The purpose of this study was to extend the body of research on teacher self-disclosure in the classroom through the theoretical lens of Petronio’s communication privacy management (CPM). Through the rule-based process teachers use to make decisions about what private information is revealed, this study aims to understand the revealing of private information related to the course content and the relationship it has with student perceptions of teacher credibility and power use as well as student learning outcomes. Research results indicated that teacher self-disclosure related to the course content was positively associated with competence, character and caring, as well as referent and expert power. Furthermore, this study found that teacher self-disclosure related to the course content was positively related to student perceptions of their affective learning and learning indicators. Practical implications and suggestions for future research are discussed.
PERCEIVED TEACHER POWER USE AND CREDIBILITY
AS A FUNCTION OF TEACHER SELF-DISCLOSURE

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Introduction

Teachers spend more time talking than their students in the classroom. Although teachers may spend a considerable amount of time covering course content, they are also likely to self-disclose by sharing information about themselves, telling personal stories, and conveying their personal beliefs (Nussbaum, Comadena, & Holladay, 1987). In instructional communication literature, self-disclosure has been defined as “teacher statements in the classroom about the self that may or may not be related to the subject content, but reveal information about the teacher that students are unlikely to learn from other sources” (Sorensen, 1989, p. 260).

Researchers in the past have examined the relationship between self-disclosure in the classroom and a variety of variables. For the most part, teacher self-disclosure in the classroom is used to clarify content (Nussbaum et al., 1987). When it comes to what exactly should be disclosed, Lannutti and Strauman (2006) suggested that “desirable classroom self-disclosure differs from self-disclosure that may be desirable in personal relationships because it should be more illustrative than revealing” (p. 96). Although much research on self-disclosure in the classroom has taken place, further examination is necessary in order to understand how teachers manage their private information in the context of the classroom so that their disclosures are instructive. A possible explanation lies in the theory of communication privacy management.

Petronio’s (2002) communication privacy management theory (CPM) provides a rule-based management system that focuses on the ways in which private information is revealed and boundaries are constructed between relational partners, such as teachers and students. Petronio (2002) suggests that there are benefits and drawbacks to disclosures. As a result, she states a rule-based process is used to reveal and conceal disclosures. Through this rule-based process, teachers are able to manage what private information is disclosed in the classroom. Research involving CPM has examined the types of private information instructors reveal (Nunziata, 2007) and reasons why this information is revealed (McBride & Wahl, 2005).

Specifically, scholars who have studied the management of teachers’ private disclosures in the classroom through the theoretical lens of CPM have found teachers reveal private information when it is related to the course content (McBride & Wahl,
2005; Nunziata, 2008). Furthermore, teachers have reported that they are mindful of the information that is appropriate and inappropriate (McBride & Wahl, 2005). CPM provides an understanding of privacy management in personal relationships, such as the relationship that develops in the classroom between teachers and students.

**Purpose of this Study**

McBride and Wahl (2005) cited Sprague’s (1993) argument that existing theory should be used by communication education researchers in an effort to enhance pedagogical knowledge. Petronio’s communication privacy management theory can be used as a theoretical lens to examine teacher self-disclosure in the classroom. Although instructional scholars have studied self-disclosure in the classroom, utilizing Petronio’s theory helps to shed more light on the management of private disclosures in the teacher-student relationship. By combining what is already known from scholars who have studied self-disclosure in the past with the theory of communication privacy management, this line of research can be extended using an existing theory to further understand the impact teacher self-disclosure may have in the classroom.

The purpose of this study was aimed at examining teacher self-disclosure through the theoretical lens of communication privacy management. In doing so, this study examined the relationship between teacher self-disclosure in the classroom and three variables: teacher credibility, teacher power use, and student learning. Because teachers disclose their private information in an effort to extend course content (McBride & Wahl, 2005; Nunziata, 2008), and are mindful of their disclosures (McBride & Wahl, 2005), further examination of the relationship between teacher self-disclosure and these variables was warranted. This study hypothesized that teacher self-disclosure related to the course content would enhance teacher credibility and power use, as well as student learning. In addition, it was believed that inappropriate self-disclosure would reduce or hinder these same variables. In order to further the body of research on self-disclosure, existing research was first examined.
Chapter 1: Review of Literature

Self-disclosure

Self-disclosure was first defined by Jourard as “the act of revealing personal information to others” (1971, p. 2). Pearce and Sharp (1973) added that self-disclosure occurs when voluntary information that is unattainable to know or discover from any other source is shared with another person. In the field of communication self-disclosure was reconceptualized as “any messages about the self that a person communicates to another” (Wheeless & Grotz, 1976, p. 47). Based on these definitions, the study of self-disclosure can be characterized as a “search for meaningful relationships” (Wheeless, 1976, p. 47). Such meaningful relationships can be found in the classroom between teachers and students.

Early research on self-disclosure examined relational communication. For example, Altman and Taylor (1973) noted that as a relationship develops, self-disclosure occurs as a way to further the closeness of the relationship. Additionally, Wheeless and Grotz (1977) suggested one basis of this emergent relationship is trust in a specific individual. Depending on the level of established trust, self-disclosure occurs more often in the relationship (Jourard, 1971; Wheeless & Grotz, 1977). Scholars have also found that high levels of self-disclosure are also accompanied by high levels of solidarity (Wheeless, 1976).

However, much of this early research on self-disclosure often reported differing results (Sorensen, 1989). Scholars believed this was a product of the instruments used to measure self-disclosure (see Cozby, 1973). These instruments often focused on one dimension, such as amount (Wheeless & Grotz, 1976; McCroskey & Richmond, 1977). In an effort to resolve the discrepancies in the literature, Wheeless and Grotz (1976) contended that self-disclosure was not based on just one dimension. Instead, these authors note that self-disclosure is a multi-dimensional construct and amount is just one of the dimensions. According to the authors, understanding the multi-dimensional nature of self-disclosure helps to explain the inconsistencies in past research (Wheeless & Grotz, 1976). They believe the findings reported were conflicting with other research at the time due to the past studies tapping into the different dimensions of self-disclosure (Wheeless & Grotz, 1976).
According to Wheeless and Grotz (1976) five dimensions of self-disclosure exist. In addition to amount, they included the intention of disclosure, the depth of disclosure, the positive and negative nature of disclosure, and the honesty and accuracy of the disclosure. The above research on the multi-dimensional nature of self-disclosure provides further explanation for the disclosures that occur in relationships (McCroskey & Richmond, 1977). Wheeless and Grotz’s research has been foundational in measuring self-disclosure in interpersonal relationships.

Research on self-disclosure has been extensive and used to examine a variety of interpersonal relationships. However, in an effort to better understand disclosure, Petronio began to extend her research in the area of self-disclosure. Petronio noted that the existing literature on self-disclosure lacked structure. Further, she felt the information on self-disclosure did not provide a conceptual idea of disclosure, and the literature was missing something overall (Petronio, 2004). As a result, Petronio introduced the theory of communication privacy management (CPM).

**Communication Privacy Management**

Communication privacy management (CPM) differs from previous conceptualization of self-disclosure because of the focus it places on others. In an effort to fully understand private disclosures, consideration is taken for both the individual who is revealing or concealing the private information, as well as the effects the disclosure may have on others (Petronio, 2002). The metaphor of boundaries is used to regulate access to private information disclosed (Petronio, 2002). When information is disclosed, individuals experience both benefits and risks. As a result, individuals must balance their dialectic tensions for privacy and for disclosure (Petronio, 2002; Metzger, 2007). Although private information is being revealed to others, boundaries are created that aid in clearly marking the borders of ownership (Petronio, 2002). The boundaries created allow individuals to control who has access to their private information (Petronio, 2002). Thus, the public and private lives of individuals are regulated through boundary openness and closedness (Petronio, 2002).

Communication privacy management (CPM) theory provides a rule-based system that can be used to examine the decisions made by individuals about balancing privacy and disclosure (Petronio, 2002). Those who disclose private information believe they are
the owners of their private information and, as a result, they have a right to regulate access to it (Petronio, 2002). In addition, individuals have the power to choose what information is revealed according to their perception of the disclosure’s significance (Petronio, 2002). Petronio (2002) states that the term private disclosures “is used to mark the distinction from the more traditional ‘self-disclosure’ literature” (p. 3). This distinction occurs in three ways: through the content of what is disclosed, the rule-based theoretical system used to conceptualize the disclosures, and the boundaries coordinated between individuals.

The first distinction is through the content of what is disclosed. Private information is considered the primary focal point in CPM (Petronio, 2002). As a result, “CPM sets parameters and gives substance to the heart of disclosures, that is, what is considered private” (Petronio, 2002, p. 3).

The second distinction rest in that CPM is based on five fundamental theoretical suppositions. They include private information, privacy boundaries, control and ownership, privacy management dialectics, and a rule-based management system (Petronio, 2002). First, the content of private information creates a distinction between privacy and intimacy. Unlike intimacy, which reflects a feeling, private disclosures reflect the process and content of private information revealed. Thus, the disclosure of private information may not lead to intimacy. Instead, revealing private information can be done for a variety of reasons based on the content, such as relieving a burden.

Second, private information and public relationships are separated through the use of a boundary metaphor. According to Petronio (2002), “personal boundaries are those that manage private information about the self, while collectively held boundaries represent many different sorts of privacy boundary types” (p. 6). Through the boundaries created, individuals are able to control who has access to their private information. Although boundaries can change throughout an individual’s life, individuals remain the owner of their information and are responsible for both personal and collectively held boundaries.

Third, because individuals feel they own their private information, they wish to control what is revealed and what is concealed. Due to the risk associated with revealing private information, individuals want to control who has access to their private
disclosures. As a result, ownership is regulated through the personal and collective boundaries mentioned above.

Fourth, the disclosure of private information is considered dialectical in nature. According to Petronio (2002) “the dialectical tension considered in the theory of CPM concentrates on the forces pulling between and with the needs of being both private through concealing and public through revealing” (p. 12). Although the dialectical nature of CPM has been questioned, the tension between public and private demonstrates the simultaneous forces occurring. And fifth, a rule-based management system is used to structure the handling of private information. Whether an individual has the responsibility of controlling access to their own information, known as personal management, or managing information disclosed to them, known as collective management, boundary regulation is necessary. The rule-based management system relies on three management processes discussed below.

The third distinction between self-disclosure and CPM occurs through the communicative process of self-disclosure. Because CPM is a rule-based theory, rules are developed by individuals to assist in their decisions about whether to reveal or conceal private information (Petronio, 2002). Petronio argued that people use a rule-based system to govern information sharing by making judgments about who has access to their private information (Petronio, Sargent, Andea, Reganis, & Chichoki, 2004). Individuals develop rules to aid in protecting their personal privacy (Metzger, 2007). Thus, individuals guard their private information by deciding who has access through privacy management (Petronio, 2002). The three processes of boundary management include privacy rule foundation, boundary coordination operations and boundary turbulence (Petronio, 2002).

First, privacy rule development “focuses on the way people come to know or establish privacy rules… at various times when individuals need to develop new rules, learn preexisting privacy rules, or negotiate rules that manage boundaries” (p. 38). Five criteria are used to develop privacy rules (Petronio, 2002). The decision criteria used to create rules include culture, gender, motivation, context, and risk-benefit ratio. Examining each further, first, cultural criterion focuses on the notion that an individual’s cultural expectations may impact the degree of private information revealed as well as the dialectical tension between privacy and being public. Another criterion used to create
privacy rules is gender. Based on one’s gender, an individual may open his/her boundary according to a gender-specific expectation. Motivational criterion is another contributing factor to rule making. This criterion focuses on the needs an individual may have surrounding his/her boundaries. Some examples of needs include rewards and costs, attraction and liking, and reciprocity.

The fourth criterion, context, differs from the above three in that it is not a constant in the rule making process. Instead, contextual criterion can occur at various times and either create a rule or modify an existing one. Three categories of context include traumatic events, therapeutic situations, and life circumstances. The fifth criterion is risk-benefit ratio, which also functions to develop privacy rules. Much like the fundamental supposition discussed above, individuals assess their private information according to the risks and benefits involved with such disclosures. Through the five above mentioned criteria, privacy rules are created in an effort to manage private information.

