

Public Abstract

First Name:David

Middle Name:Richard

Last Name:Vaught

Adviser's First Name:Karen

Adviser's Last Name:Cockrell

Co-Adviser's First Name:

Co-Adviser's Last Name:

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The study of classroom seating has generated interest since Harvard University opened its doors in 1636. Studies are present beginning in 1921 and continuing to more current research addressing a variety of social, psychological and environmental conditions present in the college classroom. At the root of these classroom studies are the students themselves and the wide variety of characteristics they bring into the classroom. This study addressed specifically student decision making in association with classroom seating choice. Approximately 150 students participated in the completion of the Decision Making Inventory and were also monitored over the first three weeks of class with regard to their seat choice on each day of class.

Results showed females were more associated with the systematic/external style and males were more inclined towards the systematic/internal style. Additional lines of inquiry provided that females sit towards the front of the room, while males select the rearward seats, those with higher high school grade point averages sit towards the front of the room and those taking exam one scored higher, the closer to the front of the room they sat. Additional data collected specific to movement, showed males tend to move more often than to females, but overall movement settled to a significant degree by the eighth class period.

This study provided that decision making styles were not predictable based upon seat choice. Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between seat choice and gender and seat choice and performance. As an overarching implication, this study showed that the predictability of seat choice and decision style was not statistically evident in the early period of the study, but over time became more predictable. Studies that occur in college classrooms are likely to be influenced by the timing of the study with more predictable results possibly occurring several weeks into the semester.