

Centre for  
HEALTH SERVICES AND POLICY RESEARCH

# Toward a Common Definition of Core Competencies in HSPR

Steve Morgan, Karen Orr

Presentation for  
2009 Annual CAHSPR Conference  
Calgary, Alberta



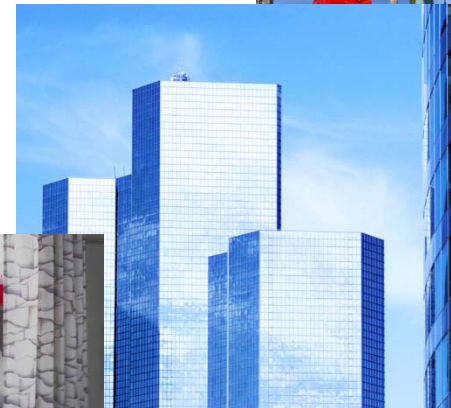
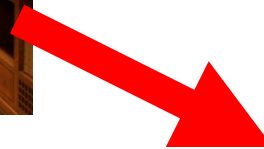
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
School of Population and Public Health

# Why core competencies?

- To help educators, learners, and employers



# Our practical goal: getting better at helping students go from A to B



## Our process (in brief)

- 45 telephone interviews
  - Non-academic and academics
- Web surveys
  - Experts & employers
  - Students & Alumni
- Workshop
  - Academics and non-academics



Key question: what knowledge, skills, or abilities are needed for success in careers related to HSPR?



# Highlights of telephone surveys



Centre for  
HEALTH SERVICES AND POLICY RESEARCH

# “Top 10” Lists (1)

## Specific / “Trainable” Knowledge and Abilities

	Mentions by Non- Academics (n=28)	Mentions by Academics (n=17)	Total Mentions (n=45)
Knowledge of the Canadian health care system	16	8	24
Understanding of research methods and study designs	13	11	24
Understanding of the politics of health care systems and policy processes	14	6	20
Ability to conduct quantitative research	9	6	15
Sufficient understanding to be able to assess/interpret quantitative research	9	6	15
Sufficient understanding to be able to assess/interpret qualitative research	6	6	12
Ability to formulate meaningful research questions	8	3	11
Knowledge of non-Canadian health care systems	8	2	10
Knowledge of health services research theories	5	5	10
Planning-related administrative skills	9	1	10



# “Top 10” Lists (2)

## General / “Intangible” Skills and Abilities

	Mentions by Non- Academics (n=28)	Mentions by Academics (n=17)	Total Mentions (n=45)
Able to engage in meaningful research producer-user partnerships	16	4	20
Effective, non-technical written communication skills	17	2	19
Strong interpersonal and teamwork skills	16	2	18
Ability to think critically and analytically	12	6	18
General communication skills	14	3	17
Personal intellect and insight	10	3	13
General knowledge translation skills (non-specific)	8	3	11
Comfort with interdisciplinary approaches to research	9	2	11
Ability to translate knowledge for a variety of audiences	7	3	10
Political acumen (e.g. knowing how to move things forward)	9	1	10