The second rule management process is boundary coordination. Boundary coordination operations look at the personal and collective nature of boundaries (Petronio, 2002). Petronio notes that in addition to the personal boundary of the individual, the private disclosure is extended onto another and as a result, the information becomes co-constructed as it is given guardianship by another (Petronio, 2002). When private information is disclosed, the information becomes owned and co-owned (Petronio et al., 2004).

The third process of boundary management is boundary turbulence. Because not all boundary coordination occurs smoothly, and the process sometimes fails, boundary turbulence is used to correct any problems that may arise during boundary coordination (Petronio, 2002). When the boundary coordination process is disrupted by anything, such as a mistake or misunderstanding during the process, private information is not communicated effectively (Petronio, 2002); as a result, boundary turbulence occurs. If boundary turbulence does occur, individuals change the rules to fit their needs in an effort to maintain the privacy boundaries they have created in their lives (Petronio, 2002).

Through the theoretical lens of CPM, the management of private information in various contexts and settings has been examined. CPM has been applied by researchers to
focus on the disclosures of private information in family communication about genetic health (Weiner, Silk, & Parrot, 2003), among the disabled (Braithwaite, 1991), HIV-testing information and prevention (Green & Serovich, 1996), online privacy (Metzger, 2007; Tyma, 2007), and relational bonding between absentee divorced fathers and their children (Petronio & Bradford, 1993). The focus of this research has highlighted the concerns of balancing the public and private (McBride & Wahl, 2005). Another relational context where the balance of public and private can be applied is the classroom.

**Teacher Self-disclosure**

When considering the classroom as a context, the understanding of revealing and/or concealing personal information is especially important (McBride & Wahl, 2005). As the interpersonal relationship develops between teachers and students, communication is used to construct the boundaries of the relationship. Petronio (2002) noted that communication is placed at the core of private disclosures because “it focuses on the interplay of granting or denying access to information that is defined as private” (p. 3). Thus, CPM provides an additional understanding of the self-disclosure process that occurs in the classroom by focusing on the balance maintained by instructors to reveal and conceal their private information. In order to further explore the private information disclosed in the classroom, teacher self-disclosure must first be examined.

In the instructional context, teacher self-disclosure refers to “teacher statements in the classroom about the self that may or may not be related to subject content, but reveal information about the teacher that students are unlikely to learn from other sources” (Sorensen, 1989, p. 260). This rich personal source of the communication that occurs between teachers and students (Fusani, 1994), plays an important role in the development of their relationship (Sorensen, 1989). Often, the teacher-student relationship is viewed as an interpersonal relationship and the positive relational climate that is created in the classroom is important to students (Frymier & Houser, 2000). Through the use of self-disclosure, the closeness of the relationship between teachers and students may be furthered. An example can be seen in the use of self-disclosure by teachers and teacher clarity. A positive relationship between teacher self-disclosure and student perceptions of teacher clarity has been reported by scholars (Wambach & Brothen, 1997). Due to the self-disclosive statements made, the relational trajectory between teachers and students
has the ability to grow in relation to the clarity of the course content. Thus, the interpersonal relationship between teachers and students has the ability to develop through the use of teacher self-disclosure.

In the classroom, teachers spend a greater part of the time talking. Although much of this time is spent covering the course content, teachers also talk about themselves as well as provide students with personal examples (Cayanus, Martin, & Myers, 2004). Past scholars examining teacher self-disclosure in the classroom have noted its impact on student perceptions. As mentioned previously, Wambach and Brothen (1997) reported a positive relationship between teacher self-disclosure and student perceptions of teacher clarity. Other researchers, such as Andersen, Norton and Nussbaum (1981) and Norton and Nussbaum (1981), note that by personalizing teaching through self-disclosure, students perceive their teachers to be effective in explaining the course content. Downs, Javidi and Nussbaum (1988) found a strong positive relationship between teacher self-disclosure and student perceptions of teacher effectiveness. These same researchers found that teachers who present information to students through the use of stories, humor and self-disclosure, improved the clarity of the information. In addition, Sorensen (1989) reported a positive relationship between teacher self-disclosure and affective learning. Goldstein and Benassi (1994) found increased teacher self-disclosure to be positively associated with increased student participation. Thus, from the above research, one may conclude that teacher self-disclosure has an impact on students in the classroom.

Scholars have also examined the types of teachers who use self-disclosure in the classroom. When comparing award-winning teachers to non award-winning teachers, teacher self-disclosure was identified as a key difference (Downs et al., 1988). Award-winning teachers have been found to use self-disclosure more often than average and poor teachers in an effort to clarify course content (Downs et al., 1988; Javidi, Downs, & Nussbaum, 1988). Although award-winning teachers use self-disclosure to clarify the course content, average teachers actually use more self-disclosure behaviors, but not necessarily to clarify course content, than award-winning teachers (Downs et al., 1988). Despite the differences in the self-disclosure behavior used by teachers, this line of research supports the use of self-disclosure in the classroom to explain course content by all teachers, from award-winning to non award-winning (Downs et al., 1988).
Although the above research examined the impact of teacher self-disclosure on students’ perceptions, learning, and behaviors (Lannutti & Strauman, 2006) as well as demonstrated the impact of using self-disclosure as an effective instructional tool in the classroom (Cayanus, 2004), other research suggests no significant impact on many of the same variables. For instance, while Goldstein and Benassi (1994) found increased self-disclosure was positively associated with increased levels of student participation, Wambach and Brothen (1997) found no significant relationship between amount of self-disclosure and students’ participation. Similar conflicting results were found when focusing on perceptions of teachers. In 1989, Sorensen found that perceptions of teachers were influenced by the types of self-disclosure statements made. However, in 1982, McCarthy and Schmeck found no significant association between teacher self-disclosure and perceptions of teachers. In addition, results reported on gender differences and self-disclosive behaviors have also been inconsistent (Berger, Gardner, Clatterbuck, & Schulman, 1976; Sorensen, 1989).

In summary, research on self-disclosure in the classroom has provided inconclusive results. Although extensive research has been done on self-disclosure in the classroom, further explanation for the differing results is necessary in order to understand the disclosures occurring in the classroom. One possible explanation lies in the theory of communication privacy management (CPM). CPM was developed to understand how people decide to disclose information within interpersonal relationships. One relational context that has been examined through the lens of CPM is the teacher-student relationship in the classroom.

**Teacher Privacy Management**

CPM has been used to identify the ways in which teachers develop privacy rules and boundaries with regard to their private information. Specifically, McBride and Wahl (2005) focused on the purposes and factors influencing teacher management of their private information. In addition, Nunziata (2008) examined privacy rule development and privacy boundary coordination through the lens of CPM. Both studies produced similar results and helped to extend the line of research on self-disclosure in the classroom.

In their 2005 study, McBride and Wahl found four emergent topics of personal and private information teachers reveal to their class. They include family, personal
feelings and opinions, such as perceptions of class attitude, daily activities, and personal history, such as the interviewing process they went through. In the same study, teachers also reported the topics they conceal from their students. These topics include personal information, such as where they like to go for fun, negative personal relationships, such as conflicts with other faculty members, sexual topics, such as their sexual orientation, and negative aspects of character or image, such as any disclosure that would cast the instructor in a bad light. This research supports the notion that teachers manage privacy boundaries in the classroom in ways similar to individuals in interpersonal relationships outside of the classroom.

As was previously noted, individuals develop rules to aid in protecting their personal privacy (Metzger, 2007) and guard their private information by deciding who has access to it through privacy rule management (Petronio, 2002). To reiterate, the three rule management processes are privacy rule foundation, boundary coordination operations and boundary turbulence (Petronio, 2002). The research findings for privacy rule foundation and boundary coordination are discussed below.

Through the examination of privacy rule foundation, two of the five criteria explain instructor rule development. The two criteria are motivational and risk-benefit. According to Petronio (2002) the motivational criterion is used as a basis for making judgments on private disclosures. Petronio (2002) also argued that people are prompted to disclose or conceal information based on their motivations. Some motives include reciprocity, maintaining control, clarification and attraction. Teachers have their own motivations for revealing and concealing their private information. Two motivational reasons reported by teachers for revealing private information were to extend the course content and attempt to relate to students on a personal level (McBride & Wahl, 2005; Nunziata, 2008).

In an effort to manage the boundary of their private disclosures, teachers reveal private information when they believe it is relevant to the course content (Nunziata, 2008). Teachers reported that 40% of their personal information revealed to students was for the purposes of extending course content (McBride & Wahl, 2005). Teachers are mindful of the private information they reveal (McBride & Wahl, 2005) and share information that helps in the understanding of the course content (Nunziata, 2008). In
addition to extending course content, another motivation teachers reported for revealing private information to students was for relational purposes. In an effort to appear more human and create an immediate classroom, teachers reported using personal disclosures (McBride & Wahl, 2005). Another motivation for teachers revealing private disclosures includes creating an environment for reciprocal disclosures (Nunziata, 2008). By creating a reciprocal environment for disclosure, teachers report that it not only “builds a relationship…. but reminds them that teachers are people too” (Nunziata, 2008, p. 15). Through their encouragement of reciprocity, teachers report that they hope “students feel comfortable sharing their information” (Nunziata, 2008, p. 14). In short, teachers report using motivational criteria, such as extending course content, as well as relational purposes, to make decisions and create rules about what private information is revealed.

Risk-benefit criterion was also reported by instructors as a decision for rule development (Nunziata, 2008). According to Petronio (2002) risk-benefit criterion is the vulnerability and advantages felt from revealing and concealing information. As a result of these feelings, individuals weigh the risks and benefits of their disclosures (Petronio, 2002). Teachers reported experiencing a tension between revealing information to help students with their learning and concealing information in order to control their privacy (McBride & Wahl, 2005). Because the classroom is a public arena, weighing the risks and benefits of their private information becomes increasingly important (Nunziata, 2008). As a result, teachers report that they avoid disclosing information in an effort to prevent problematic situations, maintain credibility and avoid student discomfort (Nunziata, 2008).

Focusing specifically on credibility, Nunziata (2008) asked teachers to list topics they believed would damage their credibility if revealed. Teachers reported topics such as sex, political affiliation, religion, drinking, and personal family issues. These topics are similar to the topics teachers reported concealing in the McBride and Wahl (2005) study. As a result, teachers report that inappropriate information is concealed in order to avoid forming a negative perception of character based on their information.

Another area of examination by scholars in the classroom is the process of coordinating boundaries by teachers. Specifically focusing on boundary ownership and boundary permeability, researchers have learned how co-ownership of information takes
place, as well as the range of access to private information available by teachers (McBride & Wahl, 2005; Nunziata, 2008). First, boundary ownership refers to “the rights and privileges individuals perceive they have and others accord them as co-owners” (Petronio, 2002, p. 30). According to McBride and Wahl (2005), if private information serves a purpose, like extending course content, then instructors are willing to co-own this information with students. However, teachers would not reveal private information that could possibly be used against them, even if it helped to increase student learning (McBride & Wahl, 2005). Thus, teachers perceive they have the right to withhold their private information and not co-own it with their students. In addition, teachers have minimal co-ownership with their students (Nunziata, 2008). Instead, teachers place the co-ownership with those they are revealing their private information about. Although these findings suggest that co-construction is decided only by the teacher (Nunziata, 2008), it also provides support for the idea that instructors are conscious of the information they reveal and conceal to their students because they know the boundaries of co-ownership.

Second, boundary permeability refers to the level of access others have to the information through boundary protection rules (Petronio, 2002). Teachers reported low boundary permeability and only grant access based on the nature of the relationship with the student and a connection through similar occurrences (Nunziata, 2008). Through these two criteria, boundaries are loosened and access is granted to the private information, making students the co-owners of the information (Nunziata, 2008). Boundary ownership and boundary permeability provide an understanding of how instructors coordinate boundaries of their private information.

