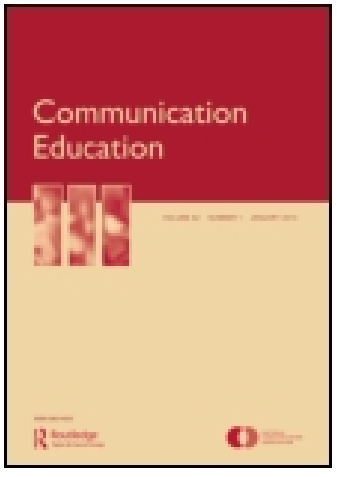

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Students' Instructional Dissent and Relationships with Faculty Members' Burnout, Commitment, Satisfaction, and Efficacy

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*Extending research on instructional dissent beyond student reports, this study examined the potential for students' expressed dissent to have deleterious effects on faculty members. Instructors (*N = *113) completed surveys about students' instructional dissent regarding their classes and reported their own burnout, commitment, satisfaction, and efficacy. Results indicated that (a) expressive dissent was positively related to emotional exhaustion and negatively related to teaching satisfaction and classroom management efficacy; (b) rhetorical dissent was positively related to instructional strategy efficacy; and (c) vengeful dissent was negatively related to affective organizational commitment and teaching satisfaction. Thus, the types of instructional dissent differentially impact instructors' professional outcomes, providing insight into stressors for faculty members.*

Keywords: Dissent; Burnout; Efficacy; Commitment; Satisfaction

"Universities attempt to hire the highest quality faculty they can, but they are not always successful at retaining them" (Ambrose, Huston, & Norman, 2005, p. 803). The disconnect between successful hiring and actual retention can be attributed to a variety of stressors including work overload, role conflicts, interaction with other faculty, and aging and retirement considerations that may influence decisions to stay at a university (Hendel & Horn, 2008). Further, research has revealed that interpersonal relationships with colleagues can influence satisfaction and retention, and institutional characteristics such as university size, budget, and mission can

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influence faculty members' morale and intentions to stay at a university (Ambrose et al., 2005; Ponjuan, Conley, & Trower, 2011). What is missing from our understanding of faculty retention is how interpersonal interactions with students, often an integral part of their everyday workload, may influence faculty members' decisions to continue at their institution.

Recent mandates require that all faculty members, even those at research institutions, give more attention to teaching, and many faculty members report that there is an equal focus on teaching and research in their academic positions (Terpstra & Honoree, 2009) and that teaching is personally "essential" (Berrett, 2013). This increased attention to teaching and interpersonal relationships with students occurs both inside and outside of the classroom (e.g., Jones, 2008; Mansson, Myers, & Martin, 2012), and these interactions can influence faculty members' professional outcomes. For example, instructors who reported caring about their students reported greater job satisfaction and motivation (Teven, 2007). Thus, instructors perceive the instructor–student relationship as important and experience positive outcomes from positive relationships with students. However, not all instructor–student interactions and relationships are positive.

It is important to consider how the potential for negative interactions with students and negative outcomes associated with poor instructor–student relationships may affect instructor indicators of overall job satisfaction. Instructional dissent, or the process by which "students express their disagreements or complaints about class-related issues" (Goodboy, 2011b, p. 423), may take a toll on instructors as many of the complaints are related to teacher-specific variables, including unfair grading, unjust assignments, and teaching style (Goodboy, 2011b). Dissent may create a source of conflict between instructors and students, and recent research has linked instructor–student conflict to college teacher burnout (Ramsey, Knight, Knight, & Verdon, 2011). This study examined the effects of college student dissent on instructors' professional outcomes. The following sections will review instructional dissent; face threats as an explanatory framework for the link between dissent and instructor outcomes; and professional outcomes.

Literature Review

When students are distraught over a class-related issue such as receiving a bad grade or being treated unfairly by an instructor, students typically respond in one of two ways. Most college students either (a) do nothing at all about their issue, or instead, (b) communicate instructional dissent (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2013; Goodboy, 2011a, 2011b, Horan, Chory, & Goodboy, 2010). Instructional dissent takes the form of student complaints or criticisms (Goodboy, 2011a, 2011b) and emerges in one of three forms: expressive dissent, rhetorical dissent, or vengeful dissent. *Expressive dissent* is when students vent their frustrations about class to others to gain sympathy and/or empathy. *Rhetorical dissent* is when students approach an instructor directly to persuade him/her to remedy an issue. *Vengeful dissent* is when students attempt to get even with an instructor by talking badly about him/her in hopes of keeping an instructor accountable.