# Findings from student/alumni surveys...



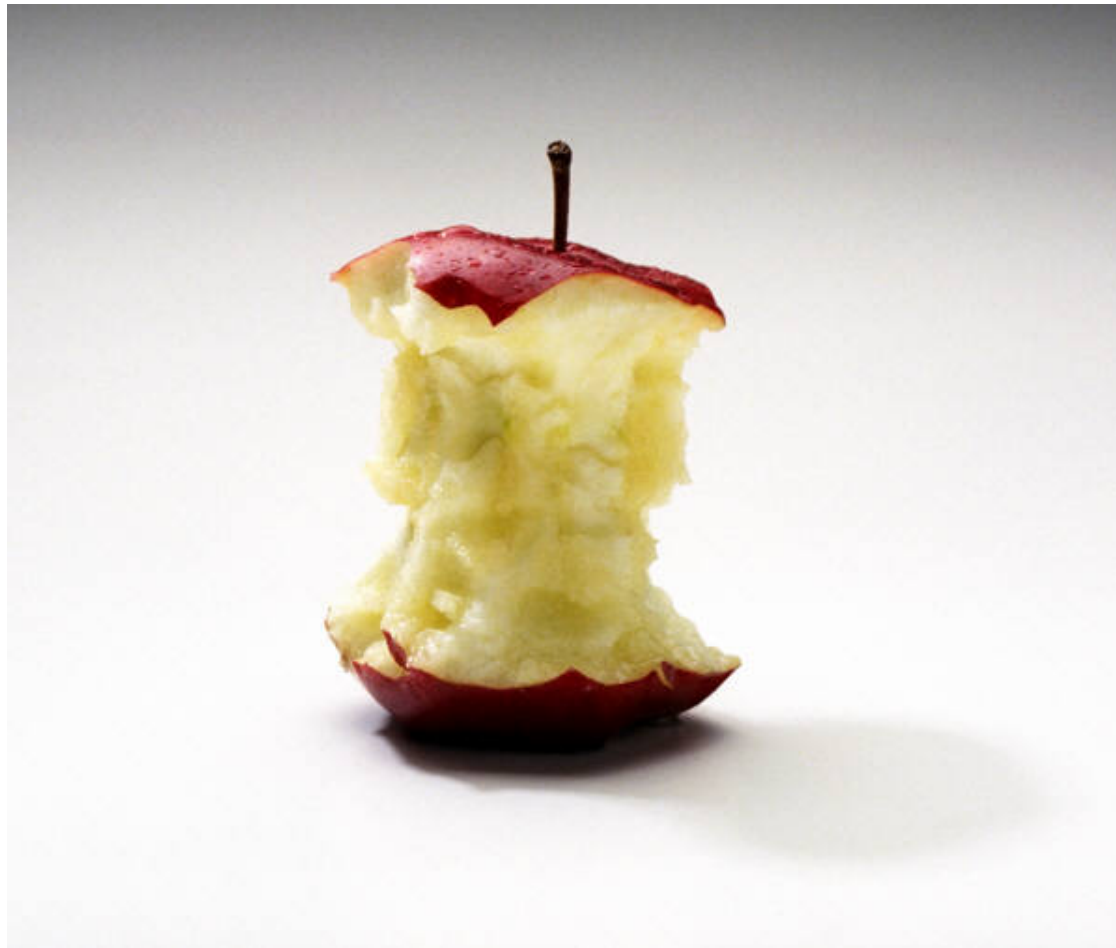
# **“Workshopping” the core competencies**



# Focus on competencies AND 'big ideas'



## Focus on the core



## Overarching question

"What types of knowledge and abilities are needed by every HSPR graduate for them to be effective in their careers and in lifelong learning, whatever form or focus their HSPR-related career might take?"

