



## A “top-down” analysis of high school teacher motivation <sup>☆</sup>

Keith D. Ciani <sup>a,\*</sup>, Jessica J. Summers <sup>b</sup>, Matthew A. Easter <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> *Department of Educational, School, and Counseling Psychology, College of Education, University of Missouri, 16 Hill Hall, Columbia, MO 65211, USA*

<sup>b</sup> *Department of Educational Psychology, College of Education, University of Arizona, P. O. Box 210069, Tucson, AZ 85721, USA*

Available online 30 May 2007

---

### Abstract

Classroom instruction may be affected by school contexts that are increasingly performance-driven because of legislative demands. Interpreting this as a need to investigate the relationships between school context and classroom practice, this study took a “top-down” approach by examining contextual elements of school goal structure and teacher community on teachers’ sense of self- and collective efficacy, and classroom goal structures. After collecting data from teachers in four Midwestern high schools, results indicated that teachers in highly performance-oriented schools reported significantly less adaptive motivational beliefs, lower community, and more performance-oriented instruction than teachers in a low performance-oriented school. Furthermore, a path analysis revealed that classroom goal structures were significantly and indirectly related to teacher community. We discuss how academic context may affect teachers’ motivational beliefs as well as classroom practices, and make recommendations for future research and practice.

© 2007 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

*Keywords:* Teacher community; Goal structures; Collective efficacy; Teacher self-efficacy; No Child Left Behind

---

---

<sup>☆</sup> Earlier versions of this article were presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April 2006, and at the 4th International Biennial Self-concept Enhancement and Learning Facilitation (SELF) Research Conference, Ann Arbor, July 2006. We thank the principals and teachers of participating schools for their time, and David Bergin for his comments on an earlier version of this manuscript.

\* Corresponding author. Fax: +1 573 884 5989.

E-mail address: [kdcgd4@mizzou.edu](mailto:kdcgd4@mizzou.edu) (K.D. Ciani).

## 1. Introduction

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 represents the most significant involvement of the federal government in public education in United States history, requiring that 100% of each state's students reach proficiency standards in both math and reading-language arts by the 2013–2014 school year (Yell & Drasgow, 2005). Henceforth, America's public schools are presumed to be more performance-oriented as a result of accountability testing. Numerous theories of human learning and motivation posit that problems may arise when certain academic contexts transcend administrative and organizational agendas to permeate the teaching staff's beliefs about their teaching capabilities and classroom instruction (Alexander & Riconscente, 2005). Midgley, Kaplan, and Middleton (2001) suggest that this emphasis on performance goals can alter teachers' instructional practices in the classroom:

The state puts pressure on the district, the district puts pressure on principals, principals put pressure on teachers, and teachers put pressure on students to demonstrate ability on these tests and to score better than others to look good in media accounts and to receive monetary rewards (p. 83).

In light of NCLB legislation, school administrations may feel pressured to control the instructional planning and practices of teachers (McDermott, 2007). Thus, the current state of teachers' academic context may significantly affect everything from their motivational beliefs and classroom practices (Midgley, Anderman, & Hicks, 1995), to teachers' sense of community within a school (Fives & Alexander, 2004). Woolfolk Hoy, Davis, and Pape (2005) have proposed an ecological model of teachers' sense of efficacy that appears to support the "top-down" directionality of Midgley et al.'s (2001) observation. The model depicts a teacher's sense of self, identity, and efficacy being at the heart of the immediate school context. All of these constructs are encompassed by the greater context of state and national school reform and accountability assessment. Results from numerous studies provide empirical support for the directionality of influence. In separate studies, significant relationships have been identified between the academic context and teachers' perceived collective efficacy (Adams & Forsyth, 2006; Lynch, Duggan, Husman, & Pennington, 2006; Ross & Gray, 2004) as well as self-efficacy (Woolfolk Hoy & Burke-Spero, 2005). Furthermore, perceived collective efficacy has been identified as a predictor of teacher self-efficacy (Goddard & Goddard, 2001; Lynch, 2007), and teacher self-efficacy has been linked with classroom goal structure (Deemer, 2004; Wolters & Daugherty, 2005, 2007). However, no one has examined these relationships in unison from a top-down perspective, including a contextual variable as the "top" predictor and teachers' beliefs about their instructional capabilities as the "bottom" predictors.

When asked about the influence of state mandated exams on classroom instruction, teachers report sound instruction (a focus on thinking, creativity, and understanding) being compromised by pressures to increase test scores (Abrams, Pedulla, & Madaus, 2003; Urdan & Paris, 1994). Sheldon and Biddle (1998) label this phenomenon as a risk accompanying a testing-sanctioning educational approach, suggesting that "Too much focus on tests can lead teachers to adopt a narrowed curriculum, dampening student interest and inhibiting critical thinking" (p. 174). For instance, when teachers perceive pressure to raise students' test scores, they tend to report using more controlled, teacher-centered instructional and assessment strategies, and these strategies are typically

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/352819>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/352819>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)