

As mentioned above, a goal of this study is to further establish the validity of the learner empowerment measure. Since we describe empowerment as a non-traditional paradigm of motivation, establishing a relationship between empowerment and motivation is crucial to the validity of the learner empowerment measure.

MOTIVATION

Brophy (1987) defines student motivation to learn as "a student tendency to find academic activities meaningful and worthwhile and to try to derive the intended academic benefits from them" (p. 205). Motivation to learn can be a general trait of a student who is intrinsically motivated to learn or a situation-specific state based on classroom experiences. State motivation refers to a student's desire to acquire knowledge in a specific class, assignment, or content area at a particular point in time. Trait motivation, on the other hand, refers to an inherent drive to learn the content because the student understands its value and enjoys learning. Christophel (1990) reported that while both state and trait motivation were positively associated with learning, state motivation was a better predictor.

State motivation to study has been successfully measured and has consistently been associated with learning (Christophel, 1990; Frymier, 1994b; Richmond, 1990). If empowerment is indeed an expanded and more inclusive conceptualization of motivation (as was argued above), then motivation should be highly associated with learner empowerment. In order to establish convergent validity for the empowerment scale, the following research question was posed.

RQ1: What is the relationship between state motivation and empowerment?

AFFINITY-SEEKING

Affinity-seeking has been defined as "the social-communicative process by which individuals attempt to get others to like and feel positive toward them" (Bell & Daly, 1984, p. 1). McCroskey and Wheeless (1976) first introduced "affinity" as an interpersonal communication construct which led to the development of Bell and Daly's (1984) typology of 25 strategies individuals can use to elicit positive feelings from another. Affinity-seeking behaviors have been the focus of studies in both the interpersonal realm (Bell, Tremblay, & Berkel-Rothfuss, 1987; Richmond, Gorham, & Furio, 1987) and the instructional context (Beebe & Butland, 1993; Frymier, 1994a, Frymier, Houser, & Shulman, 1995; Frymier & Thompson, 1992; Gorham, Kelley, & McCroskey, 1989; McCroskey & McCroskey, 1986; Richmond, 1990; Roach,

1991). Recently Frymier (1994a) identified thirteen affinity-seeking strategies most effective in the classroom.

Frymier, Houser, and Shulman (1995) identified problems with using the complete Bell and Daly typology in the instructional context, and developed an alternative instructional affinity-seeking (IAS) measure. The new IAS measure included items based on twelve affinity-seeking strategies from Bell and Daly's typology. The new instructional affinity-seeking scale was empirically tested and found to be a reliable and valid measure of teachers' affinity-seeking behaviors.

Previous research has found instructor affinity-seeking to be positively associated with students' state motivation to study (Frymier, 1994b; Frymier & Thompson, 1992; Richmond, 1990). Because of this established relationship between affinity-seeking and state motivation, we expected affinity-seeking to also be positively associated with learner empowerment. As discussed above, if empowerment is an expanded and more inclusive conceptualization of motivation, than teacher communication behaviors that influenced motivation should also be associated with empowerment. We therefore pose the following hypothesis.

H1: Teacher affinity-seeking behaviors will be positively associated with student reports of empowerment.

Learning

While it is crucial to the development of the empowerment concept to understand its relationship to motivation and to teacher communication behaviors, the underlying hypothesis of this research project is that empowerment influences learning. Having empowered students in our classrooms is all well and good, but if it does not improve learning, then we have to seriously question the usefulness of empowerment. The rationale for studying empowerment is that empowered students learn more.

We believe that empowered students learn more because empowered students feel in control of their learning environment and are motivated to take advantage of the opportunities offered in that environment. Empowered students feel that what they are doing is important and worthwhile. It is hard to imagine a situation where students were motivated and felt their efforts were important and did not learn more than students who were unempowered. However, it is possible that empowerment is simply another means to enhance learning and not a <u>better</u> means to enhance learning.

We fully expect empowered students to report higher levels of learning than unempowered students. Therefore we put forth the following hypothesis:

H2: Learner empowerment will account for a significant portion of variance in student learning.

METHOD

Participants

Participants consisted of 340 undergraduate students enrolled in communication classes at a mid-sized midwestern university. Participants were asked to think of the instructor they had immediately before their communication course (public speaking or interpersonal communication) when completing the instruments. This methodology maximized the number of instructors evaluated, the range of disciplines, and included instructors who otherwise might not agree to participate in such a study.