Many student complaints are triggered by dissatisfaction stemming from ineffective teaching and negative classroom experiences (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2013; Goodboy, 2011a). For instance, in a study sampling senior nursing students (Marchiondo, Marchiondo, & Lasiter, 2010), 88% of students reported that at least one instructor had treated them in an uncivil manner. In the same study, nursing students reported their most common response to uncivil faculty treatment was to talk about it with a friend or classmate (i.e., expressive dissent). From extant research, it is clear that much of instructional dissent is a reaction to instructor misbehaviors in the classroom (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2013; Goodboy, 2011a, 2011b; Vallade, Vela, & Martin, 2013) and overall lack of justice and respect for students (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2013; Holmgren & Bolkan, 2014; Horan et al., 2010). Conversely, instructional dissent can be dampened when instructors use effective teaching behaviors in their classrooms. For instance, LaBelle, Martin, and Weber (2013) found that college students did not engage in expressive and vengeful dissent when their instructors communicated immediacy and clarity in their classrooms.

However, other research suggests that distal variables, which have little to do with student perceptions of instructor, also play a role in the student dissent process. For instance, instructional dissent is correlated with students' communication and personality traits (Buckner & Finn, 2013; Goodboy & Bolkan, 2013; Goodboy & Martin, 2013; Goodboy & Myers, 2012) as well as their academic beliefs about college in general (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2013; Goodboy & Frisby, 2014). Moreover, proximal variables are tied to instructional dissent such as students' motivation (Goodboy, 2011b), interest (Martin, Goodboy, & Johnson, 2013), attributional blame (LaBelle & Martin, 2014), and forgiveness of the instructor (Vallade et al., 2013).

Though scholarship to this point has focused primarily on the factors influencing dissent, Garner (2013) suggests that dissent is in fact a process. In particular, once someone has expressed dissent, whether inside or outside of the classroom (Mansson et al., 2012), the event may impact not only the dissenter, but others who witnessed or were the intended targets of the dissent message. Garner's argument suggests that instructors are likely affected by student disagreements about classroom policies or procedures. For example, when a student approaches an instructor to discuss a grade believed to be unjust, the instructor may feel the dissenting student has threatened or attacked the instructor's identity, which may in turn, affect instructor commitment, satisfaction, and efficacy. Thus, both facework and self-efficacy are theoretical perspectives used to guide the predictions linking student dissent to instructor outcomes.

Theoretical Perspectives

Face is a construct akin to identity and image; it is how individuals portray themselves to others (Goffman, 1967). Later scholars delineated Goffman's notion of face into positive face, which is the desire to be perceived as competent and likeable, while negative face is the desire to be free from imposition (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Through communicative, relational, and interactional processes, it is possible for both

positive and negative face to be either threatened or supported by conversation partners (Goffman, 1967). Face threats, or the denial of someone's identity, are considered negative communication acts that elicit negative emotions (Carson & Cupach, 2000; Kennedy-Lightsey, 2010), defensiveness (Trees, Kerssen-Griep, & Hess, 2009), or embarrassment (Withers & Sherblom, 2008). Conversely, face support provides affirmation for identity, demonstrating the belief that one is competent, likable, and autonomous.

Self-efficacy frameworks suggest efficacy is molded by vicarious experiences, modeling, verbal persuasion, and performance experiences. It is important to note that performance experiences have the strongest influence on self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1977, 1982). In a study by Mottet, Beebe, Raffeld, and Medlock (2004), college student responses to instructors were behavioral predictors of instructor efficacy. Thus, instructor–student relationships can bolster (i.e., when interactions are positive) or threaten (i.e., when interactions are negative) an instructor's perceptions of his or her teaching efficacy (i.e., positive face). Taken together, instructional dissent may be face threatening for instructors and may influence perceptions of efficacy, satisfaction, burnout, and commitment.

