TEACHER CLARITY:
STUDENT PERCEPTIONS

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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)
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

160 undergraduate course sections taught in CALS in Spring 2012
Instructors in 55 course sections agreed to participate
Instrument administered in person in late February/early March 2012
  • 2,074 participants
  • 32% juniors, 44% seniors

Study approved by UF IRB
INSTRUMENT

Based on work of Kennedy, Cruickshank, Bush, & Myers (2001)

Behaviors that are most discriminating between clear and unclear teachers

Crohnbach’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 85.5% to 20.6%
“Never” ranged from 0.2% to 8.2%

Not applicable to this class:

Goes over difficult homework problems on board – 49.4%
Shows us how to do the work – 16.1%
Gives us enough time to practice – 15.6%
Explains how to do assignments by using examples – 14.2%
FINDINGS

**HIGHEST RATED**

Answers our questions

Gives specific details when teaching

Stresses difficult points

**LOWEST RATED**
FINDINGS

HIGHEST RATED

Answers our questions

Gives specific details when teaching

Stresses difficult points

LOWEST RATED

Goes over difficult homework problems on board

Shows us how to remember things

Explains something and then stops so we can think about it
RELATED FINDINGS

Negligible relationship between mean summated score and
• instructor rank
• course subject
• student college of enrollment

Low relationship between mean summated score and
• number of times instructor has taught course
• number of years instructor has taught in college
RELATED FINDINGS

Low, negative relationship between mean summated score and class size

Negligible, significant relationship between mean summated score and student 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

Most students were juniors or seniors – but class rank was still a significant factor in clarity perception.

No other student or instructor traits were significantly related to clarity perceptions.
DISCUSSION

Need for workshops to address clarity teacher behaviors

Need for individual consultation and coaching with instructors whose summated scores were lower

Potential to re-assess same classes in Spring 2013
THANK YOU!