The sample consisted of 158 male, 180 female, and two unidentified students who reported on 241 male and 90 female instructors (with nine unidentified). Participants represented a cross section of the university reporting on instructors from 40 departments in all six colleges/schools at the university.

Measurement

Empowerment. Empowerment was operationalized by modifying Frymier and Shulman's (1994) empowerment scale. Frymier and Shulman's empowerment scale consisted of 18 items representing the dimensions of meaningfulness (8 items), competence (6 items), and impact (4 items). They had also identified choice as an *a priori* dimension of empowerment, but it did not emerge as a factor. Frymier and Shulman (1994) concluded that the learner empowerment items needed to be more focused on students' feelings

of empowerment, as opposed to the empowering efforts by teachers. In an attempt to make the empowerment scale a better measure of students' feelings of empowerment, additional items were written and other items were rewritten so that all items consistently reflected students' feelings or self-perception of being empowered. This revised measure of learner empowerment (LEM) consisted of ten items reflecting meaningfulness, ten items reflecting competence, ten items reflecting impact, and eight items reflecting choice.

Responses to the LEM were submitted to principal factor analysis with iteration prior to factor extraction and rotation. Promax oblique rotation was selected to determine the factor structure due to the assumption that factors representing empowerment would be correlated. Criteria for factor extraction were: a) Eigenvalue > 1.00; b) examination of Scree plot for the number of factors; c) loadings at > .50 with at least two items loading at > .60 on each factor; and d) each factor accounting for at least 5% of the variance.

Instructional Affinity-Seeking. Instructional affinity-seeking (IAS) was measured using a streamlined version of Bell and Daly's (1984) affinity-seeking typology developed by Frymier, Houser, and Shulman (1995). The IAS measure consists of 37 Likert-type items with each item reflecting a single affinity-seeking behavior. A scale of 0 (never) to 4 (very often) was used. The IAS measure had a $\underline{M}$ =104.70, $\underline{SD}$ = 26.48, a theoretical range of 0 - 148, and an

obtained range of 14 - 148 The split-half reliability of the IAS measure in this study was .82.

Motivation. Trait and state motivation were operationalized with Richmond's (1990) motivation scale which consists of five, seven-step bi-polar adjectives. The same adjectives were used to measure both trait and state motivation. The instruments differed in their directions. The trait motivation scale asked students how they "feel in general about studying for classes." The state motivation scale asked students how they "feel about studying for the class you take immediately before COM ***." Previous reliabilities for the trait and state motivation scales have ranged from .85 to .95. In the present study the reliability for the trait motivation scale was .89 with a M = 21.97 and SD = 5.81. The reliability for state motivation was .91 with a M = 20.62 and SD = 7.32.

Learning. Learning was operationalized in two ways. First an abbreviated version of the affective learning scale (Gorham, 1988) was used. Gorham (1988) operationalized affective learning with six subscales asking students about their a) attitude toward course content, course recommended behaviors, and course instructor, and b) their behavioral intent to engage in behaviors recommended in the course, enroll in another course of related content, and take another class with the same instructor. We used two of the attitude subscales (toward course content and toward instructor) and two of the behavioral intent subscales (likelihood of enrolling in another class of

similar content and likelihood of taking another class with the same instructor). Each subscale used four, 7-step bi-polar adjectives to measure learning. The four subscales were summed to create a measure of affective learning. Previous reliabilities for Gorham's (1988) affective learning scale have ranged from .96 - .98. The reliability for the abbreviated scale in the present study was .98 with a $\underline{M}$ = 77.71 and $\underline{SD}$ = 24.20.

Learning was also operationalized with thirteen items representing learning behaviors. We reasoned that there were certain behaviors that students perform when they were involved in learning content. First, we sent a one page survey to sixty teaching colleagues asking them to describe things students do that indicate they are learning. Based on our colleagues' responses and our own experience, we identified thirteen student behaviors we felt were indicators of learning (see Table 1). These items were presented in a Likert-type format using a 0 (never) to 4 (very often) scale. In addition we included the a global item, "I learned a lot in this class" as a way of assessing the validity of the learning behaviors. This item correlated well with the thirteen items, with all correlations being significant (see Table 1). All items except items #6, #9, #10, and #11 correlated at > .20. Items #6 and #9 are behaviors that probably few students perform even if they are learning a great deal. Actually item #6 could even be an indicator that a student is not learning. Items #10 and #11 are probably indicative of learning but may be

behaviors that students see as inappropriate. These four items were dropped from all subsequent analyses.

