The Affinity-Seeking of Classroom Teachers: A Second Perspective

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This study examined strategies reported by 229 elementary and secondary school teachers as things they do to get students to like them and to like the subject matter they teach. The strategies were classified using Bell and Daly's typology of affinity-seeking strategies, with substantial intercoder agreement in interpreting teachers' responses according to those previously generated strategy types. The proportional use of various strategies, however, differed significantly from those reported by McCroskey and McCroskey as affinity-seeking strategies which had been observed by teachers. Results of the present study indicated that teachers' personal affinity-seeking efforts differ in character from their subject affinity-seeking efforts, that they feel less confident in getting students to like their subjects than to like themselves, and that the strategies that teachers consciously use to gain personal and—to an even greater extent—subject matter affinity appear to be drawn from a comparatively narrow range of affinity-seeking options.

KEY CONCEPTS   Affinity, affinity-seeking, affect, liking, classroom communication, instructional communication.

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Affinity-seeking is defined as "the social-communicative process by which individuals attempt to get others to like and feel positive toward them" (Bell & Daly, 1984a, p. 1). Research in the area of interpersonal communication has consistently demonstrated that people who like each other communicate more effectively in interpersonal relationships. Liking increases the probability of interpersonal influence and reduces the probability of interpersonal conflict (McCroskey, Richmond & Stewart, 1986).

Bell and Daly (1984a, b) have developed a typology of 25 affinity-seeking strategies which were generated by small brainstorming groups as behavioral options available to individuals who want to get others to like them. Each strategy is defined with several examples of tactics which operationalize its use (see Bell & Daly, 1984a, b). In brief, however, the strategies are as follows: helping and assisting others (*altruism*); presenting self as a leader (*assume control*); presenting self as equal (*assume equality*); acting comfortable with self and other, even if one is not

(*comfortable self*); allowing other to take charge (*concede control*); following cultural rules for socialization and conversation (*conversational rule-keeping*); presenting self as active and enthusiastic (*dynamism*); encouraging other to talk (*elicit other's disclosures*); being entertaining and making time together enjoyable for other (*facilitate enjoyment*); including other in social activities and groups of friends (*inclusion of other*); mentioning relational "history" or otherwise leading other to perceive the relationship as closer than it actually has been (*influence perceptions of closeness*); listening actively (*listening*); using nonverbal approach behaviors (*nonverbal immediacy*); disclosing personal information (*openness*); presenting self as free-thinking and independent (*personal autonomy*); trying to look good (*physical attractiveness*); highlighting past accomplishments and other things that make self interesting to know (*present interesting self*); offering favors or explaining payoffs of the relationship (*reward association*); making other feel good about self, like a very important person (*self-concept confirmation*); initiating encounters with other, making self available for inclusion (*self-inclusion*); showing empathy (*sensitivity*); pointing out similarities with other (*similarity*); encouraging, not criticizing other (*supportiveness*); and being dependable, consistent, sincere (*trustworthiness*).

McCroskey and McCroskey (1986) point out the appropriateness of examining teacher-student communication in terms of the affinity-seeking construct: Teachers need to influence students to engage in on-task behaviors. A lack of affinity in the classroom is likely to reduce the teacher's influence and result in coincidental reductions in time spent on learning tasks. The affinity between student and teacher is also likely to be related to the potential for interpersonal conflict and the development of positive affective orientations toward the subject matter taught and the behaviors recommended in the class. Increased affinity between teachers and students, then, might be expected to increase both cognitive and affective learning outcomes.

