CROSSING DISCIPLINES, CROSSING BORDERS: ASSESSING TEACHER CLARITY IN AN INTERNATIONAL SETTING

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Introduction

• Significant correlations between teacher clarity and student achievement (Rosenshine & Furst, 1971)
• Teacher clarity related to student satisfaction and achievement (Hines, Cruickshank & Kennedy, 1985)
• Clarity may be positively related to retention (Land & Lenham, 1979)
• Teacher clarity can be enhanced through training (Cruickshank, 1985)
• Teachers are clearer in “task” behaviors and less clear in “thinking” behaviors” (Barrick & Estepp, 2012)
Purpose

• Assess teacher clarity as perceived by students

• Provide guidance in preparing teacher development programs and activities to improve clarity and therefore increase student learning
Methods

• 110 major courses taught by 54 instructors in SNU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in Fall 2012
• 38 instructors agreed to participate
  • 55% Professors, 26% Associate Professors, 18% Assistant Professors
  • Average 13 years university teaching, 8 times taught same course
• Instrument administered in person in late October 2012
  • 701 students participated (97% enrolled in CALS)
  • 42% sophomores, 36% juniors, 22% seniors
Instrument

- Based on work of Kennedy, Cruickshank, Bush, & Myers (2001)
- Behaviors that are most discriminating between clear and unclear teachers
- Cronbach’s alpha = .94
- 28 items:
  - “My teacher in this class . . .”
  - Never, Sometimes, Mostly, Always, Not applicable
Findings

• My teacher in this class . . .
  • “Always” ranged from 36.9% to 10.7%
  • “Never” ranged from 3.1% to 23.7%

• Not applicable to this class:
  • Gives us enough time to practice – 11.0%
  • Goes over difficult homework problems on board – 10.1%
  • Shows us how to do class work and homework – 8.0%
  • Explains how to do assignments by using examples – 7.1%
Findings

Highest Rated

• Works examples and explains them
• Teaches step-by-step
• Answers our questions
• Explains the assignment and the materials we need to use to do it

Lowest Rated
Findings

Highest Rated
• Works examples and explains them
• Teaches step-by-step
• Answers our questions
• Explains the assignment and the materials we need to use to do it

Lowest Rated
• Shows us how to remember things
• Goes over difficult homework problems on board
• Shows examples of how to do class work and homework
Related findings

• Low, negative relationship between mean summated score and
  • years instructor has taught
  • student college of enrollment
  • number of times instructor has taught course
  • instructor rank

• Low, positive relationship between mean summated score and class rank
Discussion

• Higher rated items focused on providing specific information, especially the key points

• Higher rated items related more to the presentation of facts

• Lower rated items focused on time – to think, to solve complex problems, to remember key points

• Lower rated items related more to student engagement and reflection opportunity
Discussion

• Findings similar to results from UF study

• Magnitude of “Agree” considerably different (less) than in UF study

• Relationships mostly negative: more experienced faculty regarded as less clear
Discussion

• Need for workshops to address clarity teacher behaviors

• Need for individual consultation and coaching with instructors whose summated scores were lower
THANK YOU!