Insert Table 1 about here

Although we initially intended to use these items individually, inter-item correlations were moderate for the most part and item-total correlations were all above .55 except item #1 which was .46. Since the scale reliability was so high, we decided to sum the items and use the total in subsequent analyses. The learning behaviors scale had an alpha reliability of .84, a $\underline{M}$ = 18.35 and $\underline{SD}$ = 6.78.

RESULTS

Preliminary Results

The 38 LEM items were submitted to factor analysis using the above stated criteria. Scree indicated that at least three factors existed and MSA = .95. Three factors had eigenvalues > 1.00. A three factor solution was determined to be the most appropriate structure. The first factor accounted for 35% of the variance with 16 items loading on it. Ten items loaded on the second factor and accounted for 33% of the variance. The third factor accounted for 25% of the variance with 9 items loading on it (see Table 2).

Insert Table 2 about here

The first factor was labeled as impact. All impact *a priori* items loaded on this factor along with six of the choice *a priori* items. This factor had a M = 30.43, SD = 6.40, and an alpha reliability of .95. The second factor was labeled as meaningfulness. All meaningfulness *a priori* items loaded on this factor with a M = 20.99, SD = 8.08, and an alpha reliability of .94. The third factor was labeled as competence. Nine of the ten *a priori* items loaded on this factor. This factor had a M = 26.83, SD = 6.40, and an alpha reliability of .92. Choice did not emerge as a separate factor. As stated above, six of the eight choice items loaded with impact. The other two impact items did not load at all.

Research Question and Hypotheses

Research question one examined the relationship between state motivation and empowerment. Pearson correlation coefficients were used to answer this question and are displayed in Table 3. Examination of these correlations indicate that state motivation is significantly associated with all three dimensions of empowerment. The largest correlation is with meaningfulness, as was expected. Meaningfulness is conceptualized and operationalized in a way that is very similar to state motivation. Trait motivation was expected to have a low to zero correlation with empowerment. No significant relationship was found between trait

motivation and any of the dimensions of the LEM. Trait motivation and empowerment appear to be independent of one another.

Insert Table 3 about here

The first hypothesis predicted that instructor's affinity-seeking behavior would be positively associated with empowerment. The Pearson correlation coefficient was again used to test this hypothesis. The correlations among affinity-seeking and empowerment are displayed in Table 3. Instructor affinity-seeking was positively associated with all three dimensions of empowerment. Affinity-seeking appears to be particularly associated with meaningfulness and impact.

The second hypothesis predicted that empowerment would be associated with learning. Correlations among the two learning variables and empowerment are displayed in Table 3. Meaningfulness, competence, and impact were all positively and significantly associated with affective learning and the learning behaviors.

In order to further understand the relationship between learning and empowerment, multiple regression was used. The three dimensions of empowerment served as predictor variables and affective learning and learning behaviors served as criterion variables in separate analyses.

Meaningfulness, competence, and impact together accounted for 71% of the variance in affective learning [$F(3/336) = 265.31, p < .001$]. Meaningfulness accounted for 31% unique variance in affective learning [$F(1/336) = 346.16, p < .001$]. Competence accounted for 1% unique variance [$F(1/336) = 8.77, p < .01$]. Impact did not account for a significant portion of unique variance in affective learning. There was 39% shared variance among the three LEM dimensions.

When the learning behaviors measure served as the criterion variable, meaningfulness, competence, and impact accounted for 61% of the variance [$F(3/336) = 171.10, p < .001$]. Meaningfulness accounted for 10% unique variance in learning behavior [$F(1/336) = 85.85, p < .001$]. Competence did not account for a significant portion of unique variance in learning behavior. Impact accounted for 8% unique variance in learning behavior [$F(1/336) = 70.37, p < .001$]. There was 43% shared variance among the three LEM dimensions.