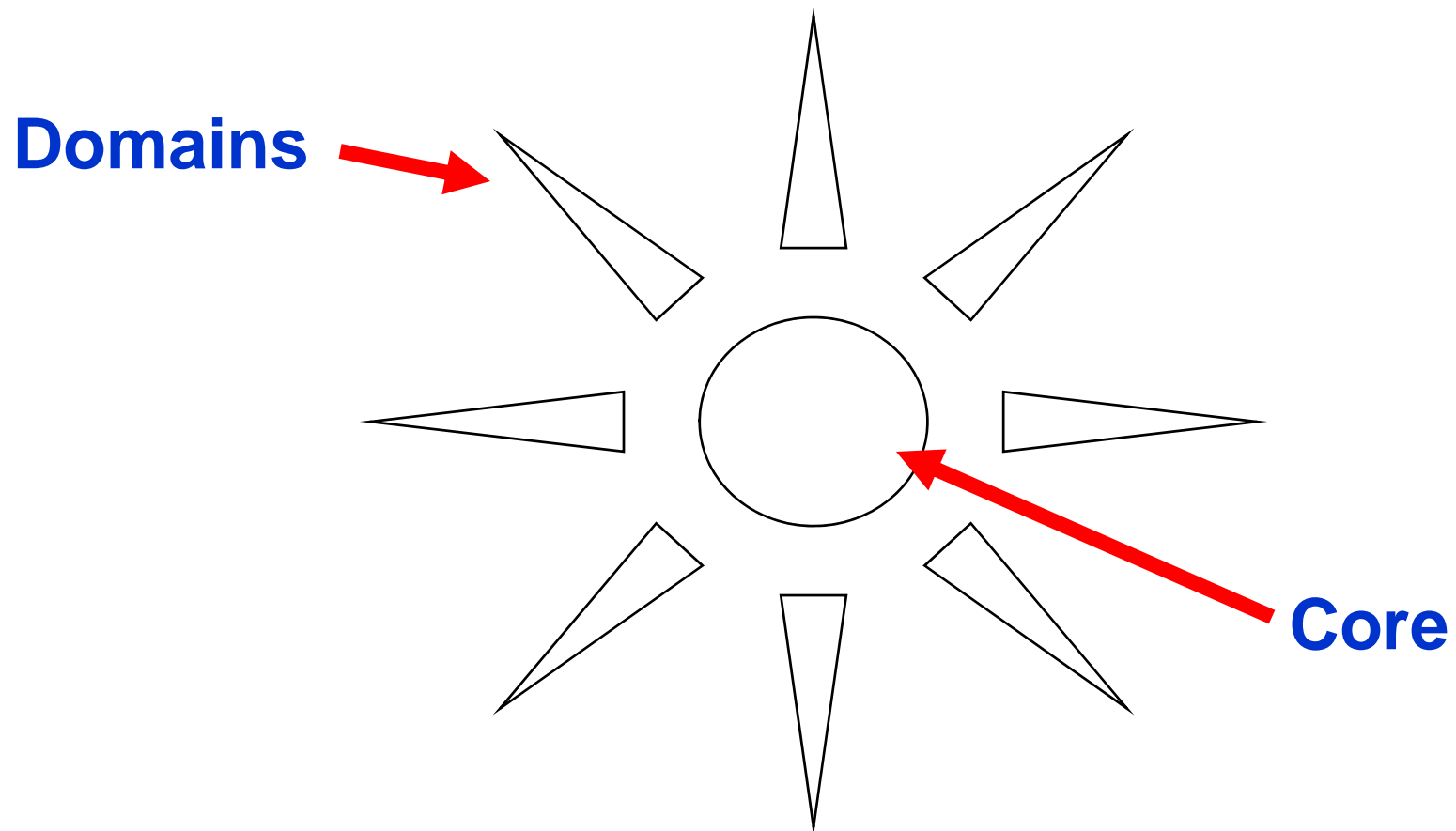


# Results

- No clear consensus yet
  - But a lot of fodder for consideration...
- Academic versus non-academic
  - Career tracks AND views of the world



# Proposed framework



# Proposed draft of “core” domains

- Theories and frameworks
- Research (Theory/Method/Conduct)
- Communications and KT
- Policy and systems



# Theories and frameworks

- Theme: Ability to identify, select and work with appropriate theories and frameworks is essential to critical thinking
  - Key theories to know include:
    - Health care utilization theories
    - Quality theory
    - Theories of change
    - Determinants of health
    - Others (policy, basic economics, systems)
- Should have depth in a discipline/sub-field



## Research (Theory/Method/Conduct)

- Ability to formulate research questions that are relevant and grounded (in theory)
- Ability to identify appropriate research designs (experimental and non-experimental)
- Familiarity with BOTH qualitative and quantitative research methods
- Ability to design and conduct qualitative OR quantitative research



## Policy and systems

- Ability to work with basic ideas of political-economy (e.g., interests, intuitions, ideas)
- Understanding history and structure of Canadian health care system
- Ability to place local/national policy in a comparative context (including international)



## Communications and KT

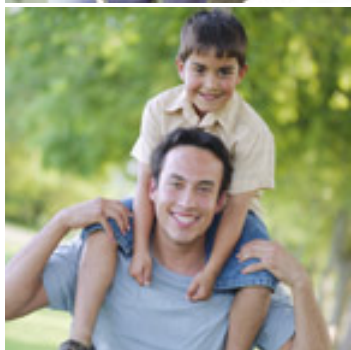
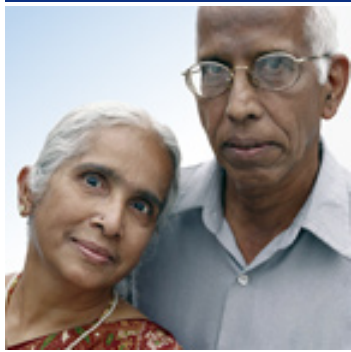
- Ability to translate complex ideas for multiple audiences (esp. non-academic)
- Ability to effectively listen to multiple actors (public, interests, professionals)
- KT: Awareness of the barriers/facilitators to the use of evidence in practice and policy
- Key sub-skills
  - Ability to write clearly, concisely and effectively
  - Ability to communicate inter-personally (teams, presentations, relationships)



## Next steps ....

1. Listen
2. Think
3. Reconcile
4. Write
5. Consult
6. Publish
7. Start again





Centre for  
HEALTH SERVICES AND POLICY RESEARCH

**Thank you!**



CIHR IRSC



UBC CENTRE FOR  
HEALTH SERVICES AND  
POLICY RESEARCH