

F. Teaching Effectiveness (Excellence)

This section outlines my ongoing efforts to evaluate and enhance my teaching practices through systematic analysis of IDEA (Individual Development and Educational Assessment, the student ratings of instruction system) scores, reflective practices, and targeted interventions. By leveraging student feedback, performance data, and innovative instructional strategies, I strive to maintain high standards of teaching excellence and foster a learning community where all students can thrive.

F.1. IDEA Score Analysis and Reflection (Excellence)

As a member of the [program], my primary teaching responsibilities include the [subject] series and subject series courses (See Table 8). During the 2017-2018 transition from an undergraduate to a graduate program, I took on additional science content and science teaching methods courses, which led to a shift in course numbers from [course section] to [course section]. This transition allowed me to further specialize in delivering science education within the program, aligning with the evolving needs of our graduate students.

Representative syllabi, assignments, and student work samples are available for review in the **II. Teaching Excellence H. Course Information** folder. This folder provides a comprehensive overview of the course materials, showcasing the rigor and structure of my courses. It includes detailed syllabi that outline the learning objectives, course content, and assessment methods, as well as examples of key assignments that reflect the application of theoretical concepts into practice. Additionally, student work samples are provided to demonstrate the high quality of work produced in my courses, offering insight into the learning outcomes and the effectiveness of my teaching methods. These materials collectively highlight the commitment to academic excellence and the practical application of knowledge that is central to my teaching philosophy (See **II. Teaching Excellence H. Course Information folder**).

To evaluate the effectiveness of my teaching, I have reviewed IDEA scores for these courses. These scores provide valuable insights into my teaching performance and student satisfaction. I have organized the data to present an overall view of my IDEA scores, as well as a detailed breakdown aggregated by each course series. This approach allows for a comprehensive analysis of my teaching impact across different courses, reflecting my ongoing commitment to delivering high-quality education in both elementary education and science teaching methods (See **II. Teaching Excellence. F. Teaching Effectiveness 1. Summary of IDEA Score Chart**).

Table 8.
The List of Course Teaching Assignments (2014-2024)

Year	Teaching Assignments	Year	Teaching Assignments*
2014/2015	Courses Redacted	2019/2020	Courses Redacted
2015/2016	Courses Redacted	2020/2021	Courses Redacted
2016/2017	Courses Redacted	2021/2022	Courses Redacted
2017/2018	Courses Redacted	2022/2023	Courses Redacted
2018/2019	Courses Redacted	2023/2024	Courses Redacted

* Please note that only course descriptions are shown, not the exact numbers of course teaching. Additionally, I may have taught multiple sections of [course] within a single year.

Over the past decade, students have rated the excellence of the course with an average score of 4.22 and the instructor's excellence with an average score of 4.37. My strengths lie in using instructional technology, with a rating of 4.46. However, there is room for improvement in providing meaningful feedback on students' academic performance, which has a rating of 3.91 (See Table 9). I have been trying to provide individualized constructive feedback and offered flexible office hours so that students were able to get help they needed. Students' comments shown below.

Table 9.
Average IDEA Scores for each question (2014-2024)

<i>Evaluation items</i>	<i>Average</i>
Overall, I rate this course as excellent	4.22
Overall, I rate this instructor an excellent teacher	4.37
Demonstrated the importance and significance of the subject matter	4.48

Provided meaningful feedback on students' academic performance	3.91
The instructional approaches used in this course were extremely valuable in helping me learn.	4.04
The instructor used technology effectively to facilitate achievement of the learning objectives	4.46
Made it clear how each topic fit into the course	4.39
Explained course material clearly and concisely	4.00

Student Feedback Excerpts

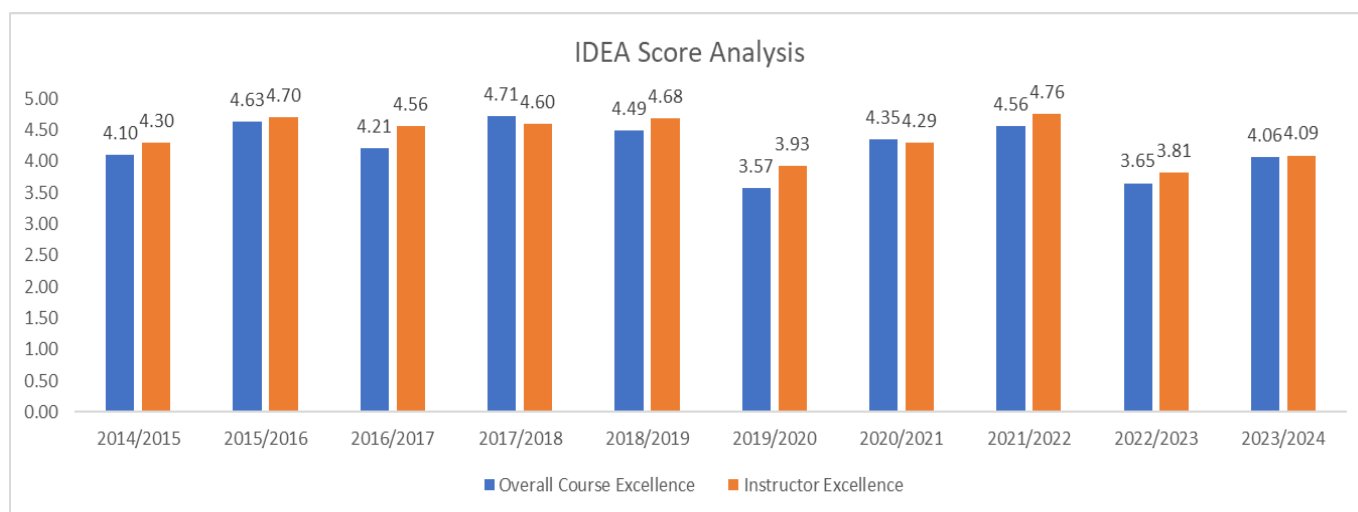
"Course was challenging but [Faculty] is a great instructor provides constructive feedback ([course], 2021)."