Face Threats and Instructional Dissent

In the instructional and organizational literature, research focuses on face threats and face support needed by the student or the subordinate. For example, Kerssen-Griep, Witt, and colleagues (Kerssen-Griep, Trees, & Hess, 2008; Kerssen-Griep & Witt, 2012; Trees et al., 2009; Witt & Kerssen-Griep, 2011) have examined feedback to college students as a face-threatening situation that requires communication to mitigate the perception of face threats. An instructor's use of face threat mitigation is important for the instructor to maintain perceptions of credibility, competence, and the provision of useful feedback. However, some scholars argued that instructors also experience face threat from students.

Dunleavy et al. (2008) found that college student nagging, which suggested an instructor was incompetent or demonstrated student frustration, was face threatening for instructors. Further, Baiocchi-Wagner (2011) found that "students' accusations, criticisms, or rejection of the instructors' directions" were face threatening acts for college instructors with communication apprehension (p. 227). Taken together, nagging and face threats are conceptually similar to instructional dissent behaviors. Although, low power partners in a relationship (i.e., students) are less likely to threaten the face of a high power partner (i.e., instructors; Morand, 2000), students still inevitably complain, nag, criticize, and express dissent. The expression of dissent may be the student's only outlet for reproach when an instructor engages in a problematic event, which may include poor performance and a host of other instructor misbehaviors (Carson & Cupach, 2000).

Instructors are often the target of student feedback on instructor and course evaluations, during out of class communication meetings (e.g., Mansson et al., 2012), and following the return of graded assignments. Student evaluations may threaten

instructor positive face (e.g., teaching competence, instructor likability) or negative face (e.g., imposing on freedoms by making requests to change a policy or grade). Instructional dissent may be expressed in teaching evaluations or may be expressed to friends, family, and other students (Goodboy, 2011a). Instructional dissent, then, is likely perceived by the instructor as inherently face threatening to his or her identity. It is important to understand how instructional dissent may affect instructors.

Instructional Dissent, Face Threats, and Professional Outcomes

Although teaching usually comprises only a percentage of an instructor's organizational responsibilities, the importance and prominence of the instructor–student relationship indicates that instructors' perceptions of their workplace may be influenced by interactions with students. For example, Gmelch, Lovrich, and Wilke (1984) reported that college instructors indicated greater stress related to teaching responsibilities than either research or service. However, the mundane and normative teaching-related tasks such as preparing lectures, writing exams, or holding office hours may not capture the most stressful elements of teaching. Instead, interactions with students, whether positive or negative, may influence instructors' perceptions of burnout, satisfaction, efficacy, and organizational commitment.

Burnout, or a general wearing out resulting from job responsibilities and communication in the workplace, describes a chronic condition that may affect employees over time (Maslach, 1982; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Due to the interpersonal communication present in instructor–student interactions (Frymier & Houser, 2000; Schrodt et al., 2009), instructors may be particularly susceptible to all three dimensions of burnout including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Farber, 1991; Maslach, 1982; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach et al., 2001). Whereas emotional exhaustion, the hallmark of burnout, describes the emotions instructors may experience such as frustration, fatigue, or anger, depersonalization refers to a shift towards negative perceptions of colleagues and students that instructors interact with and communicating in ways that distance themselves from others or even dehumanizes others (Maslach, 1982; Zhang & Zhu, 2007). Finally, reduced personal accomplishment or lack of personal accomplishment refers to decreased efficacy, perceived lack of competence, or perceived personal failure on behalf of the instructor (Maslach, 1982).

In a review of scholarship regarding primary and secondary teachers' experiences with burnout, Chang (2009) specified three sources of teacher burnout including individual factors, organizational factors, and transactional factors. Of interest to this study are the instructor–student interactions that constitute the transactional factor. Lackritz (2004) found that college student evaluations of instructors related negatively to personal accomplishment and depersonalization, whereas teaching load positively related to emotional exhaustion. Friedman (1995) identified three student behavior patterns that primary and secondary students engaged in and were associated with teacher burnout in primary education. Specifically, students who communicated disrespect, inattentiveness, or lack of sociability with teachers and peers predicted

instructor burnout. Additionally, Hastings and Bham (2003) found primary students disrespect positively predicted instructor emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Student lack of sociability also positively predicted depersonalization and negatively predicted personal accomplishment. From a face-threat perspective, these student behavior patterns, which may be expressed through dissent, may threaten instructors' positive face. That is, how students communicate with the instructor may threaten face, leading to instructor burnout.