Since the typology of affinity-seeking strategies generated by Bell and Daly was based in large part on data drawn from classroom teachers referencing general interpersonal relationships, the likelihood that it could apply to teacher-student relationships as well seems strong. McCroskey and McCroskey (1986) note that both context and status impacted subjects' choice of strategies for use in the Bell and Daly studies. Insofar as teacher-student communication involves a superior-subordinate status relationship in a unique (classroom) context, McCroskey and McCroskey focused on defining the relative use of Bell and Daly's strategies by teachers in elementary and secondary level classrooms. Their study involved 311 elementary and secondary school teachers who were presented with unlabeled descriptions of the 25 Bell and Daly affinity-seeking strategies which were rewritten to be consistent with the teacher-student relationship context (see McCroskey & McCroskey, 1986, pp. 161–163). Subjects were asked to read each description and then indicate whether and how often they had observed other teachers in their school using the strategy. Subjects were asked to reference use by other teachers rather than themselves to reduce social desirability of the responses. As a result "the frequency of yes-no responses presumably provides an indication of the proportion of schools in which a given strategy is used but may not indicate the proportion of teachers who use the strategy" (McCroskey & McCroskey, 1986, p. 161).

Results of McCroskey and McCroskey's study indicated that all of the affinity-seeking strategies had been observed, to some degree, in teacher-student relation-

ships (see Table 3). The eight strategies used most often were, in rank order, *physical attractiveness, sensitivity, elicit other's disclosure, trustworthiness, nonverbal immediacy, conversational rule-keeping, dynamism,* and *listening.* The nine strategies which were seen as having comparatively low use were *inclusion of other, self-inclusion, reward association, concede control, influence perceptions of closeness, similarity, openness, present interesting self,* and *supportiveness.* Three of these (*inclusion of other, self-inclusion,* and *reward association*) were perceived as being used in the school by less than half of the respondents. In comparison with Bell and Daly's general scores for the likelihood of use of each strategy, *optimism* and *inclusion of other* were ranked much lower by teachers in the McCroskey and McCroskey sample and *assume control* was ranked much higher.

McCroskey and McCroskey concluded that teacher use of affinity-seeking strategies with students may not differ greatly from the use of those strategies by college students across a variety of contexts. The high rank-order correlation suggested the possibility that a general hierarchy of strategy use may exist across communicators and communication contexts. Differences in rank order of use were generally in line with differences reported by Bell and Daly between task and social contexts; however, *openness,* reported by Bell and Daly to be used more in task than social contexts, was reported rarely as a strategy observed by teachers. *Openness, influence perceptions of closeness, reward association, self-inclusion, inclusion of other,* and *concede control* were found in both studies to be less likely to be used by higher status individuals. *Sensitivity, conversational rule-keeping,* and *elicit other's disclosures* were, however, found to be used often by teachers but were not higher-status strategies in Bell and Daly's findings.

Our objective in this study was to extend the investigation of teachers' use of affinity-seeking strategies. McCroskey and McCroskey (1986) suggested that "if teachers were asked to generate affinity-seeking strategies for classroom use some categories not included in the Bell-Daly typology [might] emerge" (p. 165). They further noted that "it is also probable that teachers in the various grade levels across elementary and secondary schools would find various strategies differentially effective. . . . Our 'data snooping' . . . strongly suggests that some differences do exist and indicates future research should investigate the impact of grade level directly" (p. 166). The present study addressed these concerns by requesting teachers to report strategies, without reference to the Bell-Daly typology, which they use at their own grade level.

While teachers responding to the McCroskey and McCroskey instrument indicated frequency of observed use of affinity-seeking strategies, their data did not indicate whether or not those strategies were perceived as appropriate or effective or whether they were intentionally used by the teachers who were observed using them. By asking teachers directly to list things they do to increase affinity, we were able to gain insight into behaviors used intentionally "to get others to like and feel positive about them" (Bell and Daly's definition of affinity-seeking). We assumed that the behaviors listed would be considered appropriate by the teachers using them and, though we do not have a measure of their effectiveness from the students' perspective, we would expect that teachers would not respond to the question by listing behaviors *they* did not perceive as at least somewhat effective.