Research has also focused on the ways in which students develop privacy rules and boundary coordination of their teacher’s private disclosures (Nunziata, 2007). Specifically focusing on the private information disclosed inside and outside of the classroom, Nunziata (2007) identified students’ perceptions of topic appropriateness, functionality and student boundary coordination in relation to the private information disclosed by teachers. Students’ perceptions are very similar to the results regarding teachers reported above. According to Nunziata’s (2007) study, students reported that teachers were disclosing private information about their family relationships, life
experience (background and education) and everyday talk and activities. Similar to the results reported by McBride and Wahl (2005), Nunziata (2007) found that the topic of disclosures needed to remain relevant to the course content for students to perceive it as appropriate. In addition, students reported inappropriate disclosure topics about the private disclosures of teachers. These topics were categorized as personal problems, such as in teacher’s personal relationships outside of the classroom, personal opinions, such as political and religious affiliations, and drinking behavior. However, students reported that they were willing to engage in such topics as long as they take place outside of the classroom or relate to the course content.

Just as instructors have their own motivational criterion for their private information, students have motivations for wanting to know information about their teachers. Based on the private information teachers share with students, Nunziata (2007) found three functions that help students make sense of and use their teacher’s private disclosures. Students revealed that private disclosures humanized their teachers, made their teachers approachable, and the disclosures created affect for the teacher as well as the course. In order to address students’ rule expectations for teacher’s disclosures of private information, two themes emerged from this line of research that are also similar to McBride and Wahl’s (2005) findings. Nunziata (2007) found students’ rule expectations for their teacher’s private disclosures of information included teacher disclosure as a humanizing factor and relating the disclosures to the course content. The above research on CPM and its findings in the classroom from the perspectives of both teachers as well as students, contribute to the instructional communication literature. It is through this line of research that the body of work on self-disclosure can be clarified and extended.

Specifically, research on CPM should provide a more complete understanding of the current problem in the self-disclosure literature: measurement.

Measure of Self-disclosure

An agreed upon scale for measuring self-disclosure is a major problem for researchers. When investigating teacher self-disclosure, few studies focus on the multi-dimensional nature of self-disclosure (Lannuti & Strauman, 2006) and those that do modify Wheeless and Grotz’s (1976) interpersonal scale. As previously mentioned, this scale is a measure of interpersonal self-disclosure and not specific to the classroom. As
stated above, the teacher-student relationship can be viewed as an interpersonal relationship (Frymier & Houser, 2000) but it is imperative to note that teacher self-disclosure is different than interpersonal self-disclosure. Through the use of teacher-self disclosure, immediacy develops in the classroom (Cayanus & Martin, in press) but the professional boundary between teachers and students should not be muddied (Lannuti & Straumann, 2006).

Recently, Cayanus and Martin (2004b) developed a measure of instructor self-disclosure that focused only on the amount dimension of self-disclosure, much like the early research that often reported inconsistent findings. By only measuring the amount of self-disclosure used by a teacher, other dimensions that could be affecting the relationship were not reported. This may have been the case when these authors examined the relationship between teacher self-disclosure and student perceptions of teacher credibility (Cayanus and Martin, 2004a). Results indicated no significant relationship between teacher self-disclosure and the three dimensions of credibility. Cayanus and Martin (2004a) believed this was a result of the unidimensional scale used. They suggested, as did Wheeless (1976), that several dimensions of self-disclosure need to be investigated in order to have a better understanding of what is taking place in the teacher-student relationship.

As a result, Cayanus and Martin (in press) introduced a 14-item Teacher Self-disclosure Scale that identifies three dimensions of self-disclosure: amount, relevance and negativity. Amount refers to how often self-disclosure occurs. These items were taken from the unidimensional scale mentioned above (Cayanus & Martin, 2004b). The relevance dimension focuses on the significance of the course content meeting the personal goals and needs of students (Cayanus & Martin, in press). This dimension was created based on literature from Frymier and her colleagues (Frymier & Shulman, 1995; Frymier, Shulman, & Houser, 1996). The negativity dimension focuses on the negative information revealed to students by teachers (Cayanus & Martin, in press). This dimension was created out of the research conducted by Wheeless and Grotz (1977). When using their Teacher Self-disclosure Scale, Cayanus & Martin (in press) found some support for the relationship between teacher-self disclosure, affective learning and clarity. More specifically, amount and negativity added to the explained variance in students’
reported affective learning. In addition, relevance and negativity accounted for the variance in teacher clarity.

Although this scale is an improvement from the unidimensional scale because it focuses on the multi-dimensional nature of self-disclosure, when used, mixed results were reported (Cayanus & Martin, in press). One possible explanation for this could be that the teacher self-disclosure scale needs to focus more on the content of the disclosures. For example, when examining the relevance dimension of the teacher self-disclosure scale, Cayanus & Martin (in press) created this dimension out of the literature from Frymier and her colleagues (Frymier & Shulman, 1995; Frymier, Shulman, & Houser, 1996). According to this literature, these authors wrote the scale items in an effort to examine how teachers relate course content to “students’ personal goals/needs and career goals” (Frymier & Shulman, 1995, p. 49). Frymier and her colleagues’ relevance scale is measuring how course content is tailored to meet the specific needs of students. Although the items for the teacher self-disclosure scale in the relevance dimension were modified to include the term “personal,” this dimension is not measuring how the disclosures are used to extend the course content. Instead it is measuring how the “personal” disclosures of teachers are relevant to the student and not to the course content. Furthermore, the teacher self-disclosure scale does not focus on the types of disclosures that occur in the classroom. One possible area of research that could help further the measurement of teacher self-disclosure in the classroom is the literature on CPM.

The theoretical lens of CPM can be used to further the multi-dimensional nature of the current Teacher Self-disclosure Scale. CPM provides an additional understanding of the self-disclosure occurring in the classroom by focusing on the balance maintained by instructors to reveal and conceal their private information. By first understanding the process of private disclosure, the content and type of disclosure can be examined. Specifically, CPM contends instructors are motivated to reveal private information when it is related to the course content (McBride & Wahl, 2005; Nunziata, 2008). In addition, researchers utilizing CPM have found the types of information revealed by teachers (McBride & Wahl, 2005). As a result, items focusing on course content, as well as appropriate and inappropriate disclosures should be added to the scale.
Although the theory of communication privacy management aids in providing a better understanding of teacher self-disclosure in the classroom, this line of research is also complicated by measurement issues. Because CPM has only recently been applied to the classroom, a limited amount of data has been recorded. In addition, this line of research has remained strictly qualitative, where teachers have kept diaries of their disclosures (McBride & Wahl, 2005) and completed online questionnaires (Nunziata, 2008). In short, in order to extend the literature of self-disclosure in the classroom, what is known from the qualitative research on CPM must be used to create a quantitative measure. To do this, the existing research on self-disclosure and CPM must be combined. The following paragraphs provide further rationale for adding such items to the current measure of self-disclosure in an effort to further understand this construct.

Researchers using CPM have found how both teachers and students manage the private disclosures of teachers in the classroom. This line of research helps to extend what is known about self-disclosure in the classroom. Specifically, both teachers and students use motivational criterion to develop rules with regard to the private information revealed. Such motivations include extending the course content and relating to students on a personal level (McBride & Wahl, 2005; Nunziata, 2008). These findings are consistent with the research on teacher self-disclosure. Specifically, Downs et al. (1988) suggested that award-winning teachers use narratives and self-disclosure when it is relevant to the course content. In addition, research on self-disclosure has found that when teacher self-disclosure is incorporated into explanations of course content, students believe this to be intentional (Lannutti & Strauman, 2006). Student motivation has been related to the relevance of what teachers say and when their content is relevant, student learning increases (Frymier & Shulman, 1995). In summary, by combining the research on teacher self-disclosure and CPM in the classroom, one can conclude that teachers, based on the privacy rules they create, decide to disclose their private information when it is related to the course content.

Furthermore, research on self-disclosure can be expanded when combined with CPM and the findings reported on the types of information revealed. Teacher’s reported that they are mindful of the information that is appropriate and inappropriate (McBride & Wahl, 2005). This consciousness aids in what private information is disclosed. Kearney,
Plax, Hays and Ivey (1991) noted certain teaching misbehaviors negatively affect the classroom. However, teachers avoid these misbehaviors in an effort to avoid the negative ramifications associated with their usage (McBride & Wahl, 2005). According to Mazer, Murphy and Simonds (2007) students reported that teachers should self-disclose appropriate information, further supporting the notion that students are able to distinguish appropriate information from inappropriate. Students also suggested teachers avoid inappropriate disclosures in the classroom (Nunziata, 2007). Research on self-disclosure has found that when the self-disclosure by teachers is used appropriately, a positive learning environment that is beneficial to students as well as to teachers can be produced (Cayanus, 2004). Students also believe self-disclosures that are not related to course materials appear out of place and are deemed inappropriate for class (Lannutti & Strauman, 2006), suggesting teachers should use their self-disclosure to extend the course content. Thus, by combining the research on teacher self-disclosure and CPM in the classroom, one can conclude that teachers report their understanding of the distinction between appropriate and inappropriate information disclosed and as a result, they also report that they are mindful of the private information they reveal.

McBride and Wahl (2005) cited Sprague’s (1993) argument that existing theory should be used by communication education researchers in an effort to enhance pedagogical knowledge. Pertonio’s communication privacy management theory can be used as a theoretical lens to examine teacher self-disclosure in the classroom. By doing so, instructional communication scholars will extend the body of knowledge on self-disclosure through CPM. Two such areas that can benefit from the lens of CPM are students’ perceptions of teacher credibility and teacher power use.

Credibility

Since the time of Aristotle, the concept of speaker credibility has been scrutinized (Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998). Based on the perceptions of whether or not a source is believable by the receiver (McCroskey, 1992), credibility, or ethos, refers to an individual’s outlook toward the source in the communication process (McCroskey & Young, 1981). Aristotle conceptualized ethos as having three dimensions: intelligence, character and goodwill (Frymier & Thompson, 1992; Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998) and believed that these three dimensions were sources of influence on a receiver. McCroskey
and Young (1981) reported that “contemporary research generally has supported the proposition that source credibility is a very important element in the communication process, whether the goal of the communication is persuasion or the generation of understanding” (p. 24).

**Teacher Credibility**

Credibility is one of the most important variables affecting the teacher-student relationship (Myers, 2001). In the classroom, credibility of the teacher is defined according to students’ perceptions of the teacher during the communication process. Based on the image that a teacher presents in the class, credibility is the attitude of the receiver (student) toward the teacher (Teven & McCroskey 1996; McCroskey & Teven, 1999).

There are three components of credibility; competence, character and caring (McCroskey & Teven, 1999). **Competence** centers on students’ perceptions of their teacher’s knowledge or expertise in a subject matter (McCroskey & Teven, 1999). A teacher is perceived as more credible if he/she appears to know his/her topic area (Booth-Butterfield, 1992). However, when an instructor demonstrates a lack of knowledge in the topic area, the teacher is seen as not being credible (McCroskey, 1992).

A second component of credibility is **character**. Character refers to the “goodness” (i.e., honesty) of a teacher (Frymier & Thompson, 1992) and can be conveyed in four ways: through instructor immediacy, flexibility, promotion of understanding and trustworthiness (Myers & Bryant, 2004). Character entails the amount of trust a receiver has with the source (McCroskey, 1992).

The final component of credibility is **caring**. Caring focuses on the teacher’s expressed concern about the students and their welfare (Myers, 2004). Welfare is linked to empathy, understanding and responsiveness (McCroskey, 1992). Caring can be seen through responsiveness, accommodation and accessibility (Myers & Bryant, 2004). McCroskey (1992) attributes the importance of caring to the writings of Aristotle and believed that it is of great importance for the teacher to be viewed as caring. When students perceive their teachers to be caring, students reported that they learned more and had higher affect for the course (Teven & McCroskey, 1996).
Teacher credibility has been correlated with several classroom variables such as teacher immediacy (Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998), students’ perceptions of understanding (Schrodt, 2003), affective learning (Teven & McCroskey, 1996), affinity seeking, and student motivation to study (Frymier & Thompson, 1992). Additional correlations of perceived teacher credibility and classroom variables include higher ratings of student satisfaction (Teven & Herring, 2005), greater recommendations about the instructor to a friend (Nadler & Nadler, 2001), and willingness to talk in class (Myers, 2004). Perceptions of teacher credibility have been positively linked to students’ perceptions of classroom justice (Chory, 2007). Infante (1980) reported that sources with high credibility have a greater impact on receivers. Research has also found that speakers who are able to handle questions from the audience are perceived to be more credible (Ragsdale & Mikels, 1975).

