

Interview Protocol for CCHER Project

Intro script

Thank you very much for taking the time to talk with me today and for letting me observe two of your classes. As the email mentioned, we are exploring the personal, cultural, and organizational influences on teaching introductory courses in large research universities. Your insights into this issue will help us to better understand the real-world constraints facing instructors in higher education. For the questions I'm about to ask you, please answer in as much detail as possible, and share any associations or connections that may occur to you while you are speaking.

[Note to interviewer: tangents will need to be limited, so don't hesitate to cut people off nicely; probe if topic not discussed or volunteered in response to primary question]

Grand Tour: Overview questions re: target course (5 min)

1. Please tell me basic information about the class I observed/will be observing? **(brief)**
 - Probe: level, content, role in department
2. How much leeway do you have in determining the content of this course?
 - Does departmental policy or tradition enter into the decision?
3. What are your goals for students in this course?
 - Probe: What are the origins of these goals? (dept policy, personal philosophy, mentor, etc)
4. What is your view about how people best learn key concepts in your field at the undergraduate level? (e.g., apprenticeship, memorization, hands on experience, doing problems, etc.)
 - Probe: Is this view evident in how you teach this course?
 - Probe: Is this a discipline-specific view?

Specific aspects of behaviors re: target course (10 min)

5. What specific teaching techniques do you plan to use in the class?
 - Probe: What factors did you take into account as you selected these techniques?
 - Probe: Do you have specific goals for each of these methods? (e.g., cover textbook, engage students)
6. How are you sequencing topics and/or activities in this class?
 - Probe: What factors did you take into account when you made this decision?
 - Probe: Do you have a particular pedagogical strategy motivating this decision?
7. What are the specific steps you take in presenting a new topic? (e.g., intro topic, provide illustration, work out problem, test comprehension)
 - (If not answered in Q4 or Q5)
8. Do you plan on using any specific props, objects, or technology in your class?
 - Probe: If so, where did you get the idea to use them?
 - Probe: Does your department support or encourage their use?

9. Do you pose many questions to the students in this course – and if so, how specifically do you do so?
- Probe: What is your rationale for posing questions?

Role of culture in teaching re: target course [5 min]

10. If you didn't use particular teaching techniques such as [fill in based on prior response], would your colleagues care? Or be disappointed?
- [If yes] How, if at all, do these expectations influence how you teach course X?
 - Probe: If they exist, are these expectations formal or informal?
11. Do you think that instructors teach differently based on their status within the department or field?
- Probe: Does this pertain to you?
12. Do you ever seek advice or input about your teaching from others? If so, who do you talk to or where do you get info about teaching?
13. Does your department encourage you to put energy into your teaching activities? **(if time)**

Schema for teaching (in addition to Q2 & Q7)[2-3 min]

14. How effective do you think you are as a teacher?
- Probe: How do you know?

STEM Education Reform [5 min]

15. Have you been involved in any teaching-related projects at [Institution Name]?
- Probe: If so, what activities were you involved in?
 - Probe: If so, why?
 - Probe: If not, why not? [If not, skip to #17]
16. How, if at all, has this project influenced your teaching?
17. As you may know, there are significant efforts at the national level to reform undergraduate instruction. What do you think about this? What recommendations do you have for people if they want to change teaching in undergraduate STEM courses?

Do you have any additional points you'd like to make about any of the questions I've asked?

In 2 years we will be collecting our 2nd wave of data for this study. If you are teaching an undergraduate course in the spring of 2012 would you be willing to participate in this study again?

Thank you very much for your time, and please fill out the survey.