Apart from rhetorical dissent, student expressions of disagreement with a classroom policy or procedure are frequently categorized as negative behaviors akin to disrespect, inattentiveness, or lack of sociability (Goodboy, 2011a). Interacting with students about dissent may be particularly draining (Chang & Davis, 2009) and face threatening. For example, an instructor who sees students vent about a disagreement with classroom policies to peers (i.e., expressive dissent) may be more likely to feel frustrated, angry (i.e., emotional exhaustion), or to perceive face threats. Hence:

H1: Instructional dissent is positively related to instructors' organizational burnout.

In addition to feeling burnout, an instructor may also feel less efficacious regarding his or her job following student dissent expression. Teacher self-efficacy, defined as an educator's beliefs about his or her personal ability to stimulate learning and shape student outcomes, includes efficacy for instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Instructor efficacy may elicit increased perseverance and enthusiasm in the face of classroom or institutional adversity (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Efficacious instructors experience higher commitment (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Coladarci, 1992), remain in the teaching profession (Denham & Michael, 1981), display low absenteeism (Imants & Van Zoelen, 1995), seek collaboration with coworkers more frequently (Morrison, Walker, Wakefield, Solberg, 1994), and engage in continuing their own education (Watson, 2006). Students' instructional dissent is likely evaluations of, and commentary on, previous experiences with that instructor, and thus, may influence instructors' self-efficacy beliefs. That is, following an interaction with a student who is dissenting or finding out about a student expressing disagreement to others, an instructor's efficacy may change. Thus:

H2: Instructional dissent is negatively related to instructors' teaching efficacy.

Organizational commitment is "a psychological link between the employee and his or her organization" (Allen & Meyer, 1996, p. 252). According to Meyer and Allen (1991), organizational commitment includes three components: affective, continuance, and normative. Employees with affective commitment stay with an organization because they develop affinity and want to stay; those with continuance commitment stay because they need to financially or professionally; those with normative commitment stay because they ought to because of loyalty or obligation (Meyer & Allen,

1991). Given instructors' workload related to interacting with students, communication between instructors and students may affect commitment.

Dannetta (2002) identified student factors such as lack of motivation and low achievement as negative influences of teacher commitment in the primary education context. Further, Starnaman and Miller (1992) found that workload and communicative support influenced stressors, which then influenced organizational commitment in primary education settings. In Starnaman and Miller's study, communicative support represented a positive interaction, particularly between a principal and the instructors. In this study, instructional dissent characterizes a potentially negative interaction between students and instructors. Despite the difference in communication valence, the actors involved in the interaction, or the level of education, instructor–student interpersonal communication appears to influence the instructors' organizational commitment. Therefore:

H3: Instructional dissent is negatively related to instructors' organizational commitment.

Teacher satisfaction describes "affect toward their profession and their students" (Plax, Kearney, & Downs, 1986, p. 379). Although research linking instructor–student communication to student satisfaction exists (Jones, 2008), several scholars, including Plax et al. (1986) who studied primary, secondary, and college instructors and Pena and Mitchell (2000) who studied college instructors have argued that the instructor–student relationship also affects teacher satisfaction. In the Mottet et al. (2004) study that examined relationships between college student communication behaviors and teacher efficacy, student verbal and nonverbal responsiveness was also related to teacher satisfaction. "Given that student in-class disruptions have been tied consistently to teacher reports of dissatisfaction" (Plax et al., 1986, p. 380), it is likely that another negative student behavior such as instructional dissent will also inversely relate to teacher satisfaction. Thus:

H4: Instructional dissent is negatively related to teacher satisfaction.

Method

Participants

Participants were faculty members (N = 113; male = 39, female = 72, and two who did not report his/her sex) with teaching responsibilities at higher education institutions. Faculty members ranged in age from 25 to 74 years (M = 45.3, SD = 13.1). They had been at their current institutions between 1 and 43 years (M = 9.7, SD = 9.6), teach between 1 and 10 classes per semester (M = 3.0, SD = 1.5), and teach between 3 and 300 students per semester (M = 85.3, SD = 61.1). The faculty members represented several different positions with the primary representation being assistant professors (n = 33), followed by associate professors (n = 24), full professors (n = 21), adjunct faculty (n = 14), lecturers (n = 14), other (n = 5), and 2 who did not respond. In this sample, 19 states and 37 different institutions were represented.