DISCUSSION

Summary

Current paradigms of organizational behavior (e.g., learning organization, total quality management) point to the effectiveness of empowerment in organizations. This paper was based on the premise that to survive in twenty-first century organizations (corporate, educational, governmental), students must become empowered learners. Moreover,

teacher communication behaviors can contribute to managing a learning environment where the desire to learn comes from factors inside the student.

The dual goals of this research were achieved. First, refining the Frymier and Shulman (1994) items yielded a replicated factor structure and a more reliable LEM. Second, the results of the research question and two hypotheses suggest that the instrument has construct validity. The three dimensions of the LEM were significantly and positively associated with state motivation, teacher affinity-seeking behaviors, and two different measures of learning.

Learner Empowerment Instrument

This study improved on the Frymier & Shulman (1994) instrument by explicitly distinguishing between teacher behaviors that are empowering and student feelings of being empowered. A reliable and valid instrument measuring the latter is reported in this study. This new perspective breaks down the empowerment concept into two complementary components. Future research might focus on the other perspective and develop an instrument to measure empowering behaviors of teachers.

The factor analysis results in this study were generally consistent with the conceptualization of Thomas and Velthouse (1990) and previous empirical findings (Frymier & Shulman, 1994; Schultz & Shulman, 1993). The major departure from expectations was the non-emergence of the choice dimension. On reflection, we believe that this can be explained by

understanding the differences in the populations studied. The population of interest for Thomas and Velthouse (1990) and Schultz and Shulman (1993) was adults who held jobs in organizations. In contrast, Frymier & Shulman (1994) and this study focused on younger college aged students. Employees that hold jobs for some time might wish to exercise choice based on their previous training and experience. Students, on the other hand, might not value choice because they have not yet completed their training and typically do not have much expertise, especially with non-major subject matter. Students, in post hoc interviews (who were not participants in this study), indicated that they are rarely, if ever, given the opportunity to exercise choice in classes. Usually, student "job" requirements are immutably set forth in the syllabus which prescribes assignment specifications, grading criteria, and strict operational rules for the class. Since students have not typically been socialized in most classes to expect or exercise choice, the felt need to do so may be minimal. It is interesting to note, however, that although a separate choice dimension did not emerge in this study, a majority of the *a priori* choice items still loaded together, albeit on the impact dimension.

It is conceptually significant that learner empowerment exhibited a significant and positive relationship with state motivation and a near zero relationship with trait motivation. This means that learner empowerment is situational in nature and that the class environment can affect it. Of course, one important part of the class environment is the teacher. The finding that

teacher affinity-seeking behaviors have a significant and positive relationship with learner empowerment further reinforces the practical utility of using affinity-seeking behaviors, as well as indicates that empowerment can be influenced by teacher communication behaviors.

The significant positive relationship between empowerment and two measures of learning validates the conceptual importance of the variable for future instructional communication research. A finding of interest was the differential relationship between LEM and the two measures of learning. Meaningfulness accounted for a large portion of the variance in affective learning -- a relationship very similar to that found between state motivation and affective learning (Christophel, 1990; Frymier, 1994b; Richmond, 1990). However, with learning behaviors, meaningfulness and impact accounted for roughly the same amount of unique variance with most of the variance being shared among the three dimensions. These results indicate that learner empowerment influences a several dimensions of learning. When students feel empowered they have a more positive attitude toward the course content and instructor as well as perform more behaviors that we believe reflect learning.

References

Abramson, L., Seligman, M. & Teasdale, J. (1978). Learned helplessness in humans: Critiques and reformations. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 87, 19-74.

Beebe, S. A., & Butland, M. J. (1993, November). Implicit communication and learning: Explaining affinity-seeking behaviors in the classroom. Paper presented at the Speech Communication Association convention, Miami, FL.

Bell, R. A., & Daly, J. A. (1984). The affinity-seeking function of communication. Communication Monographs, 51, 91-115.

Bell, R. A., Tremblay, S. W., & Buerkel-Rothfuss, N. L. (1987). Interpersonal attraction as a communication accomplishment: Development of a measure of affinity-seeking competence. The Western Journal of Speech Communication, 51, 1-18.

Block, P. (1987). The empowered manager: Positive political skills at work. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Brophy, J. (1987). On motivating students. In D.C. Berliner & B.V. Rosenshine (Eds.), Talks to teachers (pp. 201-245). New York: Random House.