We were also interested in whether and to what degree teachers differentiated their use of strategies directed toward making students like *them* versus making the

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students like the *subject matter,* and in how successful they felt they were at achieving each of those ends. In line with Bell, Tremblay, and Burkel-Rothfuss (1987):

> We assume that affinity-seeking encompasses a set of communication skills on which persons may differ. . . . To the extent that affinity-seeking competence fosters positive reactions from others, people probably become quite aware of their abilities to facilitate liking and should thus be able to make reports of these skills (p. 3).

The specific research questions we addressed in this study were:

RQ₁ Can the Bell and Daly typology be used successfully to classify teacher generated affinity-seeking strategies for techniques for
a) getting students to like them as a teacher, and/or
b) getting students to like the subject matter they teach?

RQ₂ Are there major differences in proportional use of the various types of affinity-seeking strategies as a function of grade level taught?

RQ₃ Is the proportional use of various affinity-seeking strategies reported by teachers similar to the proportional use found in the Bell and Daly and McCroskey and McCroskey studies?

RQ₄ How difficult do teachers belie.e it is to generate affinity in students toward
a) themselves, and
b) the subject matter they teach?

Method

Subjects were 229 elementary and secondary school teachers enrolled in classes related to communication in instruction; 65 taught in grades K–3, 71 in grades 4–6, 49 in grades 7–9, and 44 in grades 10–12. They were asked to respond to two, 10-point (0–9) Likert-type scales indicating "How difficult is it for you to get the students in your class to like *you as a teacher?*" and "How difficult is it for you to get the students in your class to like the *subject matter you teach?*" (0 = virtually impossible; 9 = very easy). These scales were followed by two open-ended questions: "Please provide at least *five* specific examples from the past year of what you have done to get a student to like you" and "Please provide at least *five* examples from the past year of what you have done to get a student to like the subject matter you teach."

Preliminary analyses of the responses to the two open-ended questions were conducted to ascertain whether the strategies listed were interpretable using the Bell-Daly typology. Two of the investigators independently coded a randomly drawn sample of 50 teachers' responses (613 separate behaviors), classifying them according to the 25 affinity-seeking strategies generated through previous research. Intercoder agreement was 98.9%. There was high agreement regarding the assignment of teacher-generated strategies to Bell and Daly's categories, even when the specific examples reported by the teachers differed from those used in strategy descriptions offered by Bell and Daly and adapted by McCroskey and McCroskey. This result was interpreted as providing an affirmative answer to the first research question. Hence, the two investigators coded the remainder of the data following the same procedure.

The proportional uses of each of the affinity-seeking strategies across the sample and by grade level were determined. Proportions of strategies listed across the levels were compared visually. Because there were numerous instances where less than one percent of the responses could be classified in a given category, it was determined

that no formal statistical test could be applied to the data to answer our second research question.

In order to answer our third research question, rank-order correlations were computed between the data obtained in the present study and that obtained in the Bell and Daly and McCroskey and McCroskey studies. To answer the fourth research question, the responses to the two Likert-scale questions were classified as low (7–9), moderate (4–6), and high (0–3) perceived difficulty in getting students to like teacher or subject. Chi-square tests were computed to determine significance of the interactions between grade level and level of perceived difficulty.

Results and Discussion

The subjects listed 2,218 different affinity-seeking behaviors, 1,172 designated as things they had done to get students to like them as a teacher and 1,046 as things they had done to get students to like the subject matter they taught.

Our first objective was to investigate whether teachers would generate affinity-seeking strategies for classroom use which were not included in the Bell-Daly typology. As noted previously, preliminary analyses of the data resulted in very high inter-coder agreement (98.9%) in classifying behaviors listed by the teachers accord-

TABLE 1 Percentage of Total Responses Accounted For By Each Affinity-Seeking Strategy Listed By Teachers As Things They Did To Get Students To Like Them As A Teacher