Procedures and Measurement

Faculty participants were recruited using faculty listserves at two institutions, emails to the research team's personal and professional networks, and a call for participants posted on social networking sites (e.g., Facebook). Faculty members who participated completed an anonymous survey hosted on Qualtrics including measures of instructional dissent (Goodboy, 2011b), burnout (Starnaman & Miller, 1992), organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990), teaching satisfaction (Plax et al., 1986), and teaching efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Qualtrics indicated 238 unique surveys were started; however, only 113 surveys were completed for a 47.5% participation and completion rate.

Instructional Dissent. The instructional dissent scale is a 22-item instrument that asks students to report on how often they express their disagreements or complaints about class-related issues. This measure includes three subscales: expressive dissent (10 items), rhetorical dissent (6 items), and vengeful dissent (6 items). For the purposes of this study, the items were modified to collect instructor perceptions of student dissent. For example, the item "I complain to others to express my frustration with this course" was revised to say "Students express their frustrations to others about the courses I teach." Responses were solicited using a 5-point response format ranging from 0 (*never*) to 4 (*very often*). Previous reliability coefficients have ranged from .86 to .95 (Goodboy, 2011b). In this study using the modified items, Cronbach's alphas for the dissent types ranged from .85 to .95: expressive (M = 21.82, SD = 7.07, α = .95), rhetorical (M = 17.54, SD = 4.35, α = .85), and vengeful (M = 7.32, SD = 2.56, α = .94).

Burnout. Burnout was assessed using a modified version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory measure (Starnaman & Miller, 1992), a multidimensional and previously reliable scale that assessed (a) emotional exhaustion (5 items; e.g., I feel emotionally drained from my work), (b) depersonalization (3 items; e.g., I really don't care what happens to some students), and (c) personal accomplishment (5 items; e.g., I have accomplished many worthwhile things with my job). Participants responded to statements on a Likert-type 6-point scale ranging from *never* (1) to *daily* (6). Previous reliabilities ranged from .65 to .89 (Starnaman & Miller, 1992). In this study, only the emotional exhaustion dimension was reliable (M = 19.50, SD = 7.77, α = .71). Personal accomplishment and depersonalization were not reliable (M = 21.56, SD = 3.40, α = .56) and (M = 7.12, SD = 4.28, α = .49), respectively. Thus, only emotional exhaustion was analyzed.

Organizational Commitment. Organizational commitment was measured using the Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS) developed by Allen and Meyer (1990). The 18-question scale includes six questions each for affective (ACS), continuance (CCS), and normative (NCS) commitment. The only modification to the scale included changing the word "organization" to "university" to reflect the target population and purpose of this study. Participants rated their feelings of commitment on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) *to strongly agree* (7). The

dimensions have been previously reliable with coefficients ranging from .73 to .85 (Allen & Meyer, 1990). In this study, the dimensions were also reliable: affective (M = 28.57, SD = 7.90, α = .86), continuance (M = 23.71, SD = 8.00, α = .78), and normative (M = 24.88, SD = 8.57, α = .85).

Teacher Satisfaction. To measure teacher satisfaction, a 6-item 5-point satisfaction scale developed by Plax et al. (1986) was used. The scale measures (a) satisfaction with teaching (e.g., Have you ever considered quitting teaching?) and (b) satisfaction toward students (e.g., In general, how satisfied are you with the motivation of students you teach?); however, Plax et al. reported that it could be used as a unidimensional scale that has been previously reliable ranging from .71 to .96 (Plax et al., 1986). Participants respond to the Likert-type scale ranging from (1) *never* to (5) *always* or (1) *very dissatisfying* to (5) *very satisfying*. In this study, the teacher satisfaction scale was reliable (M = 23.94, SD = 3.15, α = .73).

Teaching Efficacy. Teachers' perceptions of their own efficacy were measured using a 12-item scale (TSES) created by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001). This 9-point Likert-type scale included responses ranging from *nothing* (1) to a *great deal* (9). The scale assessed three factors of teaching efficacy which were all reliable: instructional strategies (M = 30.23, SD = 4.29, α = .76), classroom management (M = 29.59, SD = 5.17, α = .91), and student engagement (M = 25.65, SD = 5.57, α = .77).

