

V1. 1.21 Evidence of Consistently Excellent Teaching: Fall 1999 – Spring 2004

Section Summary

Since joining the faculty at Ball State University in the fall of 1999 my teaching responsibilities have focused on teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in the area of lifespan human development. My undergraduate courses typically include between 20 and 35 students per a section, while my graduate courses typically have between 10 and 20 students. While course enrollments in this range (especially undergraduate courses) can make discussion difficult in class, I believe I have found ways to encourage open-ended discussion through the use of critical thinking essay questions, internet-based activities, in-class activities, and videos. Comments from students across all my courses reflect my goal to have students actively engaged in course content.

In this section on teaching you will find a summative student course evaluation report that reports mean student ratings across all courses (aggregated across all sections of a specific course) I have taught at Ball State University (see Exhibit 1). My scores on all questions are quite high (mean greater than 4 out of 5 on all questions). To provide additional support for my ratings you will next find student comments regarding my teaching from all courses and all sections (see Exhibit 2). I am proud that my students find me to well organized, interesting, and challenging. You will also find my genuine concern for students' learning and progress in each course is reflected in student evaluations and comments.

I have also included summative student course evaluation reports for each specific course (aggregated across all sections of the specific course) I have taught. This was done to show that my student ratings are consistently high across all of my undergraduate and graduate courses (see Exhibits 3, 4, 9, 12, 21, 24, & 26). These consistently high evaluations have come from courses that I believe while intrinsically interesting to students are also quite demanding and challenging of students. In particular, I have most enjoyed teaching EDPSY 350: Child Psychology, which has received consistently high student evaluations. I have found this course quite enjoyable given its content, the strong link with my program of research, and the high level of interest students bring to the course.

Chair and peer evaluations of my teaching have consistently indicated that I am performing up to their high standards (mean greater than 4 out of 5 on all measures). When available I have included multiple chair and/or peer reviews for specific courses (see Exhibits 5, 10, 13, 22, & 27). Again this was done to show my peer and chair ratings are consistently high across all of my courses taught.

My teaching style focuses on helping students think critically about human development and to foster life long learning. In general, my orientation to teaching is to assist students in integrating theory and research as they begin to apply their knowledge and skills to their chosen profession, whether that is teaching, nursing, social work, or psychology. With regards to teaching, I use a variety of teaching techniques (e.g., lectures, small- and

large-group discussions, cooperative learning, and activity-based learning) to help students understand material. Additionally, I incorporate a number of options for each required course project/artifact (see Exhibit 15). By allowing students to select project options they are given active control in their learning, along with accommodating variations in learning styles. One particularly effective method is the incorporation of personal experiences into my teaching and promoting others discussing their own experiences as ways to make material more concrete and clear. I also use discussion boards regularly in each course to provide an opportunity to extend in-class discussions and to promote reflective thinking (see Exhibit 17). I find that some students need time to think about classroom material before making comments.

Additionally, during my employ at Ball State I have dramatically increased my incorporation of technology and multimedia (e.g., Power Point presentations, web-based activities, CD-ROMs, videos, online quizzes and exams, and digital projects) into my courses as another way to make content more real and meaningful to students. For example compare course syllabus in Exhibits 4 and 23 – Exhibit 23 has significantly less technology than Exhibit 4. In particular, each course has its own Blackboard web site where students have access to our course at all times (e.g., course syllabus, Power Point presentations, course grade book, discussion boards, and email). Further, my courses are predominately digital with all quizzes and exams online (either through Blackboard or INQSIT) and all projects due in a digital format (via email, digital drop box, or student web site). You may review my course syllabi to learn more regarding digital components in each of my courses (see Exhibits 6, 14, & 25). The digital components are included to help all students improve their technology skills, which will benefit them in the workplace. An added benefit in the use of online exams and quizzes has been to free up time for additional in-class activities and discussions by moving these activities outside of regular course hours.

