

**Student Evaluations and Reflections on Teaching
2017-2018**

*You will see my overall reflection of the school year first.
Then follows a semester review for Spring, 2018, with Positive Aspects and Points for Improvement, followed by a grid with sections for each individual course that contains a summary of the University evaluation information and my reflections on student comments. After the Spring, 2018, semester review there appears a Fall, 2017, semester review in the same format.*

2017-2018 School Year Reflection

In my first year full-time teaching and overseeing this program, I see that the syllabi and especially the anchor textbook used in all of the courses need to be updated. Ohio is looking at new Ohio Operating Standards for gifted, these are in-progress, including the competencies and how the courses align with these would help graduate students who might consider taking a single course for LPDC credit or license renewal. The alignment is required in the Operating Standards. There is also talk of an endorsement exam, something Ohio has been considering for more than a decade. I truly hope it does not happen, but need to be prepared – and prepare students accordingly – if it happens.

I spent a great deal of time this semester on the road, which makes keeping up with other aspects of University work a challenge, and because courses are in the evening, keeping a work/life balance was a challenge as well. I am finding that there is a very fine line between personal time and work time. The best solution for this was joining the Ashland Research and Writing Community, the AURWC, in Spring semester. Creating weekly, monthly, and semester plans, getting strong mentorship and feedback, and having a sense of accountability weekly with colleagues helped me to keep this balance. I will continue with the AURWC as long as they run it.

It helps my confidence that my students believe in my knowledge and skill level, and they appreciate my enthusiasm, and our discussion format from the Focus Questions makes them feel able to express themselves. I would like to branch out from Piirto's Focus Questions in the future to have more variety in styles of responses – lesson ideas, creative responses, graphic organizers.

In addition to a new text and alignment with the new Operating Standards, I see small adjustments in each of the courses I taught this year:

650 – Aligning one or two of the focus question assignments with the Case Study so that they can integrate the readings with that final project. They can simply include parts of those focus questions into their final Case Study paper. I held a meeting – the Synchronium – with a number of adjuncts and they gave me other positive points of growth and revision for this course.

651 – The Synchronium also gave me revision ideas here as well. (*See the Program Development section*)

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653 and 654 – Revisit the format of these syllabi: Should the assignment descriptions simply go into the calendar? Right now these are both described in detail in the body of the syllabi, so students have to go between the calendar and the description in different parts of the syllabus.

653 and 654 – I believe these courses need something that compiles various practical strategies that students can refer to in their classrooms. Perhaps some kind of collection or chart or even a shared document where they all add/share ideas? Even a shared glossary might work well.

781 – They feel alone. I need to have periodic meetings or online sessions or even phone conversations with them. They struggle with APA, so perhaps a folder on Blackboard with a PowerPoint guide might be useful. This might be useful for all courses. Perhaps a shared spreadsheet like the one the AURWC uses would be a good weekly check in, and if there are multiple students, they can support one another with weekly comments, too, and accountability to one another.

All courses – Consider how I might get them to read my feedback on their assignments.

**Semester Review
 Spring, 2018**

Positive Aspects	Points for Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Students rate my enthusiasm high, overall *I also see comments this summer that the readings, discussions, activities, and work stretch them and challenge them. *They appreciate having choices in how they respond and what they respond to from the readings *Adding the rural gifted population texts to Northwestern’s 653 course and allowing them a choice was useful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *I consistently see comments that show confusion with the syllabus (653, 654ACNW2), showing that my format needs tightening. Ask a couple of colleagues for their suggestions? *653 and 654 need more deliberate ways to gather and keep a number of teaching strategies that can be put into place in the classroom. I am considering a chart for both of these with topics/ideas, background information or researchers’ names for the topic (especially with guidance/counseling ideas), and practical applications to use. They can share these with one another to add to their own chart and have a good practical document to take back to their classrooms. *Add an AURWC-like spreadsheet to 781 to check in weekly, or Bb Collaborate sessions periodically, or even driving to meet halfway. *The 654 thoughtlog instructions need to deliberately state that they can use alternate styles. Brian used a video thoughtlog (he asked if he could) and it worked very well for him. Give suggestions or ideas. *I don’t hear a lot about my assignment feedback, only periodically. Are they reading it?

