Building Consensus using the Delphi Method:
Preservice Teachers' Beliefs about
Effective Teaching Practices

Michael Faggella-Luby, Ph.D.
Michelle Bauml, Ph.D.
CSOTTE
October 26, 2015

Context

Small private university (< 10,000 students)
EC-6 teacher education program
  2 years prerequisite courses
  • Junior Year (45-60 students)
    • Content methods courses
    • Weekly field experiences
  • Senior Year (45-60 students)
    • Assessment, Foundations, Families courses
    • Weekly field experiences (fall)
    • Student teaching (spring)

Problem

• Lortie's (1975) *Schoolteacher*
  • *"Apprenticeship of observation"*
  • *Aspiring teachers may fail to acknowledge their need for formal education in the craft of teaching*

• Educator Preparation Program (EPP) under tremendous pressure to prepare highly qualified teachers & demonstrate their value

• Self-study to inform our program curriculum

• **Question: How are pre-service teachers' beliefs changing as they move through our program?**

Method

- Delphi methodology (Dukes, 2011)
  - Build a rapid consensus among a group of experts
  - Allows individual and ultimately collective opinions
  - Keeps participants anonymous
  - Low cost to administer and analyze
  - Potential to provide rich programmatic data
- 44 juniors, 29 seniors

- 3 surveys, near the end of SPRING semester
  - Round 1: open-ended prompt

Survey Prompt

List the content area knowledge, pedagogical skills, attitudes, and instructional practices of an effective EC-6 teacher.

Method

- Delphi methodology (Dukes, 2011)
- 44 juniors, 29 seniors

- 3 surveys, near end of SPRING semester
  - Round 1: open-ended prompt
    - Juniors: 238 responses, collapsed into 146
    - Seniors: 185 responses, collapsed into 108
    - Categorized based on themes:
      - Content Area Knowledge, Pedagogical Skill/Instructional Strategies
      - Behavior Management
      - Assessment/Data
      - Teacher Attitudes/Dispositions
      - Knowledge about your students, school and community
  - Round 2: Likert scale rank 1-5 (not important ➔ very important)
  - Round 3: Likert scale rank 1-5
    - Means & SD provided

- Consensus achieved on items with an Interquartile Range (IQR) of 1 or less

How We Used the Data

EC-6 Faculty Retreat Day:

- Engage faculty with a question at start:
  - "Identify content area knowledge, pedagogical skills, attitudes, and ethical/professional behaviors of an effective EC-6 teacher."
- Record answers on series of movable white boards
- Categorize based on themes
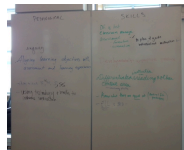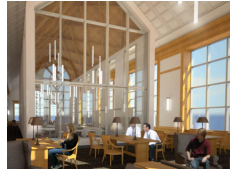
How We Used the Data

- Handout with common responses from students
  - Think: Review student responses by program year
  - Pair: 2-3 faculty to compare what is present/absent
  - Share: Whole group discussion, emphasis on gaps
- Outcome of the conversation:
  - Convene sub-committees for
    - Short-term changes
    - Long-term program changes
  - but...we used our OWN data to drive the conversations!

Limitations & Roadblocks

- Five-point Likert scale was too narrow to easily differentiate
- Higher response rates when completed in class
- Write items that can be reverse coded to avoid socially desirable responses (e.g., introduce negatives)
- Individual responses were not returned during each round
- Rd 1 general probe may have led to generic answers
- Rd 3 had fastest overall response times, limited explanations

Making an Action Plan

- What information would you like to know about your program?
  - Beliefs about High Quality Teaching
  - Quality of Student Teaching or Clinic/Lab Experience
  - Preparation for PPR
  - Commitment to University-School Partnerships
- Which stakeholder group(s) will provide the best insight to provide the desired information?
- How will you get access to this group of stakeholders?
- Would the Delphi method help to provide consensus information?
- What is your initial question(s) to the stakeholder group?
- How will you use this information once consensus is achieved?

Future Research

- Replicate results:
  - 10-point Likert scale
  - In class completion
  - Alternate positive/negative questions for variability
  - Return individual responses
- Interviews with students in the program
  - Survey: PST *knowledge*
  - Interview: PST *experiences*

  - You've been in the EC-6 program for a year now. What have been the most important experiences for you inside the TCU classroom and outside the TCU classroom to help you become an effective teacher? Why?
    - example: classes you've taken in the block or outside of block; outside: lab experiences, personal experiences outside of lab or TCU.
- Comparing the student list with what we consider to be research-based recommendations from the literature

THANK YOU!

Contact Information
m.faggella-luby@tcu.edu
&
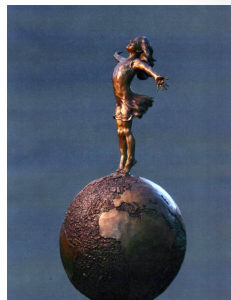m.bauml@tcu.edu

www.coe.tcu.edu
ansersinstitute.tcu.edu