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

R. Kirby Barrick, University of Florida
Seung Il Na, Seoul National University

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

- 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 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

Lowest 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

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!