**Teacher Self-disclosure and Teacher Credibility**

As previously mentioned, in 2004, Cayanus and Martin (a) examined the relationship between teacher self-disclosure and credibility. They predicted that teacher self-disclosure would be positively related to teacher credibility. To test their hypothesis, Cayanus and Martin (2004a) used the Instructor Self-disclosure Scale (2004b), an 18-item, unidimensional scale. Teacher self-disclosure was not related to any of the three dimensions of credibility (Cayanus & Martin, 2004a). However, through the lens of CPM, students’ perceptions of teacher credibility can be better understood and examined. By understanding the management and boundary creation of teachers’ disclosures, students’ perceptions of teacher credibility is worthy of further examination.

One area of CPM that helps to further examine teacher credibility in the classroom is the risks-benefits ratio criterion of privacy rule foundations. This criterion used to develop privacy rules contends that individuals weigh the risks and benefits of their private information when faced with making a decision to reveal or conceal their information (Petronio, 2002). Because the classroom is a public arena, weighing the risks and benefits of their private information becomes increasingly important (Nunziata, 2008). When teachers were asked to list topics they believed would damage their credibility if revealed, such topics included sex, political affiliation, religion, drinking and personal family issues (Nunziata, 2008). In addition, teachers also reported topics...
they conceal from students such as personal information, like where they go for fun, negative personal relationships, such as conflicts with other faculty members, sexual topics, such as their sexual orientation, and negative aspects of character or image, which refers to anything that would put the instructor in a bad light (McBride & Wahl, 2005). As a result, inappropriate information is concealed in order to avoid forming a negative perception of character and to avoid appearing uncredible in the classroom (McBride & Wahl, 2005). Thus, the research indicates that teachers are mindful of the information they reveal and conceal from their students and therefore avoid disclosing any private information that could risk hindering student perceptions of their credibility.

CPM can also be used to further examine the relationship between self-disclosure and credibility. When looking specifically at each of the three components, first, for character, McCroskey (1992) stated that this component of credibility entails the amount of trust a receiver has with the source. Research on self-disclosure has found that more consciously intended disclosures and greater amount of disclosures were associated with higher levels of trust (Wheeless and Grotz, 1977). This line of research relates to the research on CPM that notes that teachers are conscious of the information they reveal to and conceal from their students due to the private information’s co-ownership. For example, teachers are mindful of the private information they reveal (McBride & Wahl, 2005) and share information that helps in the understanding of the course content (Nunziata, 2008). If private information serves a purpose, like extending course content, then instructors are willing to co-own this information with students (McBride & Wahl, 2005). Teachers also reported that 40% of their personal information revealed to students was for the purposes of extending course content (McBride & Wahl, 2005). The relationship between self-disclosure and CPM with the character component of credibility can be furthered through the understanding of the mindful and conscious decisions teachers make with regard to their private disclosures.

For competence, Booth-Butterfield (1992) stated that teachers who appear to know their topic area were perceived as more credible. Researchers have also found that students perceive instructor communicative behaviors conveying competence through their content expertise demonstrated in the classroom (Myers & Brant, 2004). Such behaviors include demonstrating knowledge beyond the textbook and providing personal
examples. If teachers are motivated to disclose their private information in an effort to extend course content (McBride & Wahl, 2005; Nunziata, 2008) and teachers who use self-disclosure are perceived by their students as effective in explaining the course content (Andersen et al., 1981) it is only reasonable to believe that this personal self-disclosure used to extend the course content would correlate with student perceptions of teacher credibility, specifically the competence dimension. Thus, if teachers disclose private information in an effort to extend course content, and students perceive teacher communication behaviors such as providing personal examples as teacher competence, then it stands to reason that teacher self-disclosure related to the course content would have an impact on student perceptions of teacher credibility.

For caring, Myers and Bryant (2004) found that students perceive that teachers convey caring through responsiveness, accommodation, and accessibility. Research on CPM has found that teachers reported revealing private information to students for relational purposes (Nunziata, 2008), such as appearing more human (McBride & Wahl, 2005), and creating an environment for reciprocal disclosures (Nunziata, 2008). In addition, CPM research also focuses on boundary permeability and contends that teachers loosen boundaries and allow students to become co-owners of their information as a function of teacher mentoring and guidance for the student (Nunziata, 2008). Thus, if students become co-owners of their teacher’s private disclosures and teachers are granting access to their private information, then CPM furthers the relationship with the caring component of credibility through the use of openness. In summary, the relationship between the three components of credibility and teacher self-disclosure is furthered through the lens of CPM.

As noted previously, credibility is a concept that has been scrutinized since the time of Aristotle (Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998). Since much more has been learned about the source through CPM, such as the types of self-disclosure used in the classroom and the privacy rules created behind revealing this private information, the following hypothesis was advanced:

H1: Teacher self-disclosure related to the course content will be positively correlated with student perceptions of credibility: competence, character and caring.
Power

Another area of research that can benefit from the lens of CPM, in an effort to understand the impact teacher self-disclosure may have on this variable, is teacher power use. Much research on teacher power use in the classroom has been framed in French and Raven’s (1959) typology. French and Raven (1959) identified five potential bases of power. They include reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, referent power, and expert power. These bases of power are supported by the perceptions of the individuals over whom the power may be exerted. According to French and Raven, they identified the five bases of power for the primary purpose of observing “the changes which they produce and the other effects which accompany the use of power” (p. 150).

French and Raven’s five bases of relational power propose that influence is exerted over others through communication. Because power is a product that emerges from a relationship (Roach, Richmond, & Mottet, 2006) interpersonal or relational power is broadly defined as “an individual’s potential to have an effect on another person’s or group of persons’ behavior… it is the capacity to influence another person to do something” (McCroskey & Richmond, 1983, p. 176). Since the five power bases are rooted in relational perceptions, those trying to exert power (the agent) must be perceived as powerful or influential by others (the target of their power) (Roach et al., 2006). This influence is evidenced in the classroom by both teachers and students. Although French and Raven (1959) did not conceptualize the power bases with the classroom as their focus, McCroskey and Richmond (1983) have examined them in the context of the classroom. Below are the definitions of the five power bases, as well as their application to the classroom.

First, legitimate power is the title the agent possesses and is not necessarily rooted in the relationship. Instead of stemming from the interpersonal relationship the target has with the agent, this power is derived from the title or position held by the agent. This power is sometimes referred to as assigned power (McCroskey & Richmond, 1983). In the classroom, legitimate power relates to the teachers assigned authoritative role to the students in the classroom (McCroskey & Richmond, 1983; Schrodt, Witt, & Turman, 2007). Examples of this power include determining what should be studied, controlling classroom time and regulating group interaction (McCroskey & Richmond, 1983).
Teacher power over the student occurs when students accept the hierarchical role that is established in the classroom, allowing for further direction from teachers to students in relation to course content (Schrodt et al., 2007).

Second, coercive power takes place when the target holds the belief that the agent has the ability to punish him/her or withhold a reward from him/her. In the classroom, coercive power is the perception of student understanding that the teacher has the ability to punish the student (McCroskey & Richmond, 1983; Schrodt et al., 2007). Perceived coercive power over the student occurs because students want to avoid punishment (Schrodt et al., 2007).

Third, reward power takes place when the target holds the belief that the agent has the ability to reward him/her or withhold punishment from him/her. Not only must the reward seem desirable to the target, but the target must believe the agent has the authority to reward him/her. In the classroom, reward power is derived from students’ perceptions of the positive rewards that a teacher can provide them (McCroskey & Richmond, 1983; Schrodt et al., 2007). These rewards can be tangible or intangible. When students perceive that such rewards exist, they become more likely to adopt the teacher’s direction (Schrodt et al., 2007).

Fourth, referent power takes place when the agent is viewed as a role model by the target and the target is able to identify with the agent. In the classroom, referent power is the foundation of identification of students to their teachers (McCroskey & Richmond, 1983). Referent power is the perception of similarity or interpersonal affinity with the teacher by students (Schrodt et al., 2007). Based on the relationship between the teacher and the student, referent power is based on the students desire to identify with the teacher (McCroskey & Richmond, 1983). In the college classroom, referent power can be used by teachers over students through the admiration of students to teachers and student desire to be associated with the teacher (Schrodt et al., 2007).

Fifth, expert power takes place when an agent is perceived as competent or an expert in an area. In the classroom, expert power is derived from the perceptions of the teacher’s knowledge in the particular subject area of the course (Schrodt et al., 2007). According to McCroskey and Richmond (1983) most information taught in the classroom is derived from the expert base of power. The same authors also note that this knowledge
is presented in a fashion that it will be accepted by students, and as a result, the students will view their teacher as knowledgeable. Through the perception of teacher knowledge of the subject material and their delivery of the content to students (Schrodt et al., 2007), perceived power is exercised over the students and displayed through their respect for the teacher (McCroskey et al., 2006).

**Teacher Power**

Teacher power is a perception formed by students and only exists “in so far as students perceive it to exist and accept it” (Richmond & McCroskey, 1984, p. 125). Much like credibility, teacher power is a communication factor that has the ability to affect the interpersonal relationship between teachers and students in the classroom (Schrodt et al., 2007). Early research on power has provided valuable information concerning teachers’ use of power and its associations with cognitive learning (Richmond & McCroskey, 1984; Richmond 1990), affective learning (Richmond & McCroskey, 1984; McCroskey, Richmond, Plax, & Kearney, 1985; Plax, Kearney, McCroskey, & Richmond, 1986), student motivation (Richmond, 1990) and satisfaction (Plax, Kearney, & Downs, 1986). More recent work on power has also found that students use the bases of power to influence their teachers (Golish, 1999; Golish & Olson, 2000).

McCroskey and Richmond (1983) found that students perceived that their teachers relied more on reward, referent, and expert power bases than coercive and legitimate power bases. In addition, the largest increases in student learning were associated with referent and expert power (Richmond & McCroskey, 1984). Research has also found referent and expert power to have a positive association with components of credibility. For example, teacher expert power was positively associated with perceptions of competence and character (Teven & Herring, 2005). In the same study, researchers found referent power to be strongly associated with trust (Teven & Herring, 2005). The research findings above support Richmond & McCroskey’s (1984) claim that “while referent and expert power clearly are the power options to be preferred, both rest on a foundation of a good relationship between the student and the teacher” (p. 136). This good relationship can be enhanced by teacher use of self-disclosure.
**Teacher Self-disclosure and Teacher Power**

Various relational behaviors have been associated with a variety of social influence techniques (Turman & Schrodt, 2006). One such relational behavior is teacher immediacy, which has been positively associated with students’ willingness to comply (Kearney, Plax & Burroughs, 1991). Teacher self-disclosure is one strategy used for creating verbal immediacy in the classroom. In addition, previous research on power has used Roach’s (1995) Power Base Measure. Although this is a reliable measure, perceptions of teachers’ communicative behaviors expressing or conveying power is left out (Schrodt et al., 2007). As a result, Schrodt et al. (2007) developed a new measurement of teacher power that focuses on the communication behaviors instructors employ “as they draw upon and exert different types of power and social influence in the classroom” (p. 328). Self-disclosure is an example of a communication behavior that occurs in the classroom. Given that the newly developed scale focuses on the communication behaviors instructors use when exerting the types of power, and previous research has found that teacher immediacy is a relational behavior associated with students’ willingness to comply, and self-disclosure is a strategy for creating verbal immediacy, it stands to reason that self-disclosure may be a communication behavior that impacts student perceptions of teacher power use in the classroom.

