

Examining the Importance of Teaching Clarity: Findings from FSSE

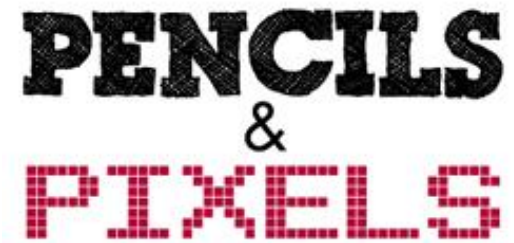
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21ST CENTURY PRACTICES IN HIGHER EDUCATION
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Purpose

- TC has strong ties to student learning, considered an effective educational practice for promoting student engagement
- Most TC research is from the student perspective
 - BrckaLorenz, A., Cole, E., Kinzie, J., Ribera, T. (2011). Examining effective faculty practice: Teaching clarity and student engagement
- Our purpose is to begin examining TC from the faculty perspective

FSSE

- Designed to complement NSSE
- Gives a snapshot of
 - Faculty perceptions of how often students engage in different activities
 - The importance faculty place on various areas of learning and development
 - The nature and frequency of student-faculty interactions
 - How faculty organize their time in and out of class
- 2011: 157 institutions; nearly 20,000 faculty

Teaching Clarity Items [FTC scale]

How important is it that you do the following in your courses?

Very much, Quite a bit, Some, Very little

- a) Clearly explain course goals and requirements
- b) Teach course sessions in an organized way
- c) Use examples or illustrations to explain difficult points
- d) Use a variety of teaching techniques to accommodate diversity in student learning styles
- e) Clarify the material is understood before moving on
- f) Provide standards for satisfactory completion of assignments (i.e. rubrics, detailed outlines, etc.)
- g) Provide frequent written or oral feedback on students' academic progress
- h) Provide prompt written or oral feedback on students' academic progress
- i) Describe the practical application of course material

Research Questions

1. What teaching clarity behaviors do faculty find most and least important?
2. What characterizes faculty with moderate, high, and very high perceptions of the importance of teaching clarity?
3. How does the perception of teaching clarity relate to other forms of effective educational practice?

Sample

- 4,400 faculty
 - 26% Professors,
23% Associate Professors,
26% Assistant Professors,
11% full-time instructors/lecturers,
14% part-time instructors/lecturers
 - 74% White
 - 45% female
 - 41% 55 or older
- 40 institutions
 - 18% at Research Universities, 40% at Master's Colleges, 42% at Baccalaureate Colleges

Most and Least Important

Which behaviors do
you think are most
and least
important?