	Level				
Strategy	K–3 N = 336	4–6 N = 395	7–9 N = 271	10–12 N = 220	Total N = 1172*
Altruism	1	4	3	11	4
Assume Control	—	—	1	—	—
Assume Equality	—	—	—	—	—
Comfortable Self	2	1	1	1	1
Concede Control	9	6	6	10	8
Conversational Rule-Keeping	1	—	—	—	—
Dynamism	—	1	1	—	1
Elicit Other's Disclosure	7	8	7	10	8
Facilitate Enjoyment	11	10	9	7	10
Inclusion of Other	1	—	1	—	—
Influence Perception of Closeness	2	1	4	1	2
Listening	4	4	2	2	3
Nonverbal Immediacy	10	5	3	4	6
Openness	5	4	7	2	5
Optimism	4	3	1	2	3
Personal Autonomy	—	—	—	—	—
Physical Attractiveness	—	—	1	—	—
Present Interesting Self	—	—	—	—	—
Reward Association	7	6	2	3	5
Self-Concept Confirmation	14	9	9	7	10
Self-Inclusion	6	7	8	9	7
Sensitivity	7	8	10	10	8
Similarity	2	3	4	4	3
Supportiveness	6	8	6	5	6
Trustworthiness	5	10	13	11	9

*N = number of behaviors listed

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ing to Bell and Daly's categories. While it is possible that some of the more heavily used categories might be subdivided into "clusters" of responses (e.g., *self-inclusion* subdivided into examples within and without the classroom) we were satisfied that the previously generated typology could be used to interpret these data. The typology, then, appears to be quite generalizable across contexts. That does not, however, mean that the usefulness of the individual strategies is highly similar across contexts.

Our second objective was to analyze proportional use of individual affinity-seeking categories within this sample as a whole and by grade level. Table 1

TABLE 2   Percentage of Total Responses Accounted For By Each Affinity-Seeking Strategy Listed By Teachers As Things They Did To Get Students To Like The Subject

	Level				
Strategy	*K–3* *N = 300*	*4–6* *N = 310*	*7–9* *N = 249*	*10–12* *N = 187*	*Total* *N = 1046**
Altruism	3	4	5	3	4
Assume Control	1	—	—	1	1
Assume Equality	—	—	—	—	—
Comfortable Self	—	—	—	1	—
Concede Control	12	15	12	17	14
Conversational Rule-Keeping	—	—	—	—	—
Dynamism	3	2	1	—	2
Elicit Other's Disclosures	2	1	2	3	2
Facilitate Enjoyment	53	51	49	44	50
Inclusion of Other	—	—	—	—	—
Influence Perceptions of Closeness	—	1	—	—	—
Listening	—	—	—	—	—
Nonverbal Immediacy	—	—	—	—	—
Openness	1	1	—	1	1
Optimism	4	3	1	3	3
Personal Autonomy	—	—	—	—	—
Physical Attractiveness	—	—	—	—	—
Present Interesting Self	1	—	—	1	—
Reward Association	5	5	8	9	6
Self-Concept Confirmation	6	4	2	6	5
Self-Inclusion	—	—	—	1	—
Sensitivity	4	4	6	6	5
Similarity	1	—	1	1	1
Supportiveness	2	5	4	2	2
Trustworthiness	3	5	9	5	5

*N = number of behaviors listed

summarizes the strategies used by teachers to get students to like them. Table 2 summarizes the strategies used by teachers to get students to like the subject matter. Of the nine most used personal affinity strategies, four tended to be used more as grade level rose: *trustworthiness, sensitivity, self-inclusion,* and *elicit disclosures. Concede control* was used more at the lowest and highest levels than at the middle levels. Three strategies, *facilitate enjoyment, nonverbal immediacy,* and *self-concept confirmation,* were listed proportionately fewer times by higher than by lower level teachers. Examples of *altruism,* a lesser used strategy overall, were considerably more evident at the 10–12 level than at any lower grade level.