**Summary of Course Evaluations
 Spring, 2018**

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Course: EDIS 654 Lakota Cohort	Hours: 3	Course: EDIS 653 Northwest Cohort 2	Hours: 3
Highest Ratings in Formative Items [Median out of 5]		Highest Ratings in Formative Items [Median out of 5]	
Instructor's enthusiasm [4.9]		Instructor's enthusiasm [4.9]	
		Encouragement given students to express themselves [4.9]	
Lowest Ratings in Formative Items [Median out of 5]		Lowest Ratings in Formative Items [Median out of 5]	
Reasonableness of assigned work [4]		Relevance and usefulness of course content [3.5]	
Answers to student questions [4.3]		Course organization [4.0]	
Amount/relevance of course content		Clarity of student responsibilities [4.0]	
Comments on Formal Evaluations		Comments on Formal Evaluations	
<p>I see that this course challenges them to consider creativity in a different way – and to consider themselves to be creative. Most adults – and many teachers – do not believe they are creative. A number of them mention that they are forced to move out of their comfort zone.</p> <p>I have heard this before, but one aspect that needs attention in this course is being more deliberate about having them collect specific strategies from the class. Having them reflect on their own creativity is good, but not as practical for their work as teachers. Perhaps a chart of all of the concepts and throughout the course putting strategies on that chart and sharing with one another during face to face sessions.</p>		<p>I can see from their ratings that I may need to tighten up the syllabus – even have a colleague review it (and EDIS 651, apparently) to determine how to improve instructions and format.</p> <p>The jigsaw activities and the option to choose the topics they are interested in to research and share were effective and “a great use of our time.” This is a very rural district, and the previous required trade book text is <i>And Still We Rise</i> that is focused on urban populations. I decided to add two optional texts: <i>Serving Gifted Students in Rural Settings</i> and <i>Hillbilly Elegy</i>. Students did a jigsaw by book, discussing it in a fishbowl setting, then everyone joined in to debrief and note important points and questions for future study.</p> <p>They appreciate the hybrid format over fully online, which is being considered.</p>	
Comments on In-Course Final Journal Reflections		Comments on In-Course Final Journal Reflections	
Did not use		Did not use.	

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Course: EDIS 781 (2 students)	Hours: 3	Course: EDIS 654 Stow cohort	Hours: 3
Highest Ratings in Formative Items [Median out of 5]		Highest Ratings in Formative Items [Median out of 5]	
All items rated 5		Explanations by instructor [5]	
		Evaluative and grading techniques [5]	
		Clarity of student responsibilities and requirements [5]	
		Instructor's ability to present alternative explanations when needed [5]	
		Encouragement give students to express themselves [5]	
		Availability of extra help when needed was [5]	
		Instructor's interest in whether students learned [5]	
Lowest Ratings in Formative Items [Median out of 5]		Lowest Ratings in Formative Items [Median out of 5]	
		Reasonableness of assigned work [4.2]	
		Relevance and usefulness of course content [4.2]	
Comments on Formal Evaluations		Comments on Formal Evaluations	
<p>Students feel challenged and like the individualized topic choice they have – they can choose what they are interested in. Even, in some respects, how they do their project as either a pure literature review or short lit review and practical application.</p> <p>I can see that they would probably benefit from more interaction with one another, even offering a “meet in the middle” kind of class to talk about ideas and support one another. Or, if not that, using the AURWC format of having students check in weekly on a spreadsheet to say what they are doing and to give supportive comments to one another. This works better with two or more, of course.</p> <p>Is there a way to make the APA less tedious? I am glad to read that one student feels that despite how challenging it is to focus on perfect APA, he/she feels like they could submit something for</p>		<p>This was a challenging group for EDIS 654. They feel a lot of stress, they feel unsteady and somewhat unsupported, and two are extremely tired all the time. I approached the activities as stress relieving/mindfulness work, which helped a bit.</p> <p>The comments here are generic, overall. They seem to have stretched their creative thinking, and that it was a challenge to them.</p> <p>They liked the thoughtlog and the field trip. The morning of this field trip I became very ill and could not go. I sent them an itinerary, even including poetry and instructions to read aloud. I was concerned that they would not see the point of this activity, doing it without me there guiding them, but it appears that the camaraderie of the day and time spent reflecting on beauty, the dark side, and nature was good therapy for them. The next time I saw them was the final class and their</p>	