"I do not like online instruction but the instructor helped me and encouraged me to stick with it and answered any questions I had after zoom if needed ([course], 2022)."

"[Faculty] demonstrate professional knowledge of the content. Excellent giving feedback on time. Thank you! ([course], 2024)"

As shown in Figure 5 below, the overall evaluation of course and instructor excellence has consistently remained above 4.0 over the last decade, with the exception of two years. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted my students' field experiences and created uncertainty around the [industry certification exam] during the 2019/2020 academic year. The transition from in-person to hybrid and Zoom-based class formats following the pandemic also altered the dynamics of student engagement and classroom interaction. Many students, now balancing household responsibilities or caregiving while attending class, have struggled to maintain the same level of focus and participation as they did in traditional settings. This shift has led to increased distractions, lower participation, and a rise in absenteeism.

Figure 5.
Overall Course Excellence and Instructor Excellence



To support students in this challenging environment, I began providing recordings of Zoom classes. However, this led to an unintended consequence: some students started relying on these recordings instead of attending live sessions, which further diminished real-time engagement. Despite my efforts to clarify assignments and tasks during live classes, I received feedback from students indicating confusion about these assignments. This suggests that the lack of live participation may have contributed to misunderstandings and a decline in the quality of learning experiences.

To address these challenges, I regularly used the Education Advisory Board (EAB) reporting system to maintain close communication with academic advisors, enabling me to track student progress and address issues promptly. However, I found that building rapport with students became more difficult in the virtual setting. Factors such as students not turning on their cameras due to low internet connectivity or other personal reasons created barriers to establishing the same level of connection that was possible in face-to-face classrooms. When students request extensions, I offer flexibility to accommodate their schedules rather than strictly enforcing tight deadlines. Additionally, when they have questions about coursework, I strive to respond as quickly as possible to prevent confusion and keep them from waiting without being able to move forward. While I understand that the new generation is often on the go and may expect instant responses, I do my best to meet their expectations, even though I may not always be able to reply immediately (See *II. Teaching Excellence. F. Teaching Effectiveness 2. Thank you, Email exchange with a student, and request for extension*)

Recognizing the difficulties students were facing, I offered additional office hours after each course session to provide the help they needed. This step was crucial in ensuring that students still had access to personalized support, despite the limitations of the virtual classroom. While the shift to hybrid and Zoom-based classes presented significant challenges, I adapted my teaching strategies to support students in these new circumstances. By offering recorded sessions, maintaining communication through EAB, and providing extra office hours, I have continued to foster an effective learning environment. However, this experience has underscored the importance of finding new ways to build rapport and ensure active engagement in this evolving educational landscape (See *II. Teaching Excellence. F. Teaching Effectiveness 3. List of Zoom recordings and Office hour signup sheet*).

In the 2022/2023 academic year, the introduction of new tools like Simple Syllabus and Sonia, a new field observation platform at NLU, presented additional learning curves for students. Many were unfamiliar with these systems and often expressed confusion about navigating multiple websites. Additionally, with the adoption of Learning by Scientific Design (LbSD) learning modules, the GoReact video platform, ATLAS, and Teaching Channel resources within the [program], students were

required to engage with various digital platforms. To ensure easy navigation and access for students, I have created comprehensive guides for each digital platform we use (See *II. Teaching Excellence. F. Teaching Effectiveness 4. GoReact Guide, Sonia Guide, and ELE 500 ATLAS guide*). Despite the availability of multiple videos and guidance, some students continued to experience difficulties navigating these resources.