Data-Analysis Plan

To test each of the hypotheses, one-tailed Pearson correlations were used to examine relationships between dissent (i.e., rhetorical, expressive, and vengeful) and burnout (i.e., emotional exhaustion), commitment (i.e., affective, normative, and continuance), satisfaction, and efficacy (i.e., instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement).

Results

Preliminary Analysis

Although there have been mixed results about whether the experiences of instructors who do and do not have tenure are significantly different (e.g., Kogan, Schoenfeld-Tacher, & Hellyer, 2010) and whether students evaluate instructors with and without tenure differently (e.g., Salmon, Smith, Byoungkwan, & Miller, 2005), preliminary analyses to determine whether the instructor position should be included as a moderator variable were conducted. The instructor status data were recoded as either tenured (1) or untenured (2). Two multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) were used to examine differences based on instructor status (e.g., tenured or untenured). For the first model, instructor status was entered as the fixed factor, and the three types of dissent (i.e., rhetorical, expressive, and vengeful) were entered as the dependent variables. Instructor perceptions of student dissent did not

significantly differ based on whether the instructor was tenured or untenured, $\Lambda = .97$, F (1, 98) = .74, $p = .53$. In the second MANOVA, instructor status was entered as the fixed factor and commitment (i.e., affective, continuance, and normative), burnout (i.e., emotional exhaustion), satisfaction, and teaching efficacy (i.e., instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement) were entered as the dependent variables. This model was also not significant, $\Lambda = .93$, F (1, 101) = .85, $p = .56$. Based on these results, instructor status (i.e., tenured or untenured) was not used as a moderator variable in hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1 predicted a positive relationship between instructional dissent and organization burnout. Expressive dissent ($r = .21$, $p < .05$) and vengeful dissent ($r = .17$, $p < .05$) were positively related to emotional exhaustion dimension of burnout. Hypothesis 1 was partially supported.

Hypothesis 2 predicted a negative relationship between instructional dissent and teaching efficacy. Expressive dissent was negatively related to classroom management efficacy ($r = -.19$, $p < .05$) and rhetorical dissent was positively related to instructional strategy efficacy ($r = .24$, $p < .01$). Vengeful dissent was not related to teaching efficacy. Hypothesis two was partially supported.

Hypothesis 3 predicted a negative relationship between instructional dissent and organizational commitment. Vengeful dissent is negatively related to affective organizational commitment ($r = -.19, p < .05$), but rhetorical and expressive dissent were not related to organizational commitment. Hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

Finally, hypothesis 4 predicted a negative relationship between instructional dissent and teacher satisfaction. Both expressive dissent ($r = -.21$, $p < .05$) and vengeful dissent ($r = -.23, p < .05$) were negatively related to teacher satisfaction. Hypothesis 4 was partially supported. See Table 1 for a correlation matrix of all variables.

Table 1 Correlation Matrix of Variables

Variables	D-E	D-R	D-V	OC-A	OC-C	OC-N	EE	TS	E-IS	E-CM
D-E	–									
D-R	.43**	–								
D-V	.44**	.30**	–							
OC-A	−.10	.01	−.19*	–						
OC-C	.09	.15	−.03	−.05	–					
OC-N	−.02	.09	−.08	.73**	.21*	–				
EE	.21*	.13	.17*	−.26**	.36**	−.15	–			
TS	−.21*	.00	−.23*	.40**	−.28**	.22*	−.33**	–		
E-IS	.07	.24**	.12	.05	−.08	−.08	−.01	.26**	–	
E-CM	−.19*	.1	−.04	.05	−.12	−.02	−.12	.36**	.47**	–
E-SE	−.11	.09	.11	.23*	−.19*	.09	−.13	.34**	.49**	.44**

Note. D-E: Expressive dissent; D-R: Rhetorical dissent; D-V: Vengeful dissent; OC-A: Affective Commitment; OC-C: Continuance Commitment; OC-N: Normative commitment; EE: Burnout Emotional Exhaustion; TS: Teaching Satisfaction; E-IS: Efficacy for Instructional Strategies; E-CM: Efficacy for Classroom Management; E-SE: Efficacy for Student Engagement. **$p < .01$; *$p < .05$.

