

**TITLE:** A Study of the Classroom Organization, Teachers' Use of Power, and Students' Perceptions of Leadership

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**OBJECTIVE:** To examine what differences, if any, students perceive regarding the leadership style of teachers employing problem-based methods versus traditional hierarchical (banking) notions of teaching.

**METHODOLOGY:** The sample consisted of two separate graduate student groups; one (N=38) was attending traditionally organized lecture style classes (from journalism, interpersonal communication, and education) while the other group (N=44) were in MBA courses organized around the problem-based learning (PBL) method of instruction. Students completed the LPI-Observer about their instructor. Focus group interviews were held with each student/instructor-style group. The six instructors also completed the LPI-Self.

**KEY FINDINGS:** LPI results indicated "that there is a difference between student and leader perceptions of leadership in both non-PBL and PBL classroom environments" (p. 66). PBL students, in qualitative analyzes, perceived their teachers to be strong on enabling, adequate in challenging and inspiring, and less likely to model or encourage (while indicating that these seemed less important in a PBL classroom). Non-PBL students were significantly less likely to feel empowered by their instructors.

**NOTE:** A later version of this research was published as "Perceptions of Empowerment: Teachers' Use of Power, and Students' Perceptions of Leadership in Traditional and Problem-based Learning Contexts" and presented at the 1997 National Communication Association Annual Conference (Chicago: November).