Two strategies, *facilitate enjoyment* and *concede control,* accounted for 64% of all behaviors listed by teachers as ways they attempted to get students to like the subject matter. Proportional use of *facilitate enjoyment* decreased as grade level increased, although 44% of the examples listed by teachers at the 10–12 level still fell into this category. Use of *reward association,* the third-ranked subject affinity strategy (at 6%), tended to increase as grade level rose, with examples of the future usefulness of learning the subject (e.g., SAT tests, college preparation, job performance) accounting for a large portion of the examples in this category at the 10–12 level. It is interesting to note that, as a personal affinity-seeking strategy, *reward association* was used less as students got older while, as a subject affinity-seeking strategy, it was used more. Elementary teachers listed many examples of extrinsic reward such as stickers and treats but classified these as things they did to get their students to like *them,* not the subjects they taught.

Our comparison (research question 3) of the proportional use of each personal affinity-seeking strategy listed by teachers in this study to the rank-ordered use of strategies in the McCroskey and McCroskey (1986) and Bell and Daly (1984a, b) studies was of particular interest. McCroskey and McCroskey concluded that teacher use of affinity-seeking strategies with students may not differ greatly from the use of those strategies by college students across a variety of contexts. Analyses of their data indicated less use of *optimism* and *inclusion of other* and more use of *assume control* than was evident in the more general context referenced by Bell and Daly. Proportional use of the other strategies was, however, similar in both studies. The present data yielded broadly different results (Table 3). Of the 25 affinity-seeking strategies, 19 were ranked five or more positions higher or lower than they had been in the previous studies. Although the rank ordering of strategies in the McCroskey and McCroskey study was highly correlated (rho = .80) with the rank ordering in Bell and Daly's study, the rank ordering of strategies in this study was not significantly correlated either with that in the McCroskey and McCroskey study (rho = .21, t = 1.03, p > .05) or that in the Bell and Daly study (rho = .17, t = .83, p > .05).

While the differences observed might be explained in terms of different research methodologies, we believe it is important to examine these differences in terms of intentionality of use. McCroskey and McCroskey asked teachers to report the frequency with which each affinity-seeking strategy *had been observed* in the classroom context. Their data might well present an accurate picture of what teachers *do,* although the question of whether the teachers studied in that investigation actually were in a position to observe what other teachers did in the classroom remains open. We believe, however, the present study presents a different picture of what teachers *try to do* as conscious attempts to increase affinity in their relationships with students. Without the prompting of a list of affinity-seeking strategies as reference, eight of Bell and Daly's strategies were almost never listed by teachers. Three of those strategies (*physical attractiveness, conversational rule-keeping,* and *assume control*) were ranked 1, 7, and 12.5 respectively by teachers in the McCroskey and McCroskey study. While these may indeed be things that teachers can be observed doing quite often, they do not appear to be consciously employed strategies for seeking affinity. Six strategies ranked in the top half in this study were reported as having been observed in the schools by less than 70% of teachers in McCroskey and McCroskey's study, with those who did report having observed the behavior indicating that it was used rarely (see Table 3). When teachers "automatically" use affinity-seeking strategies and are satisfied with affinity outcomes there is probably

TABLE 3   Rank Order Of Affinity-Seeking Strategies

Strategy	Present Study	McCroskey & McCroskey	Bell & Daly
Self-Concept Confirmation	1.5 ab	11	10
Facilitate Enjoyment	1.5 ab	9	13
Trustworthiness	3	3.5	2
Sensitivity	5	2	6
Concede Control	5 ab	22 c	19
Elicit Other's Disclosures	5	3.5	8
Self-Inclusion	7 ab	24 c	20
Supportiveness	8.5 a	17 c	11.5
Nonverbal Immediacy	8.5	5	7
Openness	10.5 ab	19.5 c	23
Reward Association	10.5 ab	23 c	25
Altruism	12	14.5	14
Listening	14 ab	7	4
Similarity	14 a	19.5 c	17
Optimism	14 b	10	1
Influence Perceptions of Closeness	16 ab	21 c	24
Comfortable Self	17.5 ab	12.5	9
Dynamism	17.5 ab	7	11.5
Assume Control	22 a	12.5	22
Inclusion of Other	22 b	25 c	15
Physical Attractiveness	22 ab	1	3
Assume Equality	22 ab	14.5	16
Present Interesting Self	22	18 c	18
Conversational Rule-Keeping	22 ab	7	5
Personal Autonomy	22 a	16	21

a = rank 5 or more positions higher or lower than McCroskey & McCroskey
b = rank 5 or more positions higher or lower than Bell & Daly
c = reported by less than 70% of teachers in McCroskey & McCroskey's study, with an average report of "rarely used" by those who had observed the strategy.