Discussion

Previous research has highlighted when, why, to whom, and even how students express instructional dissent. Instructional dissent from students has been linked to negative outcomes for students including a perceived lack of justice (Holmgren & Bolkan, 2014) and decreased learning (Goodboy, 2011b; Holmgren & Bolkan, 2014). However, instructional communication literature has yet to explore how instructors perceive student dissent or how dissent may affect instructors. Because faculty members are tasked with teaching students as a significant component of their jobs, they are likely to be either triggers, or receivers, of dissent messages from students. Moreover, given the differences between dissent types, instructors are likely to report different reactions to each type of dissent.

First, instructors reported an association between feeling more emotionally exhausted, less satisfied, and less efficacious in managing their classroom and expressive dissent. These findings mirror results of previous studies (Friedman, 1995; Hastings & Bham, 2003). For example, instructors reported emotional exhaustion when students engaged in disrespectful behavior (Friedman, 1995; Hastings & Bham, 2003). Perhaps students are engaging in expressive dissent where instructors can witness or overhear the behavior, even when the dissent message is not intended for the instructor. For example, after returning exams, instructors may observe students comparing exam grades or venting frustration. Even if not present during expressive dissent, instructors may become privy to the dissent from other students or colleague receivers. Due to the significant investment of time and emotion that instructors give to teaching, instructors may feel drained watching or even hearing about students criticizing or expressing frustration with aspects of the instructor's work.

Additionally, instructor satisfaction and efficacy with teaching may be associated with expressive dissent. Plax et al. (1986) found when students disrupted an instructor's class, the instructor reported dissatisfaction with their job. Similarly, if students are venting to others, instructors may feel less satisfied. Not only may the instructor feel dissatisfied, but also the instructor may feel less equipped to effectively deal with or address student dissent or feel unsure about changes to make to address the triggers of instructional dissent. Mottet et al. (2004) found that negative student interactions related to negative instructor perceptions of efficacy. Because students and instructors co-construct the classroom climate (Sidelinger & Booth-Butterfield, 2010), instructors may gain some of their efficacy for handling situations that arise in the classroom from students' approval. Expressing dissent implies dissatisfaction with elements of the classroom climate (i.e., policies and procedures) or classroom management strategies. The instructor may understand that students are not happy and feel that his or her face is being threatened, which may negatively impact instructor efficacy for managing classroom behavior.

Second, instructors reported a relationship between increased instructional strategy efficacy and students' expression of a potentially positive form of dissent—rhetorical dissent. Goodboy and Myers (2012) distinguished rhetorical dissent as an appropriate type of dissent due to several distinct characteristics including (a) direct interaction

between instructors and students and (b) the opportunity for the instructor to address the student issue. Unsurprisingly, then, instructors may feel more efficacious regarding strategies for teaching after a student expresses disagreement with a classroom policy to his or her instructor. For example, if a student disagrees with his or her final essay grade and expresses this idea directly to his or her instructor, then the instructor has the opportunity to explain the policies and procedures surrounding the assignment or correct any perceived mistakes. An instructor may feel more efficacious in his or her choices after constructing a face-saving argument to support the decision.

Further, an instructor may feel more efficacious in his or her instructional strategy choices if a student feels comfortable enough to constructively discuss concerns with the instructor. From a theoretical lens, rhetorical dissent may have potential to threaten an instructor's face, but the direct instructor–student interaction may also afford both the student and the instructor opportunities to practice facework to temper the face threat. This finding shows a relationship between the more positive rhetorical dissent and efficacy, which aligns with Mottet et al.'s (2004) finding that instructors report greater efficacy following positive interactions with students. Moreover, these results support that rhetorical dissent is a positive type of instructional dissent which aligns with Bolkan and Goodboy's (2013) recommendation that "whatever the mechanism, instructors should consider what they can do to promote constructive feedback in their classrooms by way of rhetorical dissent" (p. 296).

Finally, vengeful dissent, the most negative type of dissent, was the only type of dissent negatively related to a faculty member's commitment to a current institution and emotional exhaustion. By definition, vengeful dissent is expressed to others with the intent to cause significant retaliatory harm to the offending faculty member. We can only surmise that vengeful dissent may be the most face-threatening form of dissent, and understandably, an instructor cognizant of a student's attempt to have the instructor removed or disciplined may feel distanced from the organization, the students, and dissatisfied with his or her career. However, relationships between vengeful dissent and organizational commitment may be mediated by the institution's response to such dissent. For example, if the institution engaged in a fair and just process to investigate the claims against the instructor before reaching a resolution regarding the student's claim, then the instructor may feel more committed to the institution. Regardless of the institution's response, an instructor may feel isolated or distanced from the organization (i.e., decreased organizational commitment) after discovering a student's initial expression of vengeful dissent.