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publication. I am glad to think that students are considering writing for publication.		creativity projects were thoughtful and they were more relaxed than I had ever seen them.	
Comments on In-Course Final Journal Reflections		Comments on In-Course Final Journal Reflections	
Did not use.		Did not use.	
Course: EDIS 796 Lakota cohort	Hours: 3	Course: EDIS 651 CT	Hours: 3
Highest Ratings in Formative Items [Median out of 5]		Highest Ratings in Formative Items [Median out of 5]	
Student confidence in instructor's knowledge [4.9]		Conduciveness of class atmosphere to student learning was [4.8]	
Instructor's enthusiasm [4.9]		Student confidence in instructor's knowledge [4.8]	
Encouragement given students to express themselves [4.9]		Instructor's enthusiasm [4.8]	
		Encouragement given students to express themselves [4.8]	
Lowest Ratings in Formative Items [Median out of 5]		Lowest Ratings in Formative Items [Median out of 5]	
Reasonableness of assigned work [4.0]		Course organization [4.5]	
Relevance and usefulness of course content [4.0]		Use of class time [4.5]	
Use of class time [4.0]			
Comments on Formal Evaluations		Comments on Formal Evaluations	
The comments here are sparse, but useful. These students appreciate the internship giving them a chance to put into place some of the ideas and practical strategies they have learned and to get feedback on the lesson plan and their teaching through the observation. One commented that she learned most from instructor feedback. This course has been challenging to take over from Jane Piirto, I don't feel I have her presence in schools as the University Supervisor. However, I felt comfortable with these students after having gotten to know them so well through previous courses, especially 654.		These students feel challenged by the course material and practical applications. One said her thinking was "stretched," and another said that the creativity in the presentation of the class materials was excellent. This is something I am trying to improve with each semester – going beyond the Focus Question sharing/discussion time that was done when I went through the program to having them create lessons to share, critique. They liked the Cash practical text, the activities and how the content was presented, the interactions they had with one another.	

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<p>I had a wonderful and challenging conversation with a student. I saw her curriculum as photocopies from a workbook and the questions felt to me as if they were at a lower level of Blooms Taxonomy. I jotted down some concerns and questions and in our post-observation conference, she showed me a video integration assignment that allowed them to use the collected information, write personally relevant questions and move on from there to an independent study. Later they would be “interviewed” on that topic. My live presence in this interaction made all the difference.</p>	<p>I need to improve the integration of technology that can be used effectively with gifted students. A weakness overall for me.</p> <p>A couple said that the syllabus structure was a little confusing with the calendar and the assignment information in two different places.</p> <p>One student took the course for CEU credit for LPDC licensure renewal, and decide to enroll for the entire program!</p>
Comments on In-Course Final Journal Reflections	Comments on In-Course Final Journal Reflections
Did not use.	Did not use.

**Semester Review
 Fall, 2017**

Positive Aspects	Points for Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Keep aspects of the current text in place when updating to a more recent book *They like the interaction of face to face and OAGC Conference as a sub for one assignment *Journal feedback within the course is much more specific and detailed than the AU evaluations *They see that I differentiate assignments! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Improve how we support program alumni – workshops, emails, perhaps an online home *650 – align some Focus Questions to integrate the Case Study *Call attention to differentiation of assignments *Consider providing an action research option to 710 *The observation form for 796 is not aligned with the new Ohio competencies *The 796 final reflection needs to have a distinct focus, in part, on their shift in philosophy over their time in the program

**Summary of Course Evaluations
 Fall, 2017**

Course: EDIS 650 CT1 Columbus Center	Hours: 3	Course: EDIS 653 Stow Cohort	Hours: 3
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Highest Ratings in Student Engagement and Formative Items [Median out of 5]	Highest Ratings in Student Engagement and Formative Items [Median out of 5]
Intellectual challenge	All Formative Items rated [5]
High amount of effort to succeed in this course	
Instructor's ability to present alternative explanations when needed	
Student confidence in instructor knowledge	
Instructor's enthusiasm	
Instructor's preparation for class	
Evaluative and grading techniques	
Lowest Ratings in Student Engagement and Formative Items [Median out of 5]	Lowest Ratings in Student Engagement and Formative Items [Median out of 5]
Explanations by instructor	Amount you learned in the course [4.8]
Reasonableness of assigned work	Evaluative and grading techniques [4.8]
Use of class time	Clarity of student responsibilities [4.8]
	Reasonableness of assigned work [4.8]
Comments on Formal Evaluations	Comments on Formal Evaluations
<p>I am pleased to see that everyone in this class responded to the evaluations.</p> <p>One of the highlights of this course, I think, is their ability to go to the OAGC conference and report on it for one assignment. For new teachers of the gifted, this is invaluable to help them feel part of the bigger picture of gifted education. The support and like-minded individuals they meet, and the sessions they attend goes well beyond what I could teach in a class. It helps them feel less alone. Which is also why I want to keep these classes hybrid, they need the interaction. Two commented on the second qualitative question that the class discussions were important, and the text, while older now (2007), is still an extremely valuable resource for them. This is important for me to consider as I update the course – finding a way to keep aspects of the current text in place while incorporating new research.</p>	<p>Initially I am surprised at the number of hours students took with this course. I may need to revisit the courseload. I do not wish to give more work, but perhaps to deepen the challenge of the work so students are working a graduate level, which I believe should be a little more than 6 hours a week. However, they do believe that those hours were valuable in advancing their education.</p> <p>I have opened the type of responses expected in this course to go beyond APA styled “focus question” papers, to include practical applications, PowerPoints or Prezi, sharing strategies and ideas. I can see this reflected in their responses to the open-ended questions. I believe that writing is important at this level, and I want to prepare them for publishing, but they are teachers first, not researchers or scholars, and they like having practical applications and responses, as well as the discussions, which I believe are a strength of the hybrid model over fully online coursework.</p>
Comments on In-Course Final Journal Reflections	Comments on In-Course Final Journal Reflections

