

Visualizing Student Teaching

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Introduction/Need for Innovation or Idea

First year teachers have been known to experience high and low points during their induction year in the classroom (Disberger et al., 2023; Moir, 1990; Rayfield et al., 2014). Even though student teachers are under the supervision of multiple veteran teachers, they can also experience a range of high and low emotions during the various phases of their clinical internships (Caruso, 1977). Instructors of the School-Based Agricultural Education (SBAE) clinical internships at North Carolina State University noticed that their student teachers seemed especially overwhelmed throughout the 2022 spring student teaching experience. This led to conversations among instructors to identify potential stressful phases and determine ways to support students through their clinical internship experience to finish with a positive attitude towards teaching and desire to enter the SBAE classroom. After learning about research conducted by Disberger (2020), it was decided to ask the 2023 student teachers to share one word that described their feelings towards teaching each week that could be used to inform instructors of unintentional pinch points during the semester.

How it Works/Methodology/Program Phases/Steps

Student teachers were already tasked with submitting a brief reflection about their week of teaching to the course Moodle page. In the instructions for the weekly reflection, student teachers were also asked to “list one word that describes your feelings toward teaching for the week.” After reflections were submitted each Friday, the teaching assistant for the course read through the student reflections and entered the one-word into a spreadsheet. If students did not submit a reflection or did not include the one-word in the reflection, the teaching assistant would send a reminder email to those students at the beginning of the following week. At the end of student teaching, during the final day of seminar, students were provided with their list of one-words in order and a reflection chart that asked them to identify how they felt about the word on a scale from 1-10. On the chart, one was identified with a sad emoji, five with a neutral emoji, and ten with a big smile emoji. The numerical ratings were then compiled into a spreadsheet where averages were totaled for each week and each student.

Results to Date/Implications

On average, students were above the mean and their final scores ended higher than their beginning. The data shows the excitement to begin and end student teaching with an anticipated dip in the middle (see Figure 1). For some individual students, the lowest point of the dip aligns with the middle of the semester when they were responsible for all classes while others appear to align with when they were finishing and submitting their edTPA assessment. See Figure 2 below for a visualization of the mean data for all students. While there is not room in this abstract to indicate all words that came up for all students each week, we can offer brief examples of the information that would be shared in the final poster.

Figure 1

Average weekly rating by cohort during student teaching

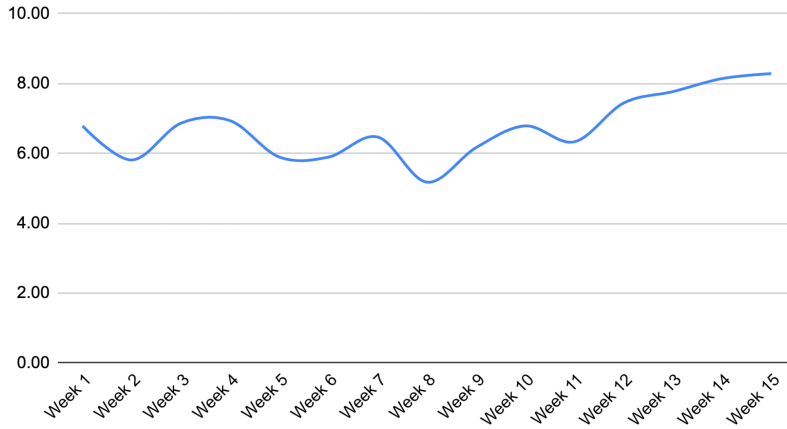


Figure 2

Examples of the one word used by students to describe their week in student teaching

Week 1	Week 3	Week 8	Week 14
Excited	Optimistic	Happy	Grateful
Optimistic	Hopeful	Behind	Fun
Nervous	Stressed	Tired	Accomplished
Overwhelmed	Overwhelmed	Disappointment	Bittersweet

Future Plans/Advice to Others

We plan to continue the project. In the future, we intend to shift the rating scale to be -5 to +5 (from our previously used 0-10) to better have students thinking about the positive or negative nature of the word they are choosing for the week. During the time students are in their internship, they are enrolled in courses taught by three different instructors. After reviewing the data, these instructors intend to review assignment deadlines for student teachers and reorganize some content to avoid the lowest rated weeks from the previous year. Our program incorporates a mid-semester seminar that brings student teachers to campus. This timing tends to align with edTPA deadlines, teaching a full load, and FFA activities in full-swing. It is worth considering if the timing of this seminar is the most appropriate to support our student teachers.

For others interested in this approach as a measure of pre-service teachers’ feelings toward teaching during the clinical internships, we offer the following recommendations. Begin the semester with a process in place for collecting one-words, reviewing them regularly, and communicating with students. Incorporate activities that encourage intentional gratitude during the weeks with the lowest ratings to support student mental health (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Sansone & Sansone, 2010). To wrap up the activity, create a word cloud to share with students at the end of student teaching as a reminder that there are highs and lows in teaching.

Costs/Resources Needed

There is no financial cost to implement weekly one-word reflections for student teachers. Instructors of student teachers do need to designate time to communicate regularly with students and compile data as it is submitted, approximately 30 minutes per week. One hour at the end of the semester for the student teachers to reflect on their compiled words and rate them on a scale. We also recommend having somewhere convenient for students to enter their one-word reflections, like built-in with a weekly assignment.

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