From a practical standpoint, instructors should engage in behaviors that reduce the negative types of instructional dissent (i.e., expressive and vengeful) and perhaps provide opportunities for students to engage in rhetorical dissent instead. For example, instructors may directly ask students to air concerns at the middle of the semester or the quarter to allow the instructor to directly address the concerns. Professional development sessions and teaching assistant training workshops should focus on classroom management and pedagogical choices that minimize dissent

provoking triggers. Further, instructors may benefit from training on face-saving tactics when dissent is experienced. Specifically, and based on Goodboy's (2011a, 2011b) findings, these trainings may include information on classroom justice, effective grading practices, syllabus adherence, and classroom management strategies. Finally, from an institutional perspective, positive faculty–student interactions should be encouraged, and appropriate channels and fair and transparent processes for dissent expression for students should be provided. These types of support mechanisms may alleviate the negative effects of student dissent and, consequently, operate to retain instructors despite student dissent.

It has been over two decades since Nussbaum (1992) argued that research explaining how students affect instructors and teaching was missing from the literature. This is an area of instructional communication research that is still lacking. A strength of the current study is the collection of data from diverse instructors' perspectives on how students can affect them professionally through instructional dissent. Although this study offers an informative springboard for understanding more about the influence of instructor–student relationships on professional outcomes for instructors, there are limitations. First, despite the diversity of the sample in this study, the sample size is still small and limited in terms of the statistical tests that could be performed. Second, this study did not measure the face threats or face support associated with each type of instructional dissent. Thus, face threat and face work are an intuitive theoretical framework to explain the results, but the theory was not fully tested in this context. For example, vengeful dissent may be more face threatening, and if dissent is publicly expressed during class or privately expressed during out-of-class communication, the levels of face threat and potential professional outcomes for the instructor may differ. Third, this study only examined potentially negative instructor–student interactions. It is likely that positive interactions between instructors and students are also important factors in professional outcomes for instructors. For example, an instructor who experiences high-quality relationships with students may report higher efficacy, satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Moreover, an instructor who perceives a conducive learning environment may also report greater efficacy and job satisfaction. In light of research identifying faculty stressors (Hendel & Horn, 2008), equally important is research identifying positive factors that affect professional outcomes for faculty, particularly in regard to a job role that requires a large investment (i.e., teaching). Another potential limitation is that this study only considered commitment to an institution, rather than commitment to a discipline or a department. Measuring and testing other types of commitment as they are affected by instructor–student interactions may produce more robust findings in future research. Finally, this study cannot claim causality given the cross-sectional, self-report, nature of the data. It remains unclear whether satisfied, committed, and efficacious instructors engage less in dissent triggering behaviors or if dissent leads to these outcomes.

Notably, this study extends instructional dissent scholarship beyond considering factors that influence a student to choose a type of dissent expression to instructor

perceptions of dissent. Future studies should also consider the impact of dissent on peers in the classroom. For example, when a student interrupts class to express dissent, classmates' perceptions of the peer dissenter, instructor, and the learning environment may also be influenced. This negative expression may prompt negative emotional contagion or set ingroup (i.e., students) and outgroup (i.e., the instructor) boundaries. More importantly, expressions of dissent may have deleterious effects on affective and cognitive learning outcomes. These areas for future research on dissent will likely be fruitful as previous scholarship indicates that peer relationships do impact students' perceptions of the classroom and learning (e.g., Sidelinger & Booth-Butterfield, 2010). Identifying the influence of dissent on peers may help faculty further develop classroom management behaviors that will preserve a conducive learning environment.

In conclusion, understanding the impact of student instructional dissent messages on college instructors is necessary for developing faculty training to proactively deal with student expressions of dissent, and to develop and disseminate better resources to proactively and reactively cope with student expressions of dissent. Understanding the potential role of the instructor–student relationship as a potential workplace stressor for faculty members lends understanding to those characteristics that may prevent a university from retaining high-quality faculty members.

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