F.2. Teaching Excellence Award and Responding to Student Feedback (Excellence)

Student feedback from [courses] reflects a range of experiences. Some students appreciated the productive struggle that I encouraged, which allowed them to engage deeply with the material and develop a strong understanding of inquiry-based teaching. For example, a student from [course] in Spring 2018 remarked, *"This was the second time I had the opportunity to take a class with [Faculty], and I was glad to have [Faculty] as an instructor again! Throughout the course of the quarter, [Faculty] demonstrates the importance of the NGSS standards and how to design instruction with them in mind. In this class, we learned how to design inquiry-based science lessons that students would benefit from—making more real-world connections than the traditional method."*

However, not all students responded positively to this approach, particularly those who preferred a more straightforward, checklist-style approach to assignments. This difference in expectations sometimes led to dissatisfaction, as evidenced by feedback from a student in [course] in 2016, who stated, *"I feel like [Faculty's] class was upside down. She would give us information that we could have used after we scheduled the implementation of the lesson."*

Despite these challenges, many students expressed high levels of satisfaction with the courses. A student from [course] in Fall 2019 noted, *"[Faculty's] lessons are amazing! So engaging. [Faculty] made the minutes fly by. I can't recall a single lesson where the moments dragged by. I would love to take another course with [Faculty] if I could someday. [Faculty] is an exemplary, excellent, passionate, INSPIRING teacher! Thank you, so much."* Similarly, a student from [course] in Fall 2021 appreciated the creative and engaging approach, stating, *"This is my second class with [Faculty]. [Faculty] is great at making the material understandable and creative. [Faculty] pushes students to do their best work and engaged with your cohort."*

In Spring 2024, a student summed up the experience by saying, *"This was a great course! I learned a lot. I am now more aware of the future of science teaching."*

Student feedback from [subject] course series showed that my teaching was well-received. For example, one student from [course] in Fall 2018 noted, *"[Faculty's course] was one of my favorite*

courses in higher education. [Faculty] organized and presented content and coursework in a manner that was sensible, constructive, and useful. [Faculty] did an outstanding job integrating course content with field experience. The course has set the foundation for the rest of the MAT program, for which I am grateful. [Faculty] was encouraging, practical, knowledgeable, and kind; she was the type of instructor/guide that first-term students need."

However, the 2019/2020 academic year presented significant challenges due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic disrupted students' field experiences and introduced uncertainty around the edTPA requirements. My courses during this time, such as [course] Practicum 2 and [course], were particularly affected. Students were already under considerable stress due to the [industry exam], and the pandemic exacerbated these challenges. Despite these difficulties, I adapted to the virtual teaching environment and employed video analysis to provide meaningful learning experiences. While my efforts were substantial, the extraordinary circumstances likely contributed to the lower evaluation scores that year.

Students' feedback during the early stages of the pandemic reflected both their appreciation and the challenges they faced. One student from [course] in Fall 2019 mentioned, *"[Faculty] has a very positive, approachable demeanor, which is a plus in the class. I liked that [Faculty] introduced us to more technology, especially Zoom, which has become so important. The presentations were interesting, and I learned a few things from them. What was sorely needed was more focus on what was expected and needed to successfully complete our assignments."* Another student echoed this sentiment, appreciating my flexibility and focus on growth rather than just task completion.

As the pandemic progressed, my ability to maintain a supportive and positive learning environment became increasingly important. Students noted my efforts to keep them calm and focused during a very stressful time. For example, a student from [course] in Winter 2020 stated, *"[Faculty] is a very positive, supportive professor. It was a very stressful semester, and [Faculty] kept a level of calm for the class. Links to assignments and expectations could still be better organized in D2L so that we know the expectations and do not have to hunt for them, but it Seemed better than last semester."*

Post-pandemic, as the teaching format began to stabilize, the evaluations reflected a return to excellence. Instructors and courses in the ELE series received high praise, with students particularly appreciating the clarity, support, and responsiveness provided. A student from [course] in 2023 commented, *"[Faculty] made sure that we were all comfortable with each step in the process of doing observations and creating a lesson plan and then teaching that lesson... I feel much more confident going into student teaching soon than I did before I took [the] class."* In recognition of my dedication and impact, I was honored to be nominated for the

Teaching Excellence Award and received this prestigious award in 2022 (See *II. Teaching Excellence. F. Teaching Effectiveness. 5. Faculty Teaching Excellence Award and Supervision Evaluation 2021, 2022*).

Impact of IDEA Score Analysis and Reflection

In conclusion, the 2019/2020 academic year presented unprecedented challenges due to the pandemic, yet the consistent positive trends in course and instructor evaluations reflect my unwavering commitment to teaching excellence. Throughout this period and beyond, I have demonstrated adaptability, resilience, and a proactive approach to overcoming obstacles, ensuring that students continue to receive a high-quality and supportive educational experience. By embracing innovative strategies, providing personalized support, and responding thoughtfully to feedback, I have maintained high standards of teaching and fostered a learning environment where students can thrive, regardless of the challenges they face. As I continue to refine my practices, my dedication to delivering impactful and engaging instruction remains at the forefront of my work.