With the increasing availability of technology in classrooms, and especially now that education majors have laptops, the need to go to a “technology classroom” to illustrate/teach the technology each course would use is no longer needed. This change can be seen when you compare older and newer course syllabi of mine (for example Exhibit 11 versus 14). Now we can do this in our classroom - as a class. To learn even more about my philosophy on digital technology and laptops in the classroom please view my videotaped discussion at <http://www.bsu.edu/teachers/laptops/classroom/>. This video became part of a promotional CD distributed by Teachers College.

At meetings of the *Midwest Teachers of Educational Psychology* I have presented on particular ways to incorporate digital media into the classroom. Specifically, I have created the developmental profile. Students describe a made up child using theory and research in terms of their physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development. The students are to link their descriptions to developmental standards and classroom practices they must master for licensure. The profile may also be easily posted to student web sites. Details regarding the developmental profile may be viewed at <http://www.bsu.edu/web/lhuffman/> (you may also view this website from the included

CD-ROM by selecting the developmental profile folder and then clicking on “developmental profile index”) (see Exhibit 18).

Taking this activity and other technology-based components of my courses a step farther, during the 2003-2004 academic year I taught my first completely online course, EDPSY 254: Psychology of Early Childhood (birth to 6 years) (see Exhibit 6). This course, I believe, has been quite successful. Examples of digital activities used in this class are included here for your review (see Exhibit 7) along with representative student work (see Exhibit 8). However, I am sure I will need to modify this course for future semesters based on my experiences, and comments from students in the course. Modifying course content and teaching methods is an important part of my own growth as a university instructor.

In addition to efforts in my own courses to incorporate technology I have worked with textbook publishers to create an Instructor Manual for a popular adult development text (with an updated version of my work is due out later this year), Power Point slides for textbooks, and CD-ROMs of activities for students and instructors to complete. Further, I am called upon regularly to review textbooks. More details about this work can be found under my “Research & Scholarly Activities” and “Service” sections and are listed on my curriculum vitae, but I think my involvement in such activities illustrates my goal to integrate teaching, research, and service into all aspects of my role as a university professor.

In summary, I see teaching as a primary component of my identity as a university professor, and I pride myself on doing it well. Furthermore, I recognize that teaching and learning is a collaborative process between students and myself. This collaboration is essential in preparing students to become life-long learners.

Section Exhibits

1. Summative Student Course Evaluation Report (across all courses and all sections)
2. Student Comments Regarding My Teaching (from all courses and all sections)
3. Summative Course Evaluation Report for EDPSY 250: Human Growth and Development
4. Summative Course Evaluation Report for EDPSY 254: Psychology of Early Childhood (online course)
5. Peer Evaluation of Website for EDPSY 254
6. Representative Course Syllabus for EDPSY 254
7. Representative Digital Activities for EDPSY 254
8. Student Flyer to Illustrate Representative Work in EDPSY 254
9. Summative Course Evaluation Report for EDPSY 260: Human Growth and Development (for elementary education majors only)
10. Peer Evaluation of Course Syllabus for EDPSY 260
11. Representative Course Syllabus for EDPSY 260
12. Summative Course Evaluation Report for EDPSY 350: Child Psychology
13. Peer and Chair Evaluations of Teaching, Course Syllabus, and Website for EDPSY 350
14. Representative Course Syllabus for EDPSY 350
15. Listing of Project/Artifact Options for EDPSY 350
16. Representative Online/Discussion Board Activities for EDPSY 350
17. Student Discussion Thread to Illustrate Representative Work in EDPSY 350
18. Developmental Profile Homepage at <http://www.bsu.edu/web/lhuffman/> (or insert included CD-ROM and select the Developmental Profile folder and then click on “Developmental Profile Index”)
19. Video of Digital Activities and Teaching Philosophy at <http://www.bsu.edu/teachers/laptops/classroom/>
20. Letter describing my participation in video from Dr. Laurie Mullen
21. Summative Course Evaluation Report for EDPSY 355: Adult Psychology
22. Peer Evaluation of Website for EDPSY 355
23. Representative Course Syllabus for EDPSY 355
24. Summative Course Evaluation Report for EDPSY 627: Child Development
25. Representative Course Syllabus for EDPSY 627
26. Summative Course Evaluation Report for EDPSY 768: Psychological Theories of Cognitive Development
27. Peer Evaluation of Teaching for EDPSY 768