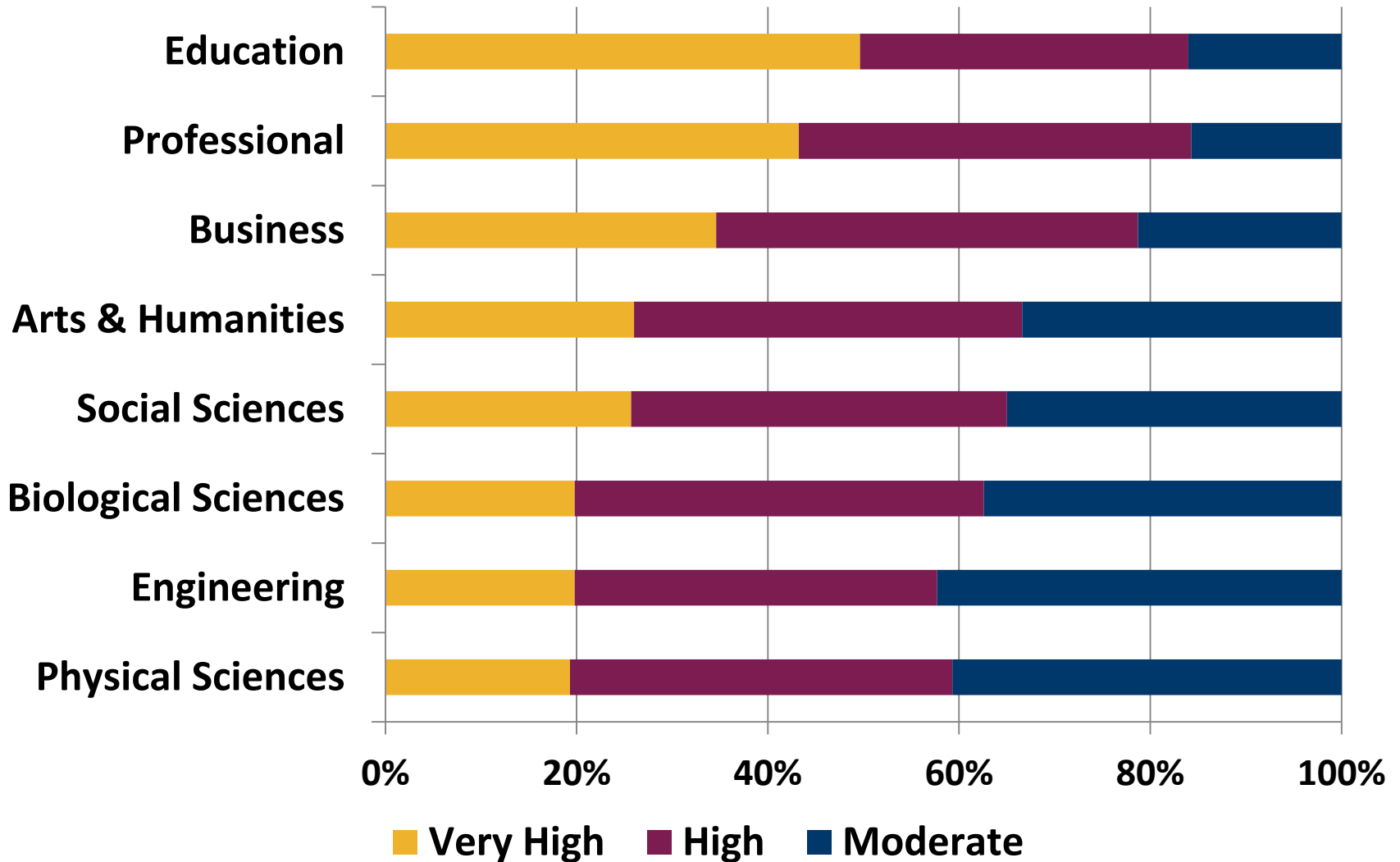
Most and Least Important

- Most important (more than 80% believed “very important”)
 - Clearly explaining course goals/requirements
 - Teaching sessions in an organized way
 - Using examples/illustrations to explain difficult material
- Least important (~13% believed to be very little or somewhat important)
 - Using a variety of teaching techniques to accommodate different learning styles