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I also ask students to give me feedback through a journal on Blackboard. Initially I started doing this because the evaluations came back to me after I had planned the next semester, and these types of comments very much help that planning. And now I also see that they write so much more in these journals than they do for the University evaluations. I'm not sure why – perhaps because in a Blackboard journal they simply feel like they are “talking” to me.

I am glad to see that students (Jeannine) saw that I try to differentiate, something I want to be able to do a little more, especially in the next course in the sequence, to model what we want teachers to do with children. And another (Margaret) with her deep questioning of the case studies – this is something that makes me appreciate her so much, and I have my eye on her to perhaps be an adjunct for this program after she has a few years under her belt in gifted ed.

I can see that students dread the case study (as I did when I took 650 – way back in 1996!), but they also learn so much from it that it is an assignment I just cannot consider taking out of this course. I have tweaked it, and see ways to continue to make it more meaningful in the future by adjusting it some more, even using Focus Question assignments to have them apply the readings to the Case Study - but it stays.

The responses I receive in this final journal go well beyond what I read in the AU online evaluations, and in this case it gives a strong indication of the life-changing and practice-changing nature of this course. Lori has told me repeatedly that she is a different teacher as a result of this course. She learned skills and practical ways of working with the social and emotional needs of her gifted – something she stated was a major issue in her self-contained gifted classroom from the first day of 650.

Using Kelli's response (as well as other feedback I've received) I am giving the option to my Spring, 2018 Northwestern cohort of choosing the Peterson (High school dialogues book) or the Christine Fonseca *I'm not just gifted* text that is more suited to elementary dialogues. I look forward to seeing how that works.

Mary reminds me that I might want to bring in a representative of SENG, Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted, to a class meeting to talk about the support they offer. I am beginning to realize that my being out of the K-8 classroom for so long, I need to connect them with teachers who are working firsthand with these students. It is important. My adjuncts are all working in the schools, so they have that firsthand experience right now, it is not as important an issue with them as it is for me.

Course:	Hours:
EDIS 710 OL	2
Highest Ratings in Student Engagement and Formative Items [Median out of 5]	
Instructor's ability to present alternative explanations [4]	
Student confidence in instructor knowledge [4]	
Answers to student questions [4]	
Availability of extra help when needed [4]	

Course:	Hours:
EDUC 710 OL1	2
Highest Ratings in Student Engagement and Formative Items [Median out of 5]	
The helpfulness of the distance learning staff [4.9]	
Tailoring of instruction to varying student skill levels [4.9]	
Student confidence in instructor's knowledge	
Encouragement given students to express themselves [4.9]	

