

# The Relationship of Professor/Student Rapport with Undergraduate Students' Change in Motivation and Engagement



Christopher M. Estep - Sul Ross State University  
T. Grady Roberts – University of Florida

# Introduction

---

- Undergraduate student motivation and engagement have been pervasive problems in higher education (Pintrich & Zusho, 2007)
- National Research Council (2009) recommended providing more active, engaging instructional interventions
- However, one component overlooked in recommendations has been interpersonal relationships between students and instructors

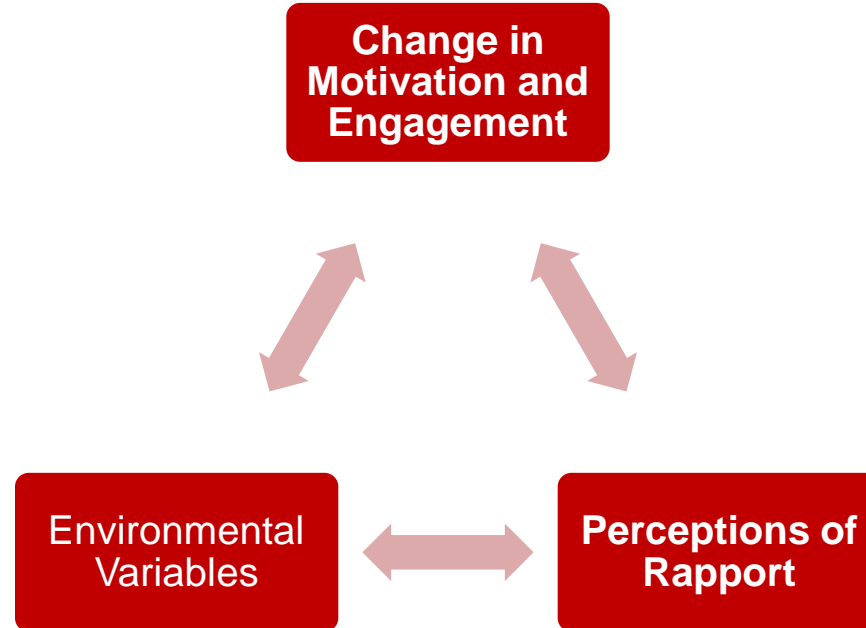
# Introduction

---

- Motivational research has suggested that interpersonal relationships between instructors and students can help improve motivation
- Velez (2008) suggested that instructors enter into relationships with students when they teach
- Therefore, an examination of students' perceptions of rapport with instructors is warranted

# Theoretical Framework

- **Social Cognitive Theory** (Bandura, 1986)
  - ▣ **Triadic Reciprocity** – Learning occurs as a result of bidirectional interactions between environment, personal factors, and behavior



# Purpose

---

- The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between professor/student rapport and change in motivation and engagement

# Methods

# Population

- Undergraduate students enrolled in large CALS classes at UF
- Convenience cluster sample ( $n = 306$ ) participating students in 10 large CALS classes
  - Chi-square tests revealed no significant differences between the sample and population on demographic variables of interest

# Instrumentation

- **Professor/Student Rapport Scale** (Wilson, Ryan, & Pugh, 2010)
  - 34 Likert-type items measuring rapport
- **Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire** (Pintrich et al., 1991)
  - 81 Likert-type items measuring motivation and engagement constructs
    - Constructs of interest for this study – student expectancy for success, values/goals, cognitive/metacognitive strategy use, and resource management strategy use
  - Post then pre design (Rockwell & Kohn, 1989)
- Post-hoc reliabilities ranged from .77 to .96



# Data Analysis

- Data analyzed using SPSS v. 19
- Paired samples t-tests compared pre and post motivation and engagement
- Pearson product moment correlations used to examine relationships between rapport and change in motivation and engagement

# Results

# Comparing Pre and Post Motivation & Engagement

	Mean Change	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Student Expectancy	.15	305	3.63	<.001	.18
Values/goals	.20	305	5.06	<.001	.21
Cognitive Strategy Use	.21	305	7.95	<.001	.23
Resource Management Strategy Use	.06	305	2.49	.013	.07

# Relationships among Variables

	Rapport	Change in SE	Change in V/G	Change in CMSU	Change in RMSU
Rapport	--	.19	.22	.17	.15
Change in SE		--	.60	.28	.32
Change in V/G			--	.40	.46
Change in CMSU				--	.73
Change in RMSU					--

# Conclusions

- Significant differences in pre and post motivation and engagement
  - ▣ However, very small effect sizes
  - ▣ Small positive changes in motivation and engagement
- Low, positive relationships between rapport and change in motivation and engagement
  - ▣ Stronger relationships with motivational variables
  - ▣ Prior research has shown rapport to be positively related to motivational variables
- Students' change in expectancy for success is highly related to their change in values/goals
  - ▣ Change in motivation has low to moderate positive relationships with change in engagement

# Conclusions

---

- Change in cognitive strategy use has a very strong positive relationship with change in resource management strategy use
  - ▣ Students who are cognitively/metacognitively aware are using more learning strategies

# Implications/Recommendations

- Slight positive change in motivation and engagement
  - ▣ Longer durations needed to adequately measure change in variables
  - ▣ Pre then post measures needed
- Instructors' rapport with students might help students' motivation and engagement
  - ▣ Approachability, fairness, friendliness, caring, respect
  - ▣ Teacher immediacy behaviors help build rapport
    - Verbal and nonverbal

# Implications/Recommendations

- Increase in motivational variables varies with increases in engagement
  - ▣ Instructors should:
    - develop an understanding of student motivation and factors contributing to motivation
    - Teach students how to use cognitive/metacognitive strategies
    - Encourage students to utilize resources such as instructor, peers, tutors, online help,
  - ▣ Path analyses should be conducted to determine which variables mediate in the conceptual model
  - ▣ The assumption was made that higher motivation and engagement leads to higher achievement – achievement should be investigated as well



# Thank you!

- Questions?

