## **High-Quality Teaching Executive Summary**

A group of Student Learning Analysts (SLAs), comprised of undergraduate students from a wide variety of class standings and majors, explored the topic of high-quality teaching at Bowling Green State University (BGSU). The SLAs collaborated to develop questions for the focus group protocol and then tabled in the Bowen-Thompson Student Union to recruit participants. The SLAs facilitated four focus groups with a total of ten participants. Afterwards, the SLAs transcribed the focus groups and then went through a three-step coding process. These steps included: 1) open coding, 2) focused coding, and 3) an analysis of the focused coding to identify major themes. After combining the codes from each SLA, a master code list was created, and findings were brought to light. Six major themes emerged with subthemes, and selected quotes were extracted to provide tangible examples.

## **Qualities of Professors**: Focus group volunteers expressed that a high-quality professor exemplifies certain characteristics.

* 1. Approachable: Participants mentioned their need for an open atmosphere in the classroom and the importance of being comfortable with their professors.
  2. Dedicated: Students discussed the importance of having a professor who is truly passionate about the work they do in and out of the classroom.
  3. Supportive: Volunteers discussed that faculty connect with and help guide students throughout their undergraduate career and act as mentors during their time at BGSU.

One participant explained: *I feel like an important thing in high-quality teaching is like you’re not just there for a paycheck, you’re there giving people an education*. (T2, L63-64)

## **Educational Practices**: Students gave examples of how professors taught and how it had an impact on the quality of instruction.

* 1. Real-World Experience: Students discussed how incorporating real-world experiences into instruction can improve the quality of their educational experience.
  2. Collaboration: Participants explained that professors providing opportunities for students to work together can be an asset when utilized in instruction.
  3. Feedback: Students explained feedback from professors as an important aspect of teaching and a concrete method of facilitating student improvement.

A student mentioned: *Yeah, uh, no matter how much I hated...[a particular course] I mean submitting a rough draft of a paper and getting it back with some red pen marks all over it, obviously it just straight up tells you what’s wrong and what could be improved, and that’s just in the specific example of writing...Um, so the lack thereof of feedback could be a negative, but yeah, the feedback, the feedback is helpful when you’re trying to specifically understand what you did wrong and how to improve it.* (T1, L357-364)

## **Supplemental Resources**: Participants identified tools that professors use to aid in student learning as key components of high-quality teaching.

* 1. Educational Software: Participants explained the connection between high-quality teaching and professors utilizing educational applications, such as Top Hat, Kahoot, Padlet, and Pearson.
  2. Resources for Academic Success: Participants highlighted that handing out helpful classroom materials, such as study guides, and utilizing additional class resources, such as teaching assistants and learning assistants, can be reflective of high-quality teaching.

A participant noted: *I didn’t really study much in high school and so the TAs when I initially got to college helped me kinda figure out study patterns and what it was like to be a prompt student. (T4, L122-124)*

## **Expectations**: Participants within the focus groups explained that expectations in their classroom interactions with faculty showcased another aspect of high-quality teaching.

* 1. Realistic Expectations: Participants expressed that part of high-quality teaching involved setting achievable goals from both a student and faculty viewpoint.
  2. High Expectations: Students explained that their motivation, willingness to participate, and ability to produce quality work is influenced by high expectations.

A student shared: *...Definitely having high expectations challenges my own thinking. Makes me want to work hard at the topics and classes that I’m in, um so that if I work hard in the classes, I’ll be able to be more successful in the future in general. There’s also professors that have low expectations as well and I feel like I didn’t challenge myself in those classes. Um I didn’t put myself to the highest standard that I should have as well (T4, L483-488).*

## **Communication**: Students identified communication as an important piece in the educational process. Professors can make a difference in delivering curriculum by using positive communication tactics or inhibiting instruction by under-utilizing these positive communication tactics.

* 1. Promotes High-Quality Teaching: Students detailed how the use of different communication methods by professors promoted high-quality teaching.
  2. Inhibits High-Quality Teaching: Participants shared experiences of ways that communication can inhibit high-quality teaching when used improperly or not used at all.

A participant mentioned: *If they [give the impression that they are] willing to communicate at all. If uh ‘Hey, 50 minutes is up. Leave and I’ll see you in two days. Don’t talk to me.’ that’s not high-quality but, if you put your email [and] phone number on the syllabus, you have readily available office hours, and you’re encouraging them to come...to you with any concerns, then that’s the complete opposite and that’s reflective of high-quality teaching and communication skills.* (T1, L284-288)

## **Suggestions for Improvement**: Students offered their opinions on how BGSU and professors could improve high-quality teaching.

* 1. Syllabi: After students saw the sample syllabus, they provided feedback on its importance and how aspects can be related to high-quality teaching. They also provided their own suggestions for a high- quality syllabus.
  2. Professional Development and Support: Students discussed how the University could provide opportunities and support to help faculty engage in high-quality teaching.

One student discussed the need to share lesson plans with other professors within that department: *Um share ideas as far as, ‘This is what I’m doing in my class.’ Especially like have all the ... teachers talk together because there is so much divide between those who are taking or teaching those specific classes even though they should be teaching the same concepts. Um share ideas with each other. Have other professors sit in on classes um and see what we would regard as a quality teacher.... Help the professors talk with each other, share ideas of different lessons that they’re doing*. (T4, L428-435)

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## **High Quality Teaching: Discovering Student Perspectives**

Infographic Title: High Quality Teaching: Discovering Student Perspectives.

Image 1: Logo of Bowling Green State University, Office of Academic Assessment.

Image Introduction: A team of 4 Student Learning Analysts (SLAs) investigated how students perceive high-quality teaching at Bowling Green State University.  They aimed to gain a student perspective of how high-quality teaching can impact student learning experiences.  The team collaborated on all stages of the assessment process, including study design, data collection, and data analysis.  The data gathered was analyzed, forming themes and corresponding subthemes that are detailed in this infographic.

Process:

Image 2: Data Collection and Analysis

4 focus groups, recorded, and transcribed.

Image 3: 

1) Open coding: each code represents an individual data piece.

2) Focused coding: codes are grouped into smaller categories.

3) Identifying themes: codes are formed into themes and subthemes.

Results: 6 major themes emerged.

1) Qualities of professors: including the subthemes of approachable, dedicated, and supportive.

2) Educational practices: including the subthemes of real-world experience, collaboration, and feedback.

3) Supplemental resources: including the subthemes of educational software and resources for academic success.

4) Expectations: including the subthemes of realistic expectations and high expectations.

5) Communication: including the subthemes of promoting high-quality teaching and inhibiting high-quality teaching.

6) Suggestions for improvement: including the subthemes of syllabi, professional development, and support.

Student Quotes:

1) Expectations: “…Definitely having high expectations challenges my own thinking.  Makes me want to work hard at the topics and classes that I’m in, um so that if I work hard in the classes, I’ll be able to be more successful in the future in general.”

2) Supplemental Resources: “I didn’t really study much in high school and so the TAs when I initially got to college helped me kinda figure out study patterns and what it was like to be a prompt student.”

3) Communication: “…if you put your email [and] phone number on the syllabus, you have readily available office hours, and you’re encouraging them to come…to you with any concerns, then…that’s reflective of high-quality teaching and communication skills.”

4) Suggestions: “Especially like have all the…teachers talk together because there is so much divide between those who are taking or teaching those specific classes even though they should be teaching the same concepts.”