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Amount you learned in the course [4]	Usefulness of video media in understanding course content [4.9]
Evaluative and grading techniques [4]	Evaluative and grading techniques [4.9]
Relevance and usefulness of course content [4]	
Lowest Ratings in Student Engagement and Formative Items [Median out of 5]	Lowest Ratings in Student Engagement and Formative Items
Course organization was [3]	Timeliness of instructor response to assignments [4.8]
Instructor's preparation for class was [3]	Quality/helpfulness of instructor feedback [4.8]
Clarity of student responsibilities and requirements was [3]	
Comments on Formal Evaluations	Comments on Formal Evaluations
<p>This student's evaluation (there was only one student in this section), was honest and her comments are helpful. The workload looks like it was positive, I think that grad students who are working in their classrooms as part of a job-embedded course like this don't notice longer working times because the work is so much a part of what they are doing anyway, and hopefully act to improve their practice.</p> <p>I am surprised that this graduate student made her way through the entire masters program without doing a research project in her classroom. Perhaps this course could be an Action Research project, with a solid text to guide their research and ongoing support from the instructor. In this way students would have a format or progression to work through. I taught an online Action Research course elsewhere using Craig Mertler's <i>Action Research: Improving Schools and Empowering Educators</i>. I might look at this for future EDIS 710 classes, or even something specific to gifted classes.</p>	<p>I am very pleased with these evaluations, though I wish more students had responded. I have not taught this course before, and adapted another instructor's syllabus and course just a week before class started. I added an annotated bibliography so that students were expected to write professionally and include research into their projects, which I think is very important at this level. They seem to feel as though their learning was excellent/good, and the effectiveness of the online format was excellent/good.</p> <p>As for the Student Engagement section, the students who responded were very engaged and felt challenged. There is a wide range of the number of hours spent on the project, and as this is a project they select, design and work through, that seems to make sense, they self-challenge (just like K-8 students) as they desire.</p> <p>The Open Ended Question responses make me wish I had required a final reflection journal. However, I compiled and reviewed their final discussion posts on their projects. For many of them the idea of tracking data from the beginning of their project to the end was not only new to them, but some of them fought the idea of doing it. They are used to tracking Ohio test score data, and I tried to open them up to using other types of data like surveys, teacher-created assessments and pre-and post-tests. I also focused on the idea that their projects were not going to make an enormous impact in such a short amount of time, but it was</p>

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	<p>the practice of data gathering, reviewing and moving forward with the new knowledge that was “good for them.”</p> <p>When I am ready to teach this class again, I would upload more videos of myself explaining aspects of the research process, the APA portion of the annotated bibliography, and using pre- and post-assessments. My thought here is that it would alleviate some stress students have about the process itself, and to make myself more accessible, as they would see me and hear my voice. I just think that helps connect me to students, even in a small way.</p> <p>I also had a mid-semester individual journal check-in, but would probably have one more just to make sure that students were progressing well.</p>
Comments on In-Course Final Journal Reflections	Comments on In-Course Final Journal Reflections
Did not use.	Did not use.
Course: EDIS 796 CT	Course: EDIS 654 CT1
Hours: 3	Hours: 3
Highest Ratings in Formative Items [Median of 5]	Highest Ratings in Formative Items [Median of 5] All items 5
2 students only. All items rated 5	Instructor’s preparation for class
	Conduciveness of class atmosphere to student learning
	Quality of questions/problems raised by instructor
	Instructor’s enthusiasm
	Student confidence in instructor’s knowledge
	Availability of extra help when needed
	Instructor’s interest in whether students learned
Lowest Ratings in Formative Items [Median of 5]	Lowest Ratings in Formative Items [Median of 5]
	Course organization [4.6]
	Clarity of student responsibilities and requirements
	Use of class time [4.8]
Comments on Formal Evaluations	Comments on Formal Evaluations
The responses for this internship were as I expected. With only three students, these two	I am pleased with the quantitative data, it shows that the work is challenging.

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responses reflect that the course does what it is supposed to do.

This is a course, however, that I will probably be working the most on. I found the observation format to be cumbersome and outside the Ohio Standards for the Gifted Endorsement, the NAGC Standards and the Ohio Competencies. It is time to revisit those to align them all with our course and observation expectations.

I solidified the final reflection paper format and expectations for this course. And upon reading the three final papers, I see them revisiting their teaching philosophies and reflecting on the changes that have occurred because of their time in the program. They also seem to see themselves as good advocates for gifted students.

In addition, I see a suggestion from Mary that we support our program graduates with workshops and follow-up classes. This is something I think would be a wonderful addition to the program, and the National Association for Gifted Children has Advanced Professional Development Standards that would be an excellent framework. It also supports my goal of finding a way to follow-up and keep track of our graduates.

Comments on In-Course Final Journal Reflections

Did not use.

Standard Open-Ended Questions

I am thrilled with these responses! It is heartening to see that these teachers, who come to class after a long day at school, and often exhausted physically as well as emotionally, were able to open up to the experience of exploring their own creativity as an avenue to supporting their students' creativity. This is vital, in my opinion. The only true way to understand that creative student is to step into his shoes, to learn something new, to see that you have something you thought you lost years ago: personal creativity. This class changed me as a teacher when I took it, and I love seeing from the comments that the tradition is continuing. That is my goal and my desire and my reward.

Comments on In-Course Final Journal Reflections

Did not use.