Christophel, D. M. (1990). The relationship among t 'acher immediacy behaviors, student motivation, and learning. Communication Education, 39, 323-340.

Conger, J. & Kanungo, R. (1988). The empowerment process: Integrating theory and practice. Academy of Management Review, 13, 471-482.

Deming, W. E. (1982). Out of the crisis. Cambridge, MA: MIT, Center for Advanced Engineering Study.

Frymier, A. B. (1994a). The use of affinity-seeking in producing liking and learning in the classroom. Journal of Applied Communication Research, 22, 87-105.

Frymier, A. B. (1994b). A model of immediacy in the classroom. Communication Quarterly, 42, 133-143.

Frymier, A. B., Houser, M., & Shulman, G. M. (1995, April). A Measure of Affinity-Seeking: An Alternative to the Bell and Daly Typology. A paper presented at the Eastern Communication Association convention, Pittsburgh, PA.

Frymier, A. B. & Shulman, G. M. (1994, November). Development and testing of the learner empowerment instrument in a communication based model. Paper presented at the annual convention of the Speech Communication Association, New Orleans, LA,

Frymier, A. B., & Thompson, C. A. (1992). Perceived teacher affinity-seeking in relation to perceived teacher credibility. Communication Education, 41, 388-399.

Glasser, W. (1990). The quality school: Managing students without coercion. New York: Harper & Row.

Gorham, J. (1988). The relationship between verbal teacher immediacy behaviors and student learning. Communication Education, 37, 40-53.

Gorham, J., Kelley, D. H., & McCroskey, J. C. (1989). The affinity-seeking of classroom teachers: A second perspective. Communication Quarterly, 37, 16-26.

Hubbard, D. (1993). Editor's preface. In D. Hubbard (Ed.), Continuous quality improvement: Making the transition to education (pp. ix-xiii). Maryville, MO: Prescott Publishing.

Kanungo, R. (1982). Work Alienation. New York: Praeger.

Luechauer, D. & Shulman, G. M. (in press) Training transformational leaders: A call for practicing empowerment in the classroom. International Journal Of Public Administration.

Luechauer, D. & Shulman, G. M. (1993). Empowerment at work: Separating folklore from fact. At Work: Stories Of Tomorrow's Workplace, 2(6), 13-14.

Luechauer, D. & Shulman, G. M. (1992a). Moving from bureaucracy to empowerment: Shifting paradigms to practice what we preach in class. In T. Head & T. Keaveny (Eds.), Conference proceedings (pp. 109-115). St. Charles, IL: Midwest Academy of Management.

Luechauer, D. & Shulman, G. M. (1992b). Practicing what we teach. At Work: Stories Of Tomorrow's Workplace, 1(2), 17-18.

McClelland, D. (1975). Power: The inner experience. New York: Irvington.

McCroskey, J. C., & McCroskey, L. R. (1986). The affinity-seeking of classroom teachers. Communication Research Reports, 3, 158-167.

McCroskey, J. C., & Wheeless, L. R. (1976). Introduction to human communication. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Richmond, V. P. (1990). Communication in the classroom: Power and motivation. Communication Education, 39, 181-195.

Richmond, V. P., Gorham, J. S., & Furio, B. J. (1987). Affinity-seeking communication in collegiate female-male relationships. Communication Quarterly, 35, 334-348.

Roach, K. D. (1991). The influence and effects of gender and status on university instructor affinity-seeking behavior. The Southern Communication Journal, 57, 73-80.

Rotter, J. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. Psychological Monographs: General and Applied, 80, 1-28.

Schultz, S. & Shulman, G. (1993, April). The development and assessment of the job empowerment instrument (JEI). Paper presented at the Joint Central States Communication Association and Southern States Communication Association annual convention, Lexington, KY.

Senge, P. (1990). The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization. New York: Currency Doubleday.

Senge, P., Roberts, C., Ross, R., Smith, B. & Kleiner, A. (1994). The fifth discipline fieldbook: Strategies and tools for building a learning organization. New York: Currency Doubleday.

Shulman, G., & Luechauer, D. (1993). The empowering educator: A CQI approach to classroom leadership. In D. Hubbard (Ed.), Continuous quality improvement: Making the transition to education (pp. 424-453). Maryville, MO: Prescott Publishing.