It also stands to reason that self-disclosure may impact student perceptions of teacher power use in the classroom based on the nature of the interpersonal relationship of both variables. As previously noted, the teacher-student relationship is viewed as an interpersonal relationship (Frymier & Houser, 2000) and self-disclosure is just one interpersonal variable that influences this relationship (Sorensen, 1989). According to Schrodt et al. (2007), the exertion of interpersonal power is a communication factor influencing the interpersonal relationship. In addition, a degree of social influence is involved in the teacher-student relationship (Frymier & Houser, 2000; Turman & Schrodt, 2006). Power by teachers is used to influence students in the classroom to achieve learning outcomes, stay on task, and achieve academic standards (Richmond & McCroskey, 1984; Richmond, 1990; Plax et al., 1986; Roach, 1994; Turman & Schrodt, 2006). As noted previously, the two preferred power options are referent and expert, and both depend on a good teacher-student relationship (Richmond & McCroskey, 1984).
Given that both self-disclosure and interpersonal power influence the interpersonal relationship between teachers and students, and referent and expert power depend on a good teacher-student relationship, it stands to reason that self-disclosure may be a communication behavior that impacts student perceptions of teacher power use in the classroom.

Though the lens of CPM, self-disclosure can be further examined in its relation to student perceptions of teacher power use in the classroom by focusing on the referent and expert bases of power. First, referent power is the identification of students to their teachers (McCroskey & Richmond, 1983) as well as student perceptions of interpersonal affinity (Schrodt et al., 2007). Also, referent power has been strongly associated with trust (Teven & Herring, 2005). Research on self-disclosure has found that higher levels of trust were associated with more consciously intended disclosures and greater amount of disclosures (Wheeless & Grotz, 1977). Research on CPM has argued that teachers, through motivational criterion used to establish rules (Petronio, 2002), disclose private information to their students for the purposes of extending course content (McBride & Wahl). If, according to the CPM literature, teachers are consciously disclosing their private information in an effort to extend the course content (McBride & Wahl, 2005), and research has linked referent power to trust (Teven & Herring, 2005) which leads to the consciously intended disclosure (Wheeless & Grotz, 1977), then it stand to reason that a relationship would exist between referent power and self-disclosure used to extend the course content. Due to the greater amount of private disclosures, a relationship between teacher self-disclosure and referent power may exist. Thus, in order to extend this rationale, the following hypothesis was advanced:

H2: Teacher self-disclosure related to the course content will be positively correlated with student perceptions of referent power.

CPM may also be used to further examine student perceptions of teacher expert power use. Expert power is derived from student perceptions of their teacher’s knowledge in a particular subject area (Schrodt et al., 2007). In addition, expert power has been perceived by students through their teacher’s skillful delivery of the content (Schrodt et al., 2007). Research has also found that when a variety of instructional tools are used to ensure student understanding of course material, students see their teachers as
possessing expert and reward power (Turman & Schrodt, 2006). One instructional tool that may be used is course related self-disclosure. As noted in the literature review of CPM, teachers reported that 40% of the private information they revealed to students was for the purposes of extending course content (McBride & Wahl, 2005). If, as CPM contends, teachers are disclosing their private information or the private information of others they may know, something they own, or co-own, and know a great deal about, in an effort to extend course content, then it stands to reason that student observations of self-disclosure would convey perceptions of expert power. Thus, in order to extend this rationale, the following hypothesis was advanced:

H3: Teacher self-disclosure related to the course content will be positively correlated with student perceptions of expert power.

Although CPM provides a lens to examine student perceptions of teacher referent and expert power use in the classroom, it remains unknown what effect, if any, self-disclosure related to the course content has on the three remaining bases of power. Thus, the following research question was advanced:

RQ1: Is teacher self-disclosure related to the course content correlated with legitimate, reward, or coercive power?

Learning

It is also important to focus on the impact teacher self-disclosure may have on student outcomes, such as learning. Learning, according to Bloom and his colleagues (1956) consists of three domains: affective, cognitive, and psychomotor. In instructional research, learning is an important area of measurement (Frymier & Houser, 1999). For this study, the domains of cognitive and affective learning were examined in relation to teacher self-disclosure.

First, cognitive learning is the “recall or recognition of knowledge and the development of intellectual abilities and skills” (Bloom, 1956, p. 7). Cognitive learning occurs in the classroom when information is transformed into knowledge by students (Mottet & Beebe, 2006). Instructional communication researchers have developed and implemented measures of cognitive learning. One such measurement is Frymier and Houser’s (1999) Revised Learning Indicators Scale (RLIS). Through this measurement, learning indicators have been positively correlated with learner empowerment, nonverbal
immediacy, affective learning, state motivation, and grades (Frymier & Houser, 1999). An examination of the relationship between learning indicators and teacher self-disclosure is warranted for two reasons. First, this relationship has not been previously examined. Second, if the RLIS provides a perception of student progress in understanding the course content (Frymier & Houser, 1999), and research on CPM demonstrates how instructors use private disclosure to extend the course content (McBride & Wahl, 2005; Nunziata, 2008), it stands to reason that instructor self-disclosure related to the course content may be related to student perceptions of their learning.

Second, affective learning is “the objectives which emphasize a feeling or tone, an emotion or degree of acceptance or rejection” (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964, p. 7). Affective learning in the classroom focuses on the attitudes, beliefs, and values of students that relate to their knowledge (McCroskey, 1992). Affective learning has been positively related to several interpersonal variables in the classroom, such as immediacy (Christophel, 1990), communicator style (Norton, 1978) and self-disclosive statements (Sorensen, 1989). Additionally, higher verbal immediacy by teachers, including talking about themselves, was related to affective learning (Witt & Wheeless, 2001). Teacher clarity has also been positively associated with greater affective learning (Chesebro & McCroskey, 2001). Through teacher disclosure of private information used to extend course content, affective learning may be increased. As a result, it stands to reason that private information teachers use to extend course content may have a positive impact on student learning.

Student affect for the teacher as well as the course has been previously examined using the newest measure of teacher self-disclosure. First, examining teacher self-disclosure in relation to student affect for the teacher, Cayanus and Martin (in press) found statistical significance for the dimensions of amount and relevance with affect for the teacher, however not for negativity. In addition, weak correlations among all three dimensions with affective learning were reported: amount (.20), negativity (-.08) and relevance (.20). Second, when looking at teacher self-disclosure in relation to student affect for the course, Cayanus and Martin (in press) found statistical significance for the dimensions of amount and negativity with affect for the course, however, not for relevance. In addition, weak correlations among all three dimensions were reported:
amount (.20), negativity (-.15) and relevance (.14). As previously mentioned, additional items should be added to Cayanus and Martin’s (in press) teacher self-disclosure scale. It is through these items that the relationship of teacher self-disclosure and affective learning can be furthered. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis was advanced:

H4: Teacher self-disclosure related to the course content will be positively correlated with student affective and cognitive learning.
Chapter 2: Methodology

This study examined teacher self-disclosure use in the classroom through the theoretical foundations of Altman and Taylor’s (1973) social penetration and Sandra Petronio’s (2002) communication privacy management. Through the use of the most recent measure of teacher self-disclosure, the dimensions of relevance, negativity, and amount were examined. The responses from this scale, as well as the measure of source credibility, teacher power use, affective learning, and learning indicators, provided the ability to test four hypotheses and one research question. In the following pages, an explanation of the participants and procedures is detailed, along with the above mentioned scales and their reliabilities.

Participants

Participants in the study were 419 undergraduate students (136 males and 283 females) enrolled in sections of three entry-level communication courses at a medium-sized Midwestern university. Sixty-six participants were first year students (15.8%), 214 participants were sophomores (51.1%), 115 participants were juniors (27.4%), 23 participants were seniors (5.5%), and one participant identified his/her class ranking as other (.2%). The participants received academic credit in their communication course for partaking in the online survey.

Procedures

Participants completed an online survey that included measures for teacher self-disclosure, teacher credibility, teacher power use, and student learning. The researcher announced the project via email to all instructors of the three entry-level courses in the communication department (see Appendix A). The instructors subsequently forwarded the email to their students; the students accessed the survey website through a link in that email. Participants were asked to evaluate the teacher they had in the class immediately preceding their entry-level communication course (see Appendices B & C). In order to maintain anonymity, the student’s name and specific course section were identified through a linking survey at the end of the first survey and were not connected to the data. Data were gathered toward the end of the semester, during the 15th week of classes, which provided students adequate time to become acquainted with their teachers and accurately report how their teachers typically behaved.
Measures

**Teacher Self-disclosure.** This variable was operationalized using a revised version of Cayanus and Martin’s (in press) 14-item Teacher Self-Disclosure Scale. Participants were asked to indicate perceptions of their teacher’s use of self-disclosure. The original scale indexed the following aspects of self-disclosure: amount, relevance, and negativity. Of the original 14 items, four measure amount, five measure relevance, and five measure negativity.

In an effort to further understand teacher self-disclosure, eight additional questions were added to the original 14 questions of the scale (see Appendix D). Of these eight additions, two items were written to reflect self-disclosure used to extend the course content. Specifically, these two items asked students how frequently their teacher’s behavior corresponded with the following two statements: “tells personal stories that closely relate to the course content” and “uses personal examples that are not appropriate for the classroom setting to illustrate course concepts.” Furthermore, two of the eight additional items were written to reflect self-disclosure unrelated to the course content. For these items, students were asked to indicate how frequently their teacher “begins class by discussing personal events and/or experiences that are unrelated to the course content” and “shares information about him/herself that is unrelated to the class.” Additionally, of the eight items added, four items were written to reflect appropriate and inappropriate self-disclosure used by teachers. For these items, the following statements were added to the scale: “goes off on a personal digression during class,” “reveals inappropriate information during class about him/herself,” “reveals appropriate information about him/herself during class,” and “discloses positive things about him/herself.” A total of 22 items were used in this study to measure teacher self-disclosure.

The 22 teacher self-disclosure items were submitted to principle components analysis with iteration prior to the factor extraction with promax rotation. Criteria for factor extraction were eigenvalue > 1.0, loadings >.50 for each item, and each factor accounting for at least five percent of the variance. MSA=.93 indicating sampling adequacy and Bartlett’s test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2=5519.162$, $df=231$, $p<.001$) indicating that there were adequate relationships among the variables for factor analysis.
to be appropriate. The first dimension consisted of six items, accounted for 41% of the variance and reflected self-disclosure relevant to the course content, such as “uses his/her own experiences to introduce a concept” and “tells personal stories that closely relate to course content.” This factor was labeled as relevance. The second dimension consisted of eight items, accounted for 15% of the variance and reflected negative teacher self-disclosures, such as “discloses negative things about him/herself” and “reveals inappropriate information during class about him/herself.” This factor was labeled as negativity. The third dimension consisted of five items, accounted for 7% of the variance and reflected the amount of self-disclosure used by teachers, such as “shares his/her dislikes and likes” and “presents his/her attitudes toward events occurring on campus.” This factor was labeled as amount. Three items did not load on any of the three dimensions. Factor loadings can be found in Table 1.

The three dimensions were measured using a 5-interval scale anchored by 1 (never) and 5 (very often). Previous scholars reported a reliability of .80 for amount, .88 for relevance, and .84 for negativity (Cayanus & Martin, in press). Additionally, these authors reported that amount had a $M=15.70$ and a $SD=5.4$, relevance had a $M=23.38$ and a $SD=7.17$, and negativity had a $M=27.54$ and a $SD=6.27$ (Cayanus & Martin, in press). In this study, alpha coefficients for the three dimensions of self-disclosure were: amount, .84 ($M=12.51$, $SD=4.40$); relevance, .93 ($M=18.05$, $SD=6.28$); negativity, .91 ($M=12.04$, $SD=5.33$).

