Science for future elementary teachers: Views of faculty

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1

Rationale

NOT Highly Qualified Science Teachers (a world problem)
- KSDE report 1467 or 13.1%

Teachers over 50 years of age increased
- 27% in 1999-00 to 34% in 2004-05,
- 24%(8,455) of all teachers (33,819) will be eligible to retire in the next five years.

About 8% turnover ratio

Science as Area of Concentration of Elementary Teachers
- Last 7 years - 88 of 1357 or 6%
- Current situation
  - Pre-professional - 3 of 345 or 1% (> 200 undeclared)
  - Professional - 25 of 382 or 7%

Demand & Supply Problem

2

Big Picture

RESEARCH STATEMENT:
The impact of the science curriculum in future elementary teachers' area of concentration decision.

Data Source I
Faculty Interviews
&
Review of Syllabus

Data Source II
Student Interviews

Data Source III
Classroom Observation

7

General Science Courses

Recommended Courses
- Biological
  - Biol 198 Principles of Biology w/ lab (4 hrs)
- Physical
  - Phys 106 Concepts of Physics w/ lab (4 hrs)
  - Chem 110 General Chemistry (3 hrs)
- Earth Science
  - Geol 100 Earth in Action (3 hrs)
  - Geog 221 Environmental Geography w/ lab (4 hrs)

8

Participants' Profile

Professor	Rank	Teaching Experience	Years at KSU	Course for Future Elem. Teachers
1	Instructor	> 7	> 3	No
2	Scholar	> 3	> 3	No
3	Asst. Prof.	> 10	> 1	Yes
4	Assc. Prof.	> 10	> 5	Yes
5	Full Prof.	> 15	> 10	No

9

Five Natural Science Courses

Course	Students per Class	Laboratory Integration	Laboratory Grade into Final Grade	Use of Technology	Human Resources	Pedagogy	Evaluation
Biol 198	~80	Yes	Yes	Computer Sim.	4-6	Studio	Quizes, 7 Exams
Chem 110	150 - 250	No	No	None	1	Mostly Lecture	5 Exams
Geol 100	~ 50	No	No	Clickers	1	Demo-Lecture, Some PCK	2 Projects, 2 Exams, Clickers
Phys 106	~ 90	Yes	Yes	PDAs	1	Demo-Lecture, Some PCK	1 Project, 5 Exams, Exploration, Application, PDAs
Geog 221	~ 100	No	Yes	None	1	Mostly Lecture	Pass Lab, Assignments, 4 Exams

10

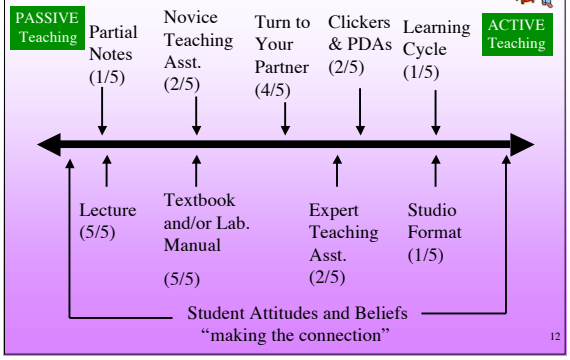
Course Goals or Plan Curriculum

Syllabus

- Introduce "scientific method" (2/5)
  - what and how of things
- Solve sophisticated scientific problems (4/5)
  - application from one context into another context
- Introduce real life applications or scientific issues (3/5)
  - global warming, designing of drugs, potable water, natural disasters
- Conceptual understanding (5/5)
  - geosphere, hydrosphere, processes and patterns, breadth of the science of biology
- Understanding of concepts as applied to elementary school children (2/5)

11

Teaching Strategies



12

Big Picture Question

In five years what attributes would you want your students to remember from the course?

- Feeling of understanding of their surroundings better (5/5)
- Good citizens - to make wise choices through critical thinking (1/5)
  - separate facts from garbage
- Feeling of not the "evil" science class (1/5)
- Gain science confidence and bridge content and teaching (2/5)
- Transfer learning to other classes (immediate impact) (2/5)

13

Educating Future Elem. Teachers

- No idea or will do the same (ex. studio format) - (1/5)
- Breadth of Content: "good grasped of good science" - strong foundation (1/5)
- Less is More (1/5)
- Couple content and pedagogy - Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) (2/5)
  - learning styles, concept maps
  - Modeling PCK
    - Ex. Integrate science into other classes (english, math)
  - Individual Projects and Group Projects
- Build confidence (2/5)
- Connecting Science Standards into lessons (2/5)
- Science impact to daily life (2/5)

14

Teaching Kids Science

- Feed on curiosity, be engaged, allow questions
  - What do you see, What does it mean, How do you test it?
- Foster the element of discovery
  - help students think about the world around them
  - science is something one can do
- Connection to things one has experienced

Active Engagement & Real Life Connection

15

Summary

- Range of learning strategies depending on "connection" to educational background and available technological resources.
  - *a) Passive vs Active b) Pure content vs PCK*
- There are tacit goals.
- There seems to be a disparity between the perception on how kids should learn science and teaching science to future science teachers.
- A question: To what degree should science faculty feel responsible in the quantity and quality of future science teachers?

17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Thank you !!!
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18