

**Student Evaluations and Reflections on Teaching
Summer, 2018**

You will see my overall reflection of the school year first. Then follows a review for Summer, 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.

Summer, 2018, Reflection

This summer coursework is always so fast-paced – double time! However, I found that these teachers, when they are not stressed by their school-based work, truly delve deeply into the content and the self-reflection that is needed to grow.

I sense that this program will move online very soon, even in the next year, and I am saddened and frustrated by this, especially in light of the comments I see here. They prize their discussions in class, even the class with only two students felt that the dialogue/discussions were the most powerful part of the course. I don't know how I will do the 654 field trip and 653 dialogue project as part of an online class, and the activities are too valuable to discard.

The 654 Saturday field trip was a powerful tool for the Northwestern group, who tend to be disconnected from one another. It was interesting to see them sharing so deeply and personally with one another. Going to Wade Chapel at Lakeview Cemetery allows them to see the work of scientists, mathematicians, get a good sense of social justice issues (as Tiffany used women to do a lot of the work), and pulls in religion and history, too. It truly makes the experience interdisciplinary. One student lost her father in the past year, and I offered her the opportunity to skip out of the cemetery and go to a church or park and meet us for lunch and the art museum later, I thought it might be too difficult for her, but she was there and her colleagues stepped up to let her open up a bit about it all. It is always such a beautiful day out.

Writing up these “Points for Improvement” always give me a list of tasks to move forward on as I plan for Fall. I am deliberate about supporting and expecting APA format in 650, especially as the Case Study paper is research and literature based, a perfect blend of scholarly writing components. But 653 and 654 might not need this as much, I could stretch out to let them respond in nontraditional ways. It would be a good to model for them, especially in the creativity course. When I taught undergraduates at the University of Akron, the final culminating project was arts-based and responsive to the topics in the course they found most compelling. I know it can be done, and it's a good lesson for graduate students in opening up their minds to alternate assessment models.

And finally, a goal for Fall is to create and use pre- and post-assessments for the Knowledge, Skill, and Disposition statements from the syllabus, as I update them. I've begun to align these statements in 650 so that Knowledge statements are on a single, important topic or goal of what to learn, the Skill statement is based on that knowledge statement, and the Disposition statement is based on the previous Knowledge and Skill statement. It just makes sense to me that these are not just 30 separate statements. They need to be aligned. And with that

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alignment, it naturally follows that the statements would allow me to find ways to show growth in a pre- and post-assessment. Gathering and using those assessments would tell me a lot about students' perceived growth.

On a side note, this summer session was personally very challenging. I realized during Spring Semester that I could not live on the Ashland University pay, even adding my McNeese University work on the side and supplemental contracts. I made the decision in March to give up my home and be a roommate to my best friend, who is in her 80's. Teaching, looking at a future program that may be 100% online, downsizing, and moving house made for a very difficult summer.

But each dark cloud does eventually drift off, and the sun returns. Through the sale of my home and the move to a less expensive and involved lifestyle (no mowing or snow removal!), I took my first and long-anticipated trip (I have wanted to do this since I was a child!) to Italy for a week at the end of June. I took about an hour to grade and check email and Blackboard once a day, and left the challenges of my school year behind. I put them into the canal in Venice, where they belong. I can start Fall with fresh eyes and attitude.

**Review
 Summer, 2018**

| Positive Aspects | Points for Improvement |
|---|---|
| *My enthusiasm. I am happy to see this. *They are able to see my differentiation of materials and ways of responding *I am happy to see the Northwestern students – some of them – embracing the creativity projects and continuing with them. *654 – I read a number of times in these thoughtlogs and evaluations that they feel changed, they learned about themselves. This is something I believe makes a difference in how teachers meet the creativity needs of their students. They have to believe it in themselves, have experienced it firsthand, taken the risks, and been changed to take on the role of Teaching Creativity to students. *When updating the text, keep aspects of the Piirto, the model in the coursework (using either a scanned chapter or newer journal article on the Pyramid). | *653 – focus in on clarity of assignment descriptions in the syllabus and in my explanations. Make a note of their questions and what is confusing so that these can be updated in future. *654 – focus questions can be more open here, even allowing them to respond creatively (Graphic organizer? Poetry and creative writing? Lesson plan?). Perhaps even a repository of classroom ideas kept online/Wiki somewhere so that they can take these with them. *I need to make sure that due dates on the syllabus match Blackboard and what I tell them in class. *I need to find a way to compile pre- and post-assessment information easily. Right now this is cumbersome, and I'm not keeping good records. It's good that I'm doing it, but I have to do it well for it to have an impact. *I need to be trained in the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking. Find \$2,000 plus travel and hotels to Georgia to do this. *Perhaps I could have the Torrance people come here to run a training? Contact Sarah and the Torrance center or mention it at NAGC. |