little cause for concern regarding intentionality of use. We would, however, suggest that recognizing a broad range of alternative behaviors as affinity-seeking strategies might be helpful for teachers who are not as satisfied with affinity outcomes. In this study, six strategies accounted for over 50% of the examples listed by teachers as personal affinity-seeking behaviors; *one* strategy accounted for 50% of the examples listed as subject affinity-seeking behaviors. Pre-service and in-service training which focuses awareness on the other behaviors as means of generating affinity might be of significant value in providing teachers with additional means of intentionally influencing affinity outcomes.

In regard to the subject affinity-seeking data, we are aware of the possible inflation of the proportion of *facilitate enjoyment* responses due to the nature of the question. Teachers were asked to list at least five examples of things they had done in the past year to get students to like the subject matter they taught. Many teachers listed four or five or six *facilitate enjoyment* examples (e.g., make fractions interesting; bake cookies to learn how to halve and double numbers; show movies). These were coded separately as examples of facilitating enjoyment. Had the teachers not been pushed to list at least five examples, they may have listed only one: make it fun. We do not perceive this as problematic in interpreting the data, however. Teachers could have, with only modestly more difficulty, listed several examples of *concede control*

TABLE 4   Percentages of Teachers Reporting Little, Moderate, and Great Difficulty In Getting Their Students To Like Them As A Teacher

Grade Level	Little Difficulty	Moderate Difficulty	Great Difficulty
K–3	94	6	0
4–6	90	9	1
7–9	88	12	0
10–12	80	20	0

or *altruism* or *dynamism* or *sensitivity* or any other strategy if, we believe, they had perceived those strategies as central to their affinity-seeking efforts in this context.

We did not note any particular relationship between the types of strategies listed by teachers and the degree of perceived difficulty in gaining affinity indicated by the two Likert scales ("How difficult is it for you to get the students in your class to like you as a teacher?" and "How difficult is it for you to get the students in your class to like the subject matter you teach?"). The overall responses to these questions, however, yielded interesting results (Tables 4 and 5). On the whole, the degree of satisfaction with affinity outcomes was much higher in regard to personal affinity than for subject affinity, with satisfaction in personal affinity dropping as grade level increased and satisfaction in regard to subject affinity dropping through grade 9 and then rising again at the 10–12 level. These results may be related to the restricted repertoire of intentionally used affinity-seeking strategies reported by teachers as things they did to influence subject affinity. Primary-level teachers may feel that it is relatively easy to make learning fun. Middle school and junior high school teachers may find it harder to do so with the subjects they teach, while high school teachers (who teach more sophisticated students who are more likely to have had a choice in the subjects they study) may again feel more successful in their efforts to facilitate enjoyment. Since facilitating enjoyment is perceived as so central to generating subject affinity, teachers who do not perceive themselves as able to do so—and who do not have a repertoire of alternative strategies to utilize—are likely to be frustrated in their subject affinity outcomes.

Further research is needed to probe the relationship of a teacher's repertoire of affinity-seeking strategies and his or her successes in influencing affinity in relationships with students. Such research should involve both teacher and student assessments of affinity outcomes. At this point, however, it is worth noting that most of the affinity-seeking strategies were listed by some teachers but a few were listed by most teachers. In terms of increasing teachers' satisfaction with their ability to generate subject matter affinity, the more problematic of the two areas investigated here, teachers who find it difficult to get their students to like the subjects they teach might

TABLE 5   Percentages of Teachers Reporting Little, Moderate, and Great Difficulty In Getting Their Students To Like Their Subject Matter

