## Fundamentals of Engineering Education Research

Rigorous Research in Engineering Education Initiative (NSF DUE 0817461) CLEERhub.org

Faculty Development Workshop (2013) - January 9, 2013 - Jeju Island, South Korea



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## Engineering Education Research and/or Innovation STORY

- When and how did you become interested in engineering education research and/or innovation?
- Was there a critical incident or memorable event associated with your initial interest?



#### • Workshop is about

- Identifying faculty interested in engineering education research
- Deepening understanding of engineering education research
- Building engineering education research capabilities

#### • Workshop is NOT about

- Pedagogical practice, i.e., "how to teach"
- Convincing you that good teaching is important
- Writing engineering education research grant proposals or papers
- Advocating all faculty be engineering education researchers

## Levels of inquiry in engineering education

- Level 0 Teacher
  - Teach as taught
- Level 1 Effective Teacher
  - Teach using accepted teaching theories and practices
- Level 2 Scholarly Teacher
  - Assesses performance and makes improvements
- Level 3 Scholar of Teaching and Learning
  - Engages in educational experimentation, shares results
- Level 4 Engineering Education Researcher
  - Conducts educational research, publishes archival papers

**Source:** Streveler, R., Borrego, M. and Smith, K.A. 2007. Moving from the "Scholarship of Teaching and Learning" to "Educational Research:" An Example from Engineering. *Improve the Academy*, Vol. 25, 139-149.

## Workshop Intentions / Participant Learning Outcomes

- 1. Describe key features of engineering education research
- 2. Explain emergence of engineering education research as a discipline
- 3. Describe recent reports and their relevance for and relationship with engineering education research
- 4. Summarize growth of engineering education research
- 5. Speculate on the future of engineering education research



- Rigorous Research in Engineering Education (RREE1)
  - One-week summer workshop, year-long research project
  - Funded by National Science Foundation (NSF), 2004-2006
  - About 150 engineering faculty participated
- Goals
  - Identify engineering faculty interested in conducting engineering education research
  - Develop faculty knowledge and skills for conducting engineering education research (especially in theory and research methodology)
  - Cultivate the development of a Community of Practice of faculty conducting engineering education research









- Identify principal features of engineering education research
- Frame and situate research questions and methodologies
- Gain familiarity with several print and online resources
- Become aware of global communities and their networks

# What does high-quality research in your discipline look like?

- What are the **qualities**, **characteristics**, **or standards** for **high-quality** research in your discipline?
- Think of it this way: "Research in my field is highquality when...."

Individually, list the qualities, characteristics or standards in your discipline

Compare your lists, <u>and as a group</u>, develop a list of high-quality research qualities, characteristics or standards









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## **Multiple theoretical frameworks**

# Going from framework to research question to research study

#### Framework

Self-determination framework says - students' motivation for a task is affected by the degree of control they have over it.

#### Therefore

If we manipulate the degree of student control, we should see variations in motivation levels.

#### Design

Different groups are given different degrees of control over the topic and process of their project and their motivation for the project is measured at various times throughout the semester.

## **Multiple theoretical frameworks**

Going from observation to framework to research question to research study and back to observation

#### Observation

Some students in a class participate more than others.

#### **Possible Frameworks**

Learning theory: Prior knowledge differences
Motivation theory: Goal orientations, task value, self-efficacy
Contextual variables: Course contingencies; classroom climate

#### **Design possibilities**

Measure and regress level of participation on potential variables.Manipulate course contingencies or course practices.

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## **Becoming an Engineering Education Researcher—Adams, Fleming & Smith**

- 1. Find and follow your dream.
- 2. Find and build community.
- 3. Do your homework. Become familiar with engineering education research.
- 4. Remember what it is like to be a student—be open to learning and the associated rewards and challenges.
- 5. Find balance. You will feel like you have multiple identities.
- 6. Be an architect of your own career.
- 7. Wear your researcher "lenses" at all times.
- 8. Use research as an opportunity for reflective practice.

Adams, R., L. Fleming, and K. Smith. 2007. Becoming an engineering education researcher: Three researchers stories and their intersections, extensions, and lessons. Proceedings, International Conference on Research in Engineering\_Education; http://www.ce.umn.edu/%7Esmith/docs/Adams-Fleming\_Smith-Becoming\_an\_engineering\_education\_researcher-ICREE2007.pdf

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lemson University	Department of Engineering and Science Education	Ph.D. Engineering or Science Education
Iniversity of Kentucky	College of Education - Department of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics	Ph.D. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education
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liagana University	College of Education	M.S. Ed. Math. Science, and Technology Education
lorth Carolina State University	College of Education - Department of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Hathematics Education	M.S and M.Ed. Program in Technology Education Ed.D. Program in Technology Education
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Expanding and sustaining research capacity in engineering and technology education: Building on successful programs for faculty and graduate students

Collaborative partners: Purdue (lead), Alverno College, Colorado School of Mines, Howard University, Madison Area Technical College, National Academy of Engineering

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# Undergraduate Science and Engineering Education: Goals

- Provide all students with foundational knowledge and skills
- Motivate some students to complete degrees in science or engineering
- Support students who wish to pursue careers in science or engineering

NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES

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- As novices in a domain, students are challenged by important aspects of the domain that can seem easy or obvious to experts. (Conclusion 7)
- Students can be taught more expert-like problemsolving skills and strategies to improve their understanding of representations.

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## Future Directions for DBER: Translating DBER into Practice

- Available evidence suggests that DBER and related research have not yet prompted widespread changes in teaching practice among science and engineering faculty. (Conclusion 12)
- Efforts to translate DBER and related research into practice are more likely to succeed if they:
  - are consistent with research on motivating adult learners,
  - include a deliberate focus on changing faculty conceptions about teaching and learning,
  - recognize the cultural and organizational norms of the department and institution, and
  - work to address those norms that pose barriers to change in teaching practice.
     (Conclusion 13)

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## Future Directions for DBER: Recommendations for Translating DBER Into Practice

- **RECOMMENDATION:** With support from institutions, disciplinary departments, and professional societies, faculty should adopt evidence-based teaching practices.
- RECOMMENDATION: Institutions, disciplinary departments, and professional societies should work together to prepare current and future faculty to apply the findings of DBER and related research, and then include teaching effectiveness in evaluation processes and reward systems throughout faculty members' careers. (Paraphrased)

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# Seven Recommendations for Innovation with Impact

#### Who

- 1. Grow professional development in teaching and learning.
- 2. Expand collaborations.

#### What

3. Expand efforts to make engineering more engaging, relevant, and welcoming.

#### How

- 4. Increase, leverage, and diversify resources for engineering teaching, learning, and innovation.
- 5. Raise awareness of proven practices and of scholarship in engineering education.

## Seven Recommendations for Innovation with Impact (continued)

#### **Creating a Better Culture**

To measure progress in implementing policies, practices, and infrastructure in support of scholarly and systematic innovation in engineering education:

- 6. Conduct periodic self-assessments in our individual institutions.
- 7. Conduct periodic community-wide self-assessments.

http://www.asee.org/about-us/the-organization/advisory-committees/Innovation-with-Impact

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# Thank you!

An e-copy of this presentation will be posted to: http://CLEERhub.org http://www.ce.umn.edu/~smith/links.html

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