**Teacher Credibility.** This variable was operationalized using McCroskey and Teven’s (1999) 18-item Measure of Source Credibility Scale. Participants were asked to indicate perceptions of their teachers based on three dimensions: competence, character, and caring. Each dimension was measured by using six, 7-point bipolar semantic differential scales. Higher scores indicated perceptions of higher credibility. Previous reliability coefficients ranging from .90 to .92 have been reported for the three dimensions of credibility (Banfield, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2006). In addition, previous scholars have reported a $M=31.28$ and a $SD=7.87$ for competence, a $M=29.96$ and a $SD=8.29$ for character, and a $M=29.22$ and a $SD=8.36$ for caring (Banfield et al., 2006). In this study, alpha coefficients for the three dimensions of credibility were: competence, .83.
(M=35.82, SD=5.87); character, .88 (M=35.63, SD=5.89); caring, .89 (M=31.24, SD=7.84).

**Teacher Power Use.** This variable was operationalized using Schrodt et al.,’s (2007) 30-item Teacher Power Use Scale (TPUS). Participants were asked to indicate perceptions of their teacher’s use of power. The scale indexed the following aspects of power: reward, coercive, legitimate, referent, and expert. Each dimension was measured by using six, 7-interval Likert scale with “completely disagree” and “completely agree” serving as the two end points. Schrodt et al. (2007) reported the following alpha reliabilities for this scale: reward, .81 (M=4.27, SD=1.21); coercive, .87 (M=2.25, SD=1.13); legitimate, .77 (M=3.08, SD=1.16); referent, .91 (M=4.81, SD=1.33); expert, .88 (M=5.49, SD=1.22). In this study, alpha coefficients for the five bases of power were: reward, .81 (M=24.92, SD=6.49); coercive, .86 (M=15.52, SD=7.09); legitimate, .73 (M=21.49, SD=6.11); referent, .87 (M=27.67, SD=7.10); expert, .86 (M=31.60, SD=6.96).

**Student Learning.** This variable was operationalized using two different scales. First, four of the six subscales from Mottet and Richmond’s (1998) Revised Affective Learning Measure were used. Each subscale used four, 7-step bi-polar adjectives to measure learning. This measure represents two sub-scores: course affect and instructor affect. The reliability for both of the sub-scores was .97 (Mottet & Richmond, 1998). In addition, the course affect factor had a M=94.8 and a SD=32.8, while the instructor affect factor had a M=41.6 and a SD=14.6 (Mottet & Richmond, 1998).

For this study, the four subscales were combined to create a measure for affective learning. The alpha reliability for this combined measure was .87 (M=82.95, SD=21.2). Alpha coefficients for the four affective learning subscales were: attitude about the course, .86 (M=20.86, SD=5.22); attitude about the instructor, .86 (M=22.17, SD=5.44); likelihood of recalling the information in real life situations, .91 (M=20.44, SD=6.45); likelihood of taking another course with the teacher, .93 (M=19.59, SD=7.65).

Learning was also measured with Frymier and Houser’s (1999) Revised Learning Indicators Scale (RLIS). The RLIS measure consisted of 7-items that used a 5-point interval scale anchored by 1 (never) and 5 (very often). Participants were asked to
indicate their frequency of each behavior. Frymier and Houser (1999) reported a reliability coefficient of .85, with a $M=15.54$ and a $SD=5.65$. In this study, alpha reliability was .89 ($M=23.00$, $SD=6.26$).
Chapter 3: Results

Preliminary Results

As noted previously, the 22 teacher self-disclosure items were submitted to principle components analysis with iteration prior to the factor extraction with promax rotation. Of the 22 items, eight items were written and added to create a revised teacher self-disclosure scale. Specifically focusing on the eight additional items that were added, two of the items did not load on any of the three factors. These items were “reveals appropriate information about him/herself during class” and “discloses positive things about him/herself.” Of the remaining six items, one item loaded onto the relevance dimension, “tells personal stories that closely relate to the course content,” and one item loaded onto the amount dimension, “begins class by discussing personal events and/or experiences that are unrelated to the course content.” The remaining items were “goes off on a personal digression during class,” “reveals inappropriate information during class about him/herself,” “shares information about him/herself that is unrelated to the class,” and “uses personal examples that are not appropriate for the classroom setting to illustrate course concepts,” and loaded onto the negativity dimension. In short, the eight additional items added to the scale did not load onto a separate factor. Instead, six of the eight items factor loaded onto the three existing factors, while two items did not load.

This study used the revised relevance dimension to measure the proposed hypotheses and research question. The decision to use this dimension was based on two reasons. First, despite the origination of the relevance items, the modified statements are focused on the classroom disclosures of teachers. Additionally, four of the five items contain the word “personal” and three of the five items focus on the course content. Looking at the goal of the study, which was how teacher self-disclosure related to the course content impacts students using an existing theory, the items for the relevance dimension most closely relate to this goal, allowing for the examination of the hypotheses and research question to take place. Second, of the eight additional items written, one item factored onto the relevance dimension: “my teacher tells personal stories that relate to the course content.” This item directly relates to the four hypotheses and research question, thus supporting the use of the revised relevance dimension. Because of the two reasons listed
above, the revised relevance dimension of self-disclosure was used to test the following hypotheses and research question.

**Data Analysis**

To examine the data concerning the four hypotheses, Pearson correlations were used to assess the relationships among the revised relevance dimension of teacher self-disclosure and the three dimensions of credibility (competence, character, and caring), referent power, expert power, and both affective and cognitive learning. In addition, Pearson correlations were computed between self-disclosure and three other bases of power (legitimate, reward, and coercive) to address the research question. Correlations among all variables are reported in Table 2.

**Research Results and Hypotheses**

The first hypothesis predicted that teacher self-disclosure related to the course content would be positively correlated with student perceptions of teacher credibility. This hypothesis was supported. A two-tailed bivariate correlation revealed that the revised relevance dimension of self-disclosure was positively correlated with all three dimensions of teacher credibility. The correlation of teacher self-disclosure with competence was $r = .27\ (p < .001)$, with character was $r = .19\ (p < .001)$, and with caring was $r = .21\ (p < .001)$. Despite the low nature of the above correlations, the data from this study supports the first hypothesis that teacher self-disclosure related to the course content is positively correlated with student perceptions of teacher credibility.

The second and third hypotheses predicted that teacher self-disclosure related to the course content would be positively correlated with student perceptions of referent and expert power. Both hypotheses were supported. The Pearson correlations revealed that the revised relevance dimension of self-disclosure was positively correlated with referent power ($r = .48, \ p < .001$) as well as expert power ($r = .35, \ p < .001$). Both of these correlations are moderate, therefore supporting the second and third hypotheses of this study.

The research question of this study focused on whether teacher self-disclosure related to the course content was correlated with legitimate, reward, or coercive power. As shown in Table 2, the revised relevance dimension of teacher self-disclosure was correlated with the legitimate and reward bases of power, however, not with the coercive base of power. A two-tailed bivariate correlation revealed that a positive correlation
between the revised relevance dimension of teacher self-disclosure and reward power existed ($r=.27, p<.001$) and a negative correlation between teacher self-disclosure and legitimate power existed ($r=-.12, p<.05$). Teacher self-disclosure related to the course content was not correlated with coercive power ($r=-.07, p>.05$). Results indicate that teacher self-disclosure related to the course content is positively associated with reward power and negatively associated with legitimate power. The size of both coefficients suggests a relationship between teacher self-disclosure and the reward and legitimate bases of power is small.

The fourth hypothesis predicted that teacher self-disclosure related to the course content would be positively correlated with student learning. In order to test this hypothesis, both affective learning and learning indicators were examined in relation to self-disclosure. The results from both sets of data analysis supported this hypothesis. Specifically, a two-tailed bivariate correlation revealed that the revised relevance dimension of self-disclosure was positively correlated with all four subscales of affective learning. The correlation between teacher self-disclosure and attitude about the course was $r=.27 (p<.001)$, and between teacher self-disclosure and attitude about the instructor was $r=.29 (p<.001)$. The correlation between teacher self-disclosure and recalling the information in real life situations was $r=.34 (p<.001)$ and between teacher self-disclosure and the likelihood of taking another course with the teacher was $r=.32 (p<.001)$.

Through an examination of the data reported using the Revised Learning Indicators Scale (Frymier & Houser, 1999), a two-tailed bivariate correlation showed that the revised relevance dimension of self-disclosure was positively correlated with students self-reported learning ($r=.37, p<.001$). Based on the above correlations, the fourth hypothesis was supported in that teacher self-disclosure related to the course content is positively correlated with student learning.
Table 1
Teacher Self-disclosure Factor Loadings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Relevance</th>
<th>Negativity</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uses personal examples to show the importance of a concept</td>
<td>.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uses his/her own experiences to introduce a concept</td>
<td>.83</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides personal explanations that make the content relevant</td>
<td>.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tells personal stories that closely related to the course content</td>
<td>.88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides personal examples which help me understand the importance of the content</td>
<td>.91</td>
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<tr>
<td>Links current course content to other areas of content through the use of personal examples</td>
<td>.82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reveals “bad” feelings he/she has about him/herself</td>
<td>.69</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goes off on a personal digressing during class</td>
<td>.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reveals inappropriate information during class about him/herself</td>
<td>.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reveals undesirable things about him/herself</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discloses negative things about him/herself</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shares information about him/herself that is unrelated to the course content</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has told me unflattering stories about him/herself</td>
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<td>Uses personal examples that are not appropriate for the classroom setting to illustrate course concepts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gives his/her opinions about current events</td>
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<tr>
<td>Begins class by discussing personal events and/or experiences that are unrelated to the course content</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shares his/her dislikes and likes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presents his/her attitudes toward events occurring on campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gives his/her opinion about events in the community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discloses, on the whole, more negative than positive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reveals appropriate information about him/herself during class</td>
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<td>Discloses positive things about him/herself</td>
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### Table 2
Correlations Among Variables

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Note: Correlations significant at p<.01, unless otherwise noted by *(p<.05) or **(p>.05).
Chapter 4: Discussion

Research Findings

The purpose of this study was to extend the literature on teacher self-disclosure in the classroom using the theoretical lens of communication privacy management (CPM). Through an understanding of the management process teachers use for disclosing their private information, the relationships between teacher self-disclosure related to the course content and teacher credibility, power use, and student learning outcomes were examined. Four hypotheses and one research question were explored to investigate the relationship between the variables mentioned.

The findings of this research indicate a positive relationship between teacher self-disclosure related to the course content and competence, character and caring, as well as referent and expert power. Furthermore, findings indicate that teacher self-disclosure related to the course content is positively related to student perceptions of their affective learning and learning indicators. This study enriches the literature on teacher self-disclosure in the classroom because it provides further evidence for the use of self-disclosure by teachers. Additionally, this study provides support for using the theory of communication privacy management when focusing on teacher self-disclosure. Based on this existing theory, an effort to develop a stronger measurement for teacher self-disclosure took place. Specifically, additional items were written and added to the current measure of teacher self-disclosure.

As previously mentioned, a major problem for researchers examining self-disclosure has been agreeing upon a measure for this variable. Cayanus and Martin (in press) recently attempted to resolve this issue by creating their teacher self-disclosure scale, a multi-dimensional measure focusing on three dimensions: amount, relevance, and negativity. Although this scale is an improvement, it is not without its faults. Specifically, these authors neglected to focus on teacher self-disclosure relevant to the course content. Based on the CPM literature, this study challenged Cayanus and Martin’s conceptualization and measurement of self-disclosure.

To do so, additional items were written focusing on teacher self-disclosure related to the course content, as well as appropriate and inappropriate disclosures. The items were consistent with the research findings of McBride and Wahl (2005) as well as Nunziata (2007; 2008) who identified the rule management process of teacher’s private information in the classroom and found teachers reveal private information when it is related to the course content. Furthermore, the items written also reflected the research findings of McBride and Wahl (2005) that identified
that teachers are mindful of the information that is appropriate and inappropriate. Through factor analysis, the eight additional items did not create a new dimension for the scale as expected. Instead, six of the eight items factored onto the three existing dimensions of Cayanus and Martin’s (in press) scale, while two items did not load.