Grade Level	Little Difficulty	Moderate Difficulty	Great Difficulty
K–3	68	31	2
4–6	36	58	6
7–9	20	73	6
10–12	52	39	9

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benefit from consciously recognizing and intentionally employing behaviors beyond facilitating enjoyment and conceding control which were listed by some of their peers:

> I am organized. If I keep the class going in the right direction, they like it.
> I don't make students play guess-what's-in-my-head. We learn together.
> I tell them how much *I* like the subject.
> I adapt the material for different abilities and interests and levels.
> Give feedback. Let students express frustrations and listen.
> Allow digressions. Keep cool if things get off track.
> Show enthusiasm; it catches on.
> I build on students prior knowledge and experiences.
> Use student names in making up sample sentences.
> I let them see ME reading whenever possible—show them I enjoy it.
> Use appealing materials—colored paper, etc. Books with attractive pictures.
> Chunk and highlight. Teach so every student can be successful.
> I read them my own writing so students can see I write when they do.
> Participate in exercises along with the class.
> Don't give homework more than one day a week.
> Let them know I CARE if they learn.
> Never criticize without giving them a specific way to improve.
> Give definite expectations and stick to them.
> No surprise quizzes.
> Let students know where they stand and what they can do about it on a regular basis. Let them know it was hard for me too when I was just starting to learn the subject.

It might be argued that students who like a teacher as a teacher will be more likely to like the teacher's subject and be more willing to engage in behaviors recommended by that teacher. In fact, one teacher in this study specifically indicated that this was the case. For the overwhelming majority of the teachers, however, the personal affinity-seeking strategies listed differed in character from the subject affinity-seeking strategies listed. There is a fundamental difference between, for example, *eliciting disclosures* regarding hobbies, pets, or outside activities and asking students what they think about the subject or whether they feel frustrated learning it; between *inclusion of self* in attending student plays or athletic events and participating with them in learning tasks; between *optimism* in general and optimism regarding the subject; between pointing out personal *similarities* and relating subject matter to students' prior knowledge and experience. We believe that these data suggest that teachers do perceive the task of generating affinity for a subject as different than, or at least an extension of, generating affinity for themselves as teachers, and that they feel less confident in their abilities to accomplish the former than the latter. We also believe that comparison of these data with results of previous studies indicates that the affinity-seeking strategies that teachers use and the affinity-seeking strategies that they intentionally use may not be the same. Our "second perspective" presented by this study suggests that teachers perceive a comparatively narrow range of affinity-seeking options in their relationships with students and that teacher training which links the findings of affinity-seeking research with relational and learning outcomes might enhance teachers' ability to influence those outcomes.

Finally, it is important to recognize the presence of a powerful assumption

underlying the present study as well as the previous study by McCroskey and McCroskey (1986). That is the assumption that the development of affinity for the teacher and for the subject should be important concerns of every teacher. Scholars in the field of learning recognize affective learning (essentially what we are calling affinity for the subject matter) as one of the three primary types of learning. However, not everyone in the field of education even recognizes this as a meaningful type of learning, much less everyone outside the profession (parents, politicians, etc.). We have all heard, if not personally expressed, the view that "the teacher's job is to teach the content, not to make the people like it." While we believe that this is precisely the attitude which leads students to dislike school and quit trying to learn, that is a philosophical position we hold, not necessarily an established fact.

Probably because of this assumption neither this nor the previous study asked the subjects whether they thought seeking affinity toward themselves or toward their subject matter was important. It may well be that many of the subjects in the present study, for example, could not come up with many affinity-seeking strategies because they thought the whole idea was irrelevant and had never seriously thought about it before. If we are to make prospective or in-service teachers more capable of generating affinity toward themselves and their subject matter, it might be that our major task will be to convince them of the importance of achieving such skills. Future research in this area should take into account the views of teachers and prospective teachers with regard to affinity-seeking in the classroom to determine the relationship, if any, between perceived importance of this activity and ability to engage in it.

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