Shulman, G., Luechauer, D. & Shulman, C. (in press). Assessment for learner empowerment: The meta-cognitive map. In T. Banta (ed.) Good practice in assessing higher education outcomes. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Shulman, G., McCormack, A., Luechauer, D. & Shulman, C. (1993). Using the journal assignment to create empowered learners: An application of writing across the curriculum. Journal on Excellence in College Teaching, 4, 89-104.

Thomas, K., & Velthouse, B. (1990). Cognitive elements of empowerment: An "interpretive" model of intrinsic task motivation. Academy Of Management Review, 15, 666-681.

Warr, P., Cook, J. & Wall, T. (1979). Scales for the measurement of some work attitudes and aspects of psychological well-being. Journal of Occupational Psychology, 52, 129-148.

Table 1

Correlations Between Learning Behavior Items and Global Learning

Learning Behavior Items	r*
1. I see the relationship of the course content from one day to the next throughout the semester.	.57
2. I see the connections between the content in this class with the content in other classes.	.50
3. I ask questions to find out what others in class think about the content	.22
4. I actively participate in class discussion.	.34
5. I like to talk about what I'm doing in this class with friends and family.	.45
6. I meet my instructor in her/his office.	.18
7. I explain course content to other students	.48
8. I volunteer my opinion in class	.31
9. I helped my instructor with his/her project outside of class.	.11
10. I challenge points made by my instructor in class.	.16
11. I openly disagree with my instructor on content in class	.13
12. I see improvement in my performance on assignments in this class	.50
13. I think about the course content outside of class.	.56

* correlations with global item "I learned a lot in this class."

all correlations were significantly different from zero, $p < .05$

Table 2
Empowerment Measure Factor Analysis

Items	Loading
Impact	
1. I have the power to make a difference in how things are done in this class.	.80
*2. I have a choice in the methods I can use to perform my work.	.65
3. My participation is important to the success of this class.	.66
*4. I have freedom to choose among options in this class.	.73
5. I can make an impact on the way things are run in this class.	.86
*6. Alternative approaches to learning are encouraged in this class.	.73
7. I have the opportunity to contribute to the learning of others in this class.	.75
*8. I have the opportunity to make important decisions in this class.	.80
9. I cannot influence what happens in this class.	-.69
10. I have the power to create a supportive learning environment in this class.	.78
11. My contribution to this class makes no difference.	-.66
*12. I can determine how tasks can be performed.	.62
13. I make a difference in the learning that goes on in this class.	.78
*14. I have no freedom to choose in this class.	-.56
15. I can influence the instructor.	.72
16. I feel appreciated in this class.	.70
Meaningfulness	
1. The tasks required of me in this class are personally meaningful.	.71
2. I look forward to going to this class.	.80
3. This class is exciting.	.82
4. This class is boring.	-.78
5. This class is interesting.	.83
6. The tasks required of me in this class are valuable to me.	.84
7. The information in this class is useful.	.84
8. This course will help me achieve my future goals.	.71
9. The tasks required in this course are a waste of my time.	-.82
10. This class is not important to me.	-.79
Competence	
1. I feel confident that I can adequately perform my duties.	.69
2. I feel intimidated by what is required of me in this class.	-.68
3. I possess the necessary skills to perform successfully in class.	.77
4. I feel unable to do the work in this class.	-.75
5. I believe that I am capable of achieving my goals in this class.	.76
6. I have faith in my ability to do well in this class.	.84
7. I have the qualifications to succeed in this class.	.73
8. I lack confidence in my ability to perform the tasks in this class.	.73
9. I feel very competent in this class.	.78

* indicates an a priori choice dimension item

Table 3

Correlations Among Empowerment, Motivation, Affinity-Seeking, and Learning

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Meaningfulness	_ _							
2. Competence	.48*	_ _						
3. Impact	.67*	.42*	_ _					
4. State Motivation	.79*	.49*	.57*	_ _				
5. Trait Motivation	-.10	-.01	-.03	.05	_ _			
6. Affinity-Seeking	.71*	.44*	.65*	.52*	-.09	_ _		
7. Affective Learning	.84*	.48*	.57*	.73*	-.14*	.73*	_ _	
8. Learning Behaviors	.72*	.41*	.70*	.67*	.00	.58*	.63*	_ _

* $p < .05$