In an effort to explain why the eight additional items did not create a new dimension for the scale as expected, a closer examination of the items is necessary. Of the eight additional items, two items were written to reflect self-disclosure used to extend the course content, two items were written to reflect disclosures unrelated to the course content, and four items were written to reflect appropriate and inappropriate self-disclosure used by teachers. In the order described above, the eight items written were as follows: (1) tells personal stories that closely relate to course content; (2) uses personal examples that are not appropriate for the classroom setting to illustrate course concepts; (3) begins class by discussing personal events and/or experiences that are unrelated to the course content; (4) shares information about him/herself that is unrelated to the class; (5) goes off on a personal digression during class; (6) reveals inappropriate information during class about him/herself; (7) reveals appropriate information about him/herself during class; (8) discloses positive things about him/herself. Although these items were written to reflect what is known about teacher self-disclosure according to the literature on CPM, more emphasis should be placed on the content of the disclosures.

According to Petronio (2002), “private disclosures concern the process of telling, and reflect the content of private information” (p. 6). Additionally, Petronio noted that individuals share their private information for many reasons. One reason for teachers to share their private information that has been identified by scholars is to extend course content. Specifically, teachers have reported disclosing their private information when relevant to the course content (Nunziata, 2008). McBride and Wahl (2005) further support this reason for sharing their private information through their findings that teachers report revealing their private disclosures 40% of the time to extend the course content. Additionally, students reported that relating teacher self-disclosure to the course content is a rule expectation used by students (Nunziata, 2007). It is likely that the eight additional items did not factor onto a new dimension because the items indistinctly referenced teachers’ disclosures used to extend the course content (i.e., relate to the course content) but distinctly reference self-disclosure in general (i.e., uses personal examples). Thus, they factored onto already existing dimensions. Perhaps if items were written using the
same language as that of the CPM literature, like words such as private, items may have factored onto a new dimension.

Based on CPM literature, it is likely that additional items focusing on teacher self-disclosure used to extend the course content would tap into a new dimension of teacher self-disclosure. Two such examples would be “my teacher uses personal stories that help to clarify the course content” and “my teacher uses a family member and their experience as an example in order to emphasize the subject of the class period.” As a result of writing items worded specifically about teacher disclosures used to extend the course content, these statements could possibly tap into a new dimension of teacher self-disclosure and create an even stronger measure of teacher self-disclosure. In short, it is possible the creation of a new dimension did not occur due to the wording of the additional questions.

Although the additional items did not create a new dimension of the teacher self-disclosure, results from this study provide support for a revised measure of teacher self-disclosure to be used and built upon. Specifically, when examining the relationship between teacher self-disclosure using the revised relevance dimension, and classroom variables such as teacher credibility, and teacher power use, student perceptions of these variables were positively correlated, thus supporting the use of the revised measure. Furthermore, the revised relevance dimension was positively correlated with student self-reported learning. Again, these results further support the use of the revised measure. The revised scale was extended to measure these variables and detailed support for this measure is provided in the following paragraphs.

The understanding of teacher self-disclosure related to the course content was extended by this study when examining the relationship between the revised relevance dimension of the Teacher Self-disclosure Scale (Cayanus & Martin, in press) and the Measure of Source Credibility Scale (McCroskey & Teven, 1999). A positive correlation was found between these variables, providing support for the relationship between teacher self-disclosure and student perceptions of teacher credibility. Results from this study suggest teachers who use self-disclosure relevant to students are perceived as more competent, caring and trustworthy by their students.

Scholars have contended that although teacher credibility is important, research has offered little advice to teachers on how they may increase their credibility in the classroom (Frymier & Thompson, 1992). The results from this study suggest that the use of teacher self-disclosure
related to the course content may assist in the development of teacher credibility. Specifically, literature on CPM has found that teachers are mindful of the disclosures they reveal to their students and conceal private information that would put them in a bad light (McBride & Wahl, 2005). Teachers do this to create privacy rules through boundary management. Thus, the results from this study provide a practical implication for teachers to reveal private information that not only extends the course content, but also increases student perceptions of their credibility.

Practical implications for the use of self-disclosure may also be provided to teachers through an examination of the second and third hypotheses of this study. When focusing on teacher self-disclosure related to the course content, the revised relevance dimension of this scale was used with the Teacher Power Use Scale to further examine its relationship with the referent and expert bases of power. Hypothesis two advanced that teacher self-disclosure related to the course content would be positively correlated with student perceptions of referent power. Hypothesis three advanced a similar correlation, except focusing on expert power. Both hypotheses were supported.

These results are in line with previous scholars who suggest that reward, referent, and expert power bases are perceived by students to be relied on more by their teachers than coercive and legitimate power bases (McCroskey & Richmond, 1983). Additionally, Turman and Schrodt (2006) noted that students see their teachers as possessing expert and reward power, when a variety of instructional tools are used to ensure student understanding of the course material. One such tool is self-disclosure related to the course content. This study provides support for teachers to use self-disclosure as an instructional tool to further the understanding of course content. By doing so, as indicated in this study, student perceptions of referent, expert and reward power increase.

Additionally, the reward, legitimate and coercive bases of power and their relationship with teacher self-disclosure related to the course content was the focus of the research question in this study. A positive significant correlation was found between the revised relevance dimension of teacher self-disclosure and the reward base of power. This result is consistent with the previously mentioned research of McCroskey & Richmond (1983) and Turman and Schrodt (2006) in that reward power is one of the relied on power bases students perceive their teachers to use. Coercive power did not demonstrate a significant relationship to the revised relevance dimension. Perhaps due to the nature of the teacher’s private information disclosed, a perception
of punishment does not exist. Additionally, a negative significant relationship between legitimate power and the revised relevance dimension was found. Such findings for the coercive and legitimate power base may be because they are the two anti-social forms of power “and therefore are less salient to students in the college classroom than pro-social forms” such as the referent, expert and reward bases of power (Turman & Schrodt, 2006, p. 275).

The findings from this study further support the use of teacher self-disclosure in the classroom. Through the communication behavior of self-disclosure, student perceptions of referent, expert and reward power were enhanced. Thus, the results of hypotheses two and three, as well as the research question focusing on the reward base of power, support the use of teacher self-disclosure related to the course content. Teachers can benefit from this study by understanding how their self-disclosure works to influence student perceptions of teacher power use.

By examining the above three hypotheses and research question, practical implications for teachers are noted. This study illustrates the importance of using teacher self-disclosure in the classroom. Based on the results reported, teachers are encouraged to use their private disclosures to extend the course content. In doing so, teachers are likely to relate to student perceptions of their credibility as well as power use. Although it is important to understand how the use of self-disclosure relates to student perceptions of their teacher, it is equally important to understand how this same disclosure relates to student perceptions of their own learning. In this study, a positive significant relationship was found between the revised relevance dimension of teacher self-disclosure and affective learning, as well as learning indicators.

The findings for affective learning are particularly interesting, as they are partially in line with previous research. Cayanus and Martin (in press) examined the relationship between teacher self-disclosure and affect for the teacher and affect for the course. These authors found a weak significant correlation between the relevance dimension and student affect for the teacher (.20) and no statistical significance between the relevance dimension and student affect for the course. In this study, the four sub scales used were all correlated with teacher self-disclosure related to the course content. Specifically, when examining the same two subscales used by Cayanus and Martin (in press) with the revised relevance dimension, this study found higher positive significance for both affect for the teacher (.27) and affect for the course (.29). Thus, the findings of this study illustrate not only the relationship between self-disclosure related to the course
content and student perceptions of their affective learning, but further support the use of the revised relevance dimension.

In addition, students indicated increases in learning indicators with teachers who used self-disclosure related to the course content. Although this was the first time a relationship between these two variables was examined, this study provides evidence that learning indicators and teacher self-disclosure related to the course content work well together. Therefore, teacher self-disclosure related to the course content should be used in the classroom in an effort to enhance student learning.

Although the hypotheses and research question of this study focused on the revised relevance dimension of self-disclosure, correlations among the revised negativity and amount dimensions of self-disclosure with other variables provide additional insight into self-disclosure in the classroom. First, focusing on the negativity dimension, this study revealed a weak negative significant relationship with competence ($r = -0.19, p<.001$), character ($r = -0.22, p<.001$), and caring ($r = -0.29, p<.001$). Additionally, the same type of relationship was found between the negativity dimension and expert power ($r = -0.19, p<.001$). Examining this relationship is particularly useful in providing additional recommendations for teachers and their use of self-disclosure in the classroom. Specifically, the results of this study provide additional ways and advice for teachers on how they may increase their credibility in the classroom. As previously noted, scholars have offered little advice on how to do so (Frymier & Thompson, 1992). Based on the results of the relationship between the revised negativity dimension and teacher credibility, not using negative disclosures has the potential to influence student perceptions of teacher credibility and expert power use. These results suggest a relationship between not using negative self-disclosures with competence, character and caring, as well as expert power. Based on these results, teachers should avoid using negative self-disclosures.

To further support the avoidance of using negative self-disclosure, the results of this study revealed a moderately positive significant relationship between the negativity dimension and the two anti-social bases of power; coercive and legitimate. These results are consistent with previous scholars who reported that because they are the two anti-social forms of power “and therefore are less salient to students in the college classroom” (Turman & Schrodt, 2006, p. 275). Thus, teachers should avoid using negative self-disclosures in the classroom.
Four of the eight additional items written loaded onto the negativity dimension when the factor analysis was completed. Of these four items, two items asked directly about the inappropriate disclosures of teachers: “reveals inappropriate information during class about him/herself,” and “uses personal examples that are not appropriate for the classroom setting to illustrate course concepts.” Based on the correlations among the negativity dimensions and the variables mentioned above, the results of this study show how inappropriate disclosures may also be considered negative in nature. Thus, as reported in previous research, teachers are mindful of information that is appropriate and inappropriate (McBride & Wahl, 2005) and as a result of this study, teachers should continue to avoid disclosing information they feel may be inappropriate.

Second, when looking at the amount dimension of self-disclosure, this study revealed a significant positive correlation between this dimension and student perceptions of referent power ($r=.26, p<.001$) and reward power ($r=.22, p<.001$). Although amount was correlated with referent and reward power, all other variables in this study were not significant in their relation to the amount dimension. The results of this study are in line with past scholars who have also reported the low impact of amount (Cayanus & Martin, in press). As a possible explanation, these researchers cited Cozby (1972) and Gilbert (1976) who believed a breaking point may exist when it comes to the amount of self-disclosure used and students may think too much is not good. But exactly how much is too much self-disclosure? And is the amount something that should be determined by the teacher or by the student? These questions provide an avenue for future research. In summary, the findings of this study not only provide direction for future research, but also provide significant evidence for the incorporation of positive teacher self-disclosure related to the course content in the classroom. Thus, teachers should include self-disclosure into their lesson plans.

Research results from this study are significant and warrant further attention for numerous reasons. One of the most important is the inclusion of an existing theory. In existing instructional communication research, the inclusion of theory is uncommon. In order to answer the “what, how, and why questions in instructional settings,” theory inclusion is necessary (Mottet, Frymier, & Beebe, 2006, p. 256). Thus, the goal of this study was accomplished in extending the line of research on self-disclosure through the theoretical lens of communication privacy management.
Despite the fact that self-disclosure has been examined for many years by scholars, CPM provides additional understanding about the management of private disclosures in the teacher-student relationship. Through this existing theory, an understanding for the rule-based process teachers used to reveal their private information is provided. McBride and Wahl (2005) cited Sprague’s (1993) argument that existing theory should be used by communication education researchers in an effort to enhance pedagogical knowledge. The present study enhances the understanding of teacher self-disclosure in the classroom through the lens of communication privacy management.

Furthermore, the results from this study are imperative for teachers in the classroom. Instructional communication is inherently an applied area, and thus educators can benefit from the results of the present study. The results of this study indicate teachers should incorporate self-disclosure related to the course content into their lesson plans. By doing so, student perceptions of teacher credibility, referent, expert and reward power use have the ability to be influenced. Additionally, teachers should avoid using negative disclosures. By doing so, student perceptions of teacher credibility as well as expert power have the ability to be influenced.