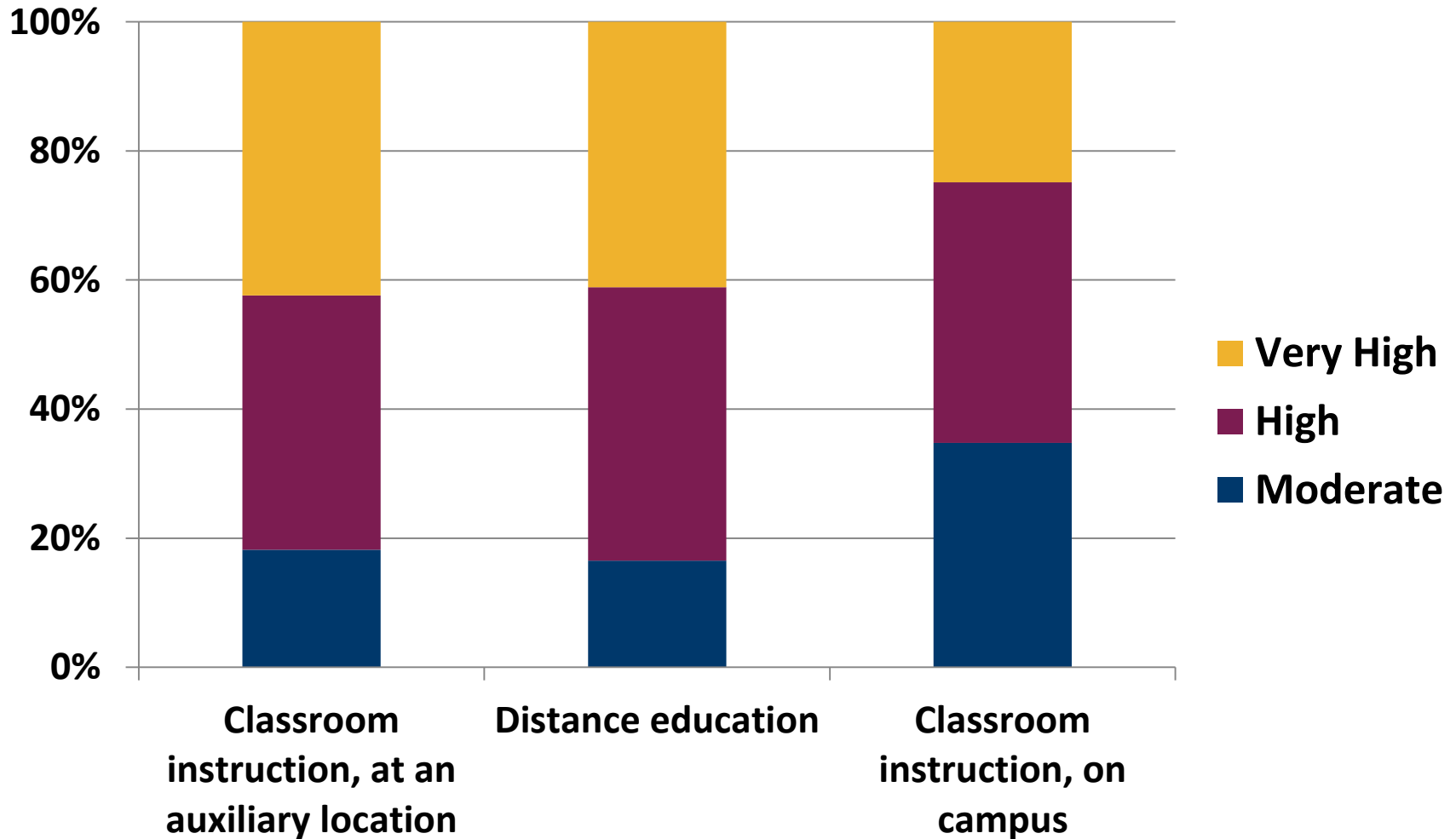
Who Values Clarity More

- Faculty divided into three groups (~1500 each)
 - Moderate: FTC somewhat-quite a bit important
 - High: FTC quite a bit important
 - Very High: FTC very much important
- Very High: more Black/African Americans, less male and full Professors
- High: more Asian faculty
- Moderate: less Black/African Americans, part-time lecturers, females, faculty w/o doctorate

FTC Importance by Discipline



FTC Importance by Location



FTC Related to Other Effective Teaching Practices

	Course-Based Option	Typical-Student Option
Faculty-Student Interaction		
Intellectual Skills		
Practical Skills		
Personal and Social Responsibility		
Reflective Learning		
Integrative Learning		
Higher-Order Learning		

FTC Related to Other Effective Teaching Practices

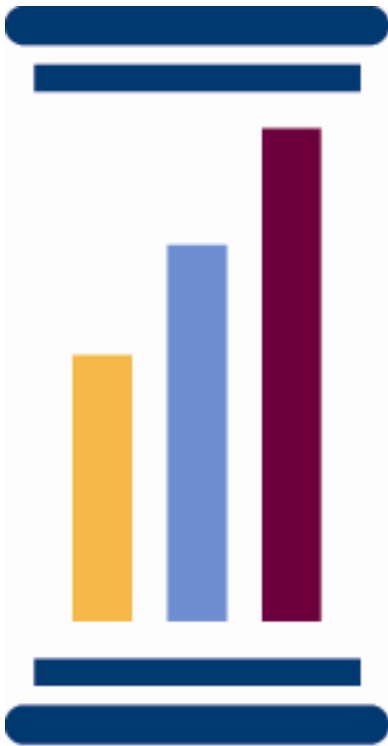
	Course-Based Option	Typical-Student Option
Faculty-Student Interaction	++	++
Intellectual Skills	+++	+++
Practical Skills	+++	+++
Personal and Social Responsibility	+++	++
Reflective Learning	++	++
Integrative Learning	++	++
Higher-Order Learning	+++	+++

Key: + $p < .001$ unstd $B > .1$, ++ $p < .001$ unstd $B > .2$, +++ $p < .001$ unstd $B > .3$

Models controlled for disciplinary field, rank, doctorate degree, years of experience teaching, course load, age, gender, citizenship, institutional control, and institutional Carnegie classification

Final Thoughts

- Most faculty identified all behaviors to be important
- Faculty with highest level of importance on TC are disproportionately Black/African American, female, and from Education
- Faculty who place greater importance on TC also emphasize higher levels of student engagement
 - Earlier NSSE study: exposure to teaching clarity behaviors is tied to student engagement, deep approaches to learning, and self-reported gains



Questions?

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