Teaching Methods and Course Characteristics Related to College Students’ Desire to Take a Course

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Do college students’ ratings of how frequently their instructor applies certain teaching methods (i.e., stimulating student interest, fostering student collaboration, establishing rapport, encouraging student involvement, and structuring the classroom experience) correlate with their desire to take the course?

- Do college students’ ratings of course characteristics (i.e., using a variety of assessment methods, using educational technology to promote learning,) correlate with their desire to take the course?

- Are students’ ratings of course workload (i.e., difficulty of subject-matter, amount of reading, and amount of work in non-reading assignments) related to their desire to take the course?

- Does students’ desire to take a course correlate with their perception of the instructor’s expectations of them (i.e., expecting students to take their share of responsibility for learning and setting high achievement standards)?
DIRECTIONAL HYPOTHESES

- Students’ desire to take a course would be positively related to how frequently the instructor
  - used certain teaching methods.
  - used a variety of assessment methods.
  - used educational technology to promote learning.
NONDIRECTIONAL HYPOTHESES

- Students’ desire to take a course would be related to how much the instructor
  - expected them to take responsibility for their own learning.
  - set high achievement standards.
  - course workload (amount of reading, amount of work in non-reading assignments, difficulty of subject matter).
From 2002 to 2007, 366,597 classes of university/college students from 290 institutions completed The IDEA Center Student Ratings Diagnostic Form.

The average enrollment in those classes was 22 students, with class sizes ranging from 1 to 909.

Archival data were obtained from files stored at The IDEA Center in Manhattan, Kansas.

Most classes completed ratings using the paper-and-pencil response format (93.9%), whereas 6.1% used the online format.

The type of institutions included in the IDEA student ratings database varies as follows: 22% two-year, 14% Baccalaureate, 28% Masters, 23% Doctoral, and 13% other.

The approximate U.S. regional distribution includes 21% from the East/Northeast, 12% from the Southeast, 39% from the Midwest, 13% from the Rockies/West, and 16% from the Southwest.
INSTRUMENTATION

- *Faculty Information Form* (FIF). The FIF is designed to solicit the instructor’s perspective about the course.
- *Student RatingsDiagnostic Form*. The IDEA Center recommends that students complete the *Student Ratings Diagnostic Form* any time after they have completed the first half of the course.
  - Frequency of each of 20 teaching methods (1=Hardly Ever to 5 = Almost Always)
  - Course workload questions: 1 = Much less than most courses to 5 = Much more than most courses
  - Course characteristics (variety of assessment methods, use of educational technology, 1 = Definitely False to 5 = Definitely True)
TEACHING METHOD SCALES

- Structuring the classroom experience
- Establishing rapport
- Encouraging student involvement
- Fostering student collaboration
- Stimulating student interest
CRITERION VARIABLE

• “I really wanted to take a course from this instructor.”
  ◦ 1=Definitely false, 2=More false than true, 3=In between, 4=More true than false, 5=Definitely true
### REGRESSION MODEL 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>Semi-partial $r$</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Scale SSI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scale ES</td>
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</table>

**Note.** SSI = Stimulating Student Interest; FSC = Facilitating Student Collaboration; ER = Establishing Rapport; ESI = Encouraging Student Involvement; SCE = Structuring Classroom Experience.
**REGRESSION MODEL 2**

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<td>Assessmnt</td>
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Note. Assessmnt = used variety of assessment methods; Ed.Tech. = used educational technology to promote learning.
### REGRESSION MODEL 3

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<td>Work</td>
<td>0.159</td>
<td>81.56</td>
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<td>Difficulty</td>
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<td>0.05</td>
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</tbody>
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- **Note.** Reading=Amount of reading; Work=Amount of work in non-reading assignments; Difficulty=Difficulty of subject matter.
## REGRESSION MODEL 4

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**Note.** Respons. = Expected students to take responsibility for their share of learning; Standards = Instructor set high achievement standards.
SUMMARY

- Students have a stronger desire to take a course when an instructor:
  - Stimulates their interest and provides structure
  - Uses educational technology to promote learning
  - Uses a variety of assessment methods
  - Has high expectations
  - Expects students to take share of responsibility for learning
  - Assigns work in non-reading assignments
LIMITATIONS

- Research questions limited to items in the IDEA database
- No data available regarding students’ individual characteristics
- No information available about students who dropped the course
- All relationships correlational; no attempt to posit cause-effect relationships