In addition to these practical implications discussed above, instructors can also benefit from the literature on CPM that was supported by the results of this study. Specifically, Nunziata (2008) found that based on the rules instructors develop, teachers are motivated to reveal their private information for content purposes. The present study supports this line of research when focusing on teacher self-disclosure related to the course content. Thus, teachers should develop rules to manage their private information and use these rules when revealing this information to students to extend the course content.

Limitations

While several significant results were found in this study, it is not without limitations. The largest limitation of this study can be found when examining the statistical significance of each hypothesis. Although significance was found for each hypothesis, low correlations were reported. These correlations were in line with earlier research using the Teacher Self-disclosure Scale (Cayanus & Martin, in press). As noted previously, measurement is a perplexing problem for researchers examining self-disclosure. Even though the revised scale in this study provided larger correlations than Cayanus & Martin (in press), it is still a limiting factor in understanding self-disclosure in the classroom. Wheeless and Grotz (1976) contend that self-disclosure is a
multi-dimensional construct. Perhaps the revised scale used is still tapping into a different dimensions not addressed in the present study.

Another explanation for the low correlations is the fact that self-disclosure is only a small part of the entire instructional process. Although it is small, past researchers have found positive correlations between this variable and teacher clarity (Wambach & Brothen, 1997), teacher effectiveness (Downs et al., 1988), and increased student participation (Goldstein & Benassi, 1994). Results from these studies emphasize the importance self-disclosure plays in the larger picture of the course, providing evidence that self-disclosure should be used.

Another limitation to note is the participants of the convenience sample used. Specifically, this study was dominated by students who identified their class rank as sophomore (51.1%). Additionally, out of the 419 participants, 283 (67.5%) identified themselves as female. Due to these dominating numbers, this study is not very generalizable.

**Future Research**

Student reports are not always the most reliable measure of teacher self-disclosure in the classroom. Future research should focus on coding what teachers are disclosing in the classroom. Having trained coders observe the classroom environment would be beneficial because it would examine how much and exactly what teachers are self-disclosing in the classroom.

Additionally, future research should focus on other areas of CPM that may be used by teachers to create boundaries regarding their private information. For example, two of the five criteria used to establish privacy rules include culture and gender. Both of these criteria have been well studied by scholars in the communication discipline. Future researchers should continue focusing on culture and gender using this existing theory. Based on a teacher’s background or sex, privacy rules may be developed with certain expectations. By focusing on these two criteria, researchers can further examine how privacy rules are formed.

**Conclusion**

The research conducted in this study illustrates the significance of teacher self-disclosure in the classroom. Additionally, the research in this study extends the existing body of research on self-disclosure through the incorporation of an existing theory. Because teachers spend the majority of time talking during a traditional class period, trying to improve their use of disclosure is important to consider. According to Lannutti and Strauman (2006) “desirable classroom self-disclosure….should be more illustrative than revealing” (p. 96). If
classroom self-disclosure is used in relation to the course content, it has been determined by this study to lead to positive outcomes for both teachers and students. Thus, teachers should incorporate private disclosures related to the course content into their lesson plans.
REFERENCES


Appendix A

FULFILL YOUR COM 134/COM 135/COM 136 RESEARCH REQUIREMENT!

A research study has been designed to gain a better understanding of student perception of teacher communication behavior in the classroom. All COM 134, COM 135 and COM 136 students are eligible and encouraged to participate in this study.

Participation in this project **WILL** count toward the research requirement in COM 134, COM 135 and COM 136. To participate in this study, please go to the link below and complete the survey.

[https://survey.muohio.edu/Checkbox/comresearchopportunity.survey](https://survey.muohio.edu/Checkbox/comresearchopportunity.survey)

Participation in this research will take approximately 10-15 minutes. Your professor will be notified after you have completed the survey.

**NOTE:**
To ensure that you receive credit for your participation in this study, please fill out the **ENTIRE** survey with all required information. At the end of data collection, your name will be separated from your responses and there will be NO way to match your responses to you.

For more information, please contact Danielle Orbash at [orbashdn@muohio.edu](mailto:orbashdn@muohio.edu) or 513-529-7182

Thank You!
Danielle Orbash
Graduate Student, Department of Communication
Appendix B

Survey Introduction

This research project is designed to investigate student perception of teacher communication behavior in the classroom. This survey is concerned with your perceptions of the teacher you have immediately before your communication class.

For each question, please indicate the response that most clearly matches your opinion. There are no right or wrong answers. I am interested only in your opinions. At times it may seem like the same question is being asked several times but using different words. I do this on purpose because no single question will perfectly measure your opinions.

At the end of the survey, a link will be provided. By clicking the link, you will be taken to the sign-in page. This page asks for your name and current course. This page is sent separately from you questionnaire. Note that there is no place for you to type your name or student number on the questionnaire. Your responses will be completely anonymous. No one will be able to tell which questionnaire is yours, as the sign-in sheet is sent separately.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project, please contact the Office for the Advancement of Research and Scholarship (OARS) at 513-529-3734 (humansubjects@muohio.edu). If you have any questions regarding this research project, please ask the experimenter, Danielle Orbash, at 513-529-7182 or orbashdn@muohio.edu.

Your participation in this research project will partially fulfill a research requirement in your communication course. Thank you for your time and effort, it is much appreciated.
Appendix C

Description of Project

Please read the following before consenting to participate in this survey:

1.) This research project is designed to investigate student perception of teacher communication behavior in the classroom. You will be asked to answer each question while thinking about the teacher you have immediately before your communication course. You will not be asked to identify by name that teacher.

2.) I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

3.) I understand that I can refuse to answer specific questions.

4.) The purpose of this research has been explained to me, and I understand the explanation.

5.) I understand that I have the right to have this study explained to my satisfaction upon completion of the questionnaire.

6.) I understand that the information I give in this study is anonymous. The experimenter will have no way of determining which responses are mine.

7.) I understand that the data I provide in this study may be used by other scientists for secondary analysis. Again, these data will be treated in the strictest confidence. The researcher will not be able to identify individual responses.

8.) I understand that a copy of the research report for this study will be made available to me upon request.

9.) I am over 18 years of age.

Given these statements, I freely consent to participate in this research project within the Department of Communication that will partially fulfill the research requirement for COM 134/135/136:

○ Yes
○ No
Appendix D

Directions: Please carefully read each of the following statements and indicate how frequently your teacher’s behavior corresponds with each statement using the following scale. When answering these questions refer to the teacher you have immediately before your communication class.

1=Never 2=Rarely 3=Occasionally 4=Often 5=Very Often

My teacher:

1. _____ gives his/her opinion about current events.

2. _____ uses personal examples to show the importance of a concept.

3. _____ discloses, on the whole, more negative than positive.

4. _____ begins class by discussing personal events and/or experiences that are unrelated to the course content.

5. _____ shares his/her dislikes and likes.

6. _____ uses his/her own experiences to introduce a concept.

7. _____ reveals “bad” feelings he/she has about him/herself.

8. _____ goes off on a personal digression during class.

9. _____ reveals inappropriate information during class about him/herself.

10. _____ presents his/her attitudes toward events occurring on campus.

11. _____ provides personal explanations that make the content relevant.

12. _____ reveals undesirable things about him/herself.

13. _____ tells personal stories that closely relate to course content.

14. _____ gives his/her opinion about events in the community.

15. _____ provides personal examples which help me understand the importance of the
content.

16. _____ discloses negative things about him/herself.

17. _____ shares information about him/herself that is unrelated to the class.

18. _____ reveals appropriate information about him/herself during class.

19. _____ links current course content to other areas of content through the use of personal examples.

20. _____ has told me unflattering stories about him/herself.

21. _____ uses personal examples that are not appropriate for the classroom setting to illustrate course concepts.

22. _____ discloses positive things about him/herself.

**Directions:** Please carefully read each of the following statements and indicate how frequently your teacher’s behavior corresponds with each statement using the following scale. When answering these questions refer to the teacher you have immediately before your communication class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1=Completely Disagree</th>
<th>2=Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>3=Disagree</th>
<th>4=Undecided</th>
<th>5=Agree</th>
<th>6=Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>7=Completely Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. _____ My teacher’s lectures are clearly organized and well delivered.

2. _____ My teacher demonstrates that he/she considers the position of Professor to be superior to that of a student.

3. _____ My teacher demonstrates commitment to the class by being authentic and genuine when interacting with students.

4. _____ My teacher rewards the class for complying with his/her requests.

5. _____ When students do not perform at an acceptable level, my teacher embarrasses them in front of the class.
6. My teacher discusses current theory and research in the class.

7. My teacher acts as though students ought never to disobey a teacher or fail to comply with teacher requests.

8. I find myself identifying with my teacher because we have a lot in common.

9. When a student demonstrates mastery of course material, my teacher commends and affirms the student.

10. My teacher belittles or puts down students if they do not perform up to expectations.

11. I can tell my teacher really knows how to teach this course by the way he/she organizes the class and delivers instruction.

12. My teacher uses his/her position as Professor to maintain complete and total control of the classroom.

13. My teacher builds rapport with the class by relating to students in an open and approachable manner.

14. When a student performs well in the course, my teacher gives him/her recognition in the class.

15. If students question or challenge course policy, my teacher responds by acting dominant or dictatorial.

16. When my teacher discusses course information, I can tell he/she is a credible source in the content area.

17. My teacher relates to students in ways that are formal and distant.

18. I feel that my teacher and I are “on the same page.”

19. My teacher publicly recognizes students who exceed expectations in course
performance.

20._____ My teacher punishes students who do not follow his/her instructions.

21._____ I can tell by the way my teacher speaks with the class that he/she is an expert in the content area of the course.

22._____ My teacher says things like “If you don’t like the course policies, you can always drop this class and take a different one.”

23._____ I see things from my teacher’s perspective.

24._____ When a student follows my teacher’s instructions, he/she receives compliments or praise from the teacher.

25._____ My teacher glares at students who misbehave in class.

26._____ My teacher communicates in ways that demonstrate advanced knowledge/expertise in the content area of the course.

27._____ My teacher makes it clear that his/her decisions are policies will be backed by the department chair.

28._____ I feel that I can relate to my teacher as a person because of the personal stories and illustrations he/she shares with the class.

29._____ When students perform well, my teacher becomes more flexible and willing to negotiate details like assignment deadlines.

30._____ When students turn in assignments late, my teacher puts them on a guilt trip.

**Directions:** Please carefully read each of the following statements and indicate the appropriate response. When answering these questions refer to the teacher you have immediately before your communication class.

Intelligent 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unintelligent
Directions: Please carefully read each of the following statements and indicate how frequently your behavior corresponds with each statement using the following scale. When answering these questions refer to the class immediately before your communication class.

My attitude about the content of this course:
1. Good 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Bad
2. Worthless 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Valuable
3. Fair 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unfair
4. Positive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Negative

My attitude about the instructor of this course:

5. Good 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Bad
6. Worthless 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Valuable
7. Fair 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unfair
8. Positive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Negative

In “real life” situations, my likelihood of actually recalling and using some of the information from this class:

9. Likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unlikely
10. Impossible 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Possible
11. Probable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Improbable
12. Would 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Would Not

The likelihood of my taking another course with the teacher of this course, if I have a choice: (If you are graduating, assume you would still be here).

13. Likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unlikely
14. Impossible 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Possible
15. Probable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Improbable
16. Would 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Would Not

**Directions:** Please carefully read each of the following statements and indicate how frequently your behavior corresponds with each statement using the following scale. When answering these questions refer to the class immediately before your communication class.

1=Never  2=Rarely  3=Occasionally  4=Often  5=Very Often
1. _____ I like to talk about what I’m doing in this class with friends and family.

2. _____ I explain course content to other students.

3. _____ I think about the course content outside of class.

4. _____ I see connections between the course content and my career goals.

5. _____ I review the course content.

6. _____ I compare the information from this class with other things I have learned.

7. _____ I feel I have learned a lot in this class.

**Directions:** Please select the appropriate response.

**I am:**
- Male
- Female

**I am a:**
- First Year
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Other

**My teacher in the class I have immediately before my COM 134/135/136 class is:**
- Male
- Female