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**Summary of Course Evaluations
 Summer, 2018**

| Course: EDIS 650 ACA | Hours: 3 | Course: EDIS 654 ACNW2 Northwestern 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 | | Instructor's enthusiasm [4.9] | |
| | | Encouragement given students to express themselves [4.9] | |
| | | Instructor's ability to present alternative explanations when needed [4.8] | |
| | | Answers to student questions [4.8] | |
| | | Use of class time [4.8] | |
| | | Instructor's interest in whether students learned [4.8] | |
| Lowest Ratings in Formative Items [Median out of 5] | | Lowest Ratings in Formative Items [Median out of 5] | |
| | | Instructor's preparation for class [4.3] | |
| Comments on Formal Evaluations | | Comments on Formal Evaluations | |
| <p>At this point I am considering a new textbook for Fall, so may be my last course with Piirto. Interestingly enough, one student commented in depth about the Piirto Pyramid as a good foundation for learning about all aspects of gifted – genetics, personality, intelligence, talent, environmental, and motivational aspects. It would be good to keep Piirto's model in the course in some way (as it is not in the new textbook).</p> <p>They felt that the small class size allowed them to dig very deeply into the content.</p> | | <p>I am again surprised by the repeated mention of creativity assessments in this course. This is the first time I have added this kind of in-depth look at these assessment, and I thought it would feel tedious, but students found it helpful and interesting.</p> <p>One mentioned that the syllabus was hard to read and dates did not always match with Blackboard dates. This summer I made responsive changes with this group, and while this student mentioned that the changes were "not a bad thing" but I need to be more precise in checking due dates between the syllabus and Blackboard.</p> <p>I am a bit stymied by the lowest rated item, "Instructor's preparation for class" at a median of 4.3. Perhaps this relates to the shift in the syllabus and the confusion about it.</p> | |
| Comments on In-Course Final Journal Reflections | | Comments on In-Course Final Journal Reflections | |

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I appreciate the information that these extended responses provide! Teaching a class of two students is a joy, but I want more interaction for them – more diverse ideas, more viewpoints. They appreciated the small group format, and as both are math teachers, they truly supported one another. I hope I was able to guide that.

They appreciate choice in the Focus Question responses – being able to choose what they write about from the chapter is differentiation and gives them a chance to learn what they need.

The love the Case Study. I believe that it may have been life-changing for one of the students, based on her presentation and the emotional insights in her paper.

I am starting to initiate pre- and post-assessments based on the Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions from the course. I'm hoping to show growth – even perception of growth – in their knowledge and comfort level with the material. One student said, “this is the first time in my college experience, we were given a pre-post test. I found that helpful as a student.” Looking back at the pre-test, which students took online, I noted which KSD statements were important for each student, and asked them to set goals for the course. With those in mind, I made it my mission to point out when something we discussed, or an activity we did in class, or a topic that emerged aligned with one of their goals, I would draw that out in the discussion. It gave me good insights into student thinking.

As for the post-tests, at the time of writing this reflection I cannot seem to find them on Blackboard, so they were most likely given in hard copy, and I have lost them. In future want to find a way to give a pre and post-assessment to students and show the growth. Even have the students see the changes/shifts in their thinking, knowledge, and comfort level.

A number of students noted that they would have liked other options for the thoughtlog, rather than just writing.

Surprisingly, the students saw the creativity assessments as interesting! That is a challenging topic/lesson, I am not trained in the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking Ability, and am using NAGC conference materials and what I've read to cobble together something that shows them what this entails. This deserves more attention – and is something I would like to continue to learn more about, as well.

One student mentioned that he/she wanted more practical applications instead of focus questions. A good idea – perhaps giving students options as to how they respond to readings: responding

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| | <p>creatively, writing up a practical application, or answering a focus question.</p> <p>I also see a good suggestion to share creativity projects and biographies on different nights. In these larger classes it can be tedious to spend the entire evening this way.</p> <p>I loved reading a few of these quotes: “I learned a great deal from you about my students and about myself.”</p> <p>And I see that many of these students are taking their creativity projects to the next level (outlining her “next book,” starting a nature photography study, continuing sewing projects she had put aside).</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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an eye out for the clarity of the syllabus and my explanations and taking questions.

Few comments, but those comments are very helpful. The content and variety of content are appreciated, and the choice of urban/rural populations for the trade book (*"I liked how the textbooks were differentiated for our needs – urban vs rural, early childhood vs. adolescent"*) have been a good addition. And one really liked the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator work, and this comes up again in 654, and I think their knowledge of these basic personality styles is good for their work with all students.

One comments on the Gilbert & Delisle book, that is was practical and they would have liked to have spent more time on it. (S)he also said that it seemed to be *"somewhat surface-level for teachers in a talent development program"* and I agree.

Still hearing that students are looking for ways to note/keep track of concrete strategies – one recommending an *"ongoing strategy journal of some kind."*

Comments on In-Course Final Journal Reflections

In-class dialogues have been very powerful with this group. They appreciate that I did a model for them of one of the dialogues in the Peterson book on stress (and they can relate!). I am glad that I added the Fonseca book to this booklist as a choice. The Peterson book is good for teens, but not necessarily for those teaching elementary and younger middle grades. This book is perfect, and in a style that elementary teachers like – activity oriented, and then allowing them to incorporate the dialogue/discussion format that is so powerful.

They really love the face to face sessions, as I do. I worry that we will take the program fully online, and a course like this one, which is so discussion based and responsive to their

Comments on In-Course Final Journal Reflections

Did not use.

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individual needs and situations, would suffer. One mentioned that she was glad that I was not using online discussion boards, as she found them “*somewhat disjointed*” and preferred face-to-face.

One student commented that the dialogues are getting easier week to week, and connected that to doing a dialogue with her students over a semester, how they would begin to feel group trust/risk-taking (which connects to the creativity class, 654). They like doing these dialogues with their colleagues – they act as therapy, too. Bonus! I don’t know how I would do these dialogues online.

One student commented – and not complaining, either - about the final research paper. “*The final research paper was surprisingly enjoyable. I appreciated being able to pick the topic I desired. The three different options for how to go about our final were much appreciated. I think when there are options, it makes the process more meaningful.*”

I always preach to students that they should provide their students with choices – I’m glad that they see I practice what I preach here, and that this is one way to differentiate.