My central goal in teaching is to **meet students where they are** in terms of how and why they engage with the classroom. This means giving students a voice in how I present and evaluate content assessments. Additionally, it means being receptive to students' own goals and definitions of success and building curricula that promote development and transition as much as foundational content knowledge. Moreover, it requires confronting my own assumptions about which perspectives are represented in the classroom. Below are some examples of how this goal has manifested in my previous courses, and how I plan to continue integrating it with the ways I teach.

When teaching quantitative methods in the Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences department at UConn, I faced students every semester who would self identify as "bad at math." These students had internalized messaging that they were not welcome or able to thrive in quantitative spaces, which created an attitude of hopelessness that disadvantaged them before instruction even began. Meeting students where they were in that course involved **reframing the narratives holding them back**: adjusting how content was introduced, discussed and evaluated. As one example, while very few students resonated with math, most were interested in music and many were accomplished musicians. Content such as Fourier analysis, the nature of sine waves, and how to read waveforms and spectrograms became far more palatable to students when it was introduced by first recording various sounds and instruments live in class—produced by the students themselves—then decomposing and analyzing the sounds in real time. By tying content knowledge to students' lived experiences or areas they already feel mastery, I strive to **welcome diverse perspectives and make everyone feel able to contribute** and learn.

Another cornerstone of meeting students where they are is frequently asking for feedback with real ramifications towards instruction and course structure. For example, in the same class where students felt anxiety around their math abilities, they reported hating graded out of class assignments that included multi-step problems and formula application. As I felt this was important practice, I chose to assign *more* of these assessments but to grade based on completion. This took some of the pressure off of each assignment individually and allowed students to take more ownership of their own learning rather than chasing a particular letter grade. Once students felt free to try their best, both scores and attitudes improved. I have carried this lesson towards other classes I teach; assessments are frequent and interactive, and **students are rewarded for positive demonstration of knowledge rather than penalized for mistakes**.

Meeting students where they are requires, unsurprisingly, meeting with students. When I taught a first-year experience course focused on student transition, I opted for a one-on-one half hour conversation with each student in lieu of a traditional written midterm. This format allowed students to discuss their challenges and difficulties in ways that may not have been comfortable in an essay or in a public environment surrounded by peers. It also dovetailed with another major goal of my curricula: **providing and evaluating content across various formats**. Teaching diverse and well-rounded students involves allowing students to demonstrate their knowledge in diverse ways.

Finally, I believe in **orienting coursework towards metrics of success that students determine for themselves**. As a late-stage graduate student, I co-developed and taught a seminar for earlier stage graduate students. Having sat through (in my opinion) too many 'journal club' style seminars—where everyone skims a new research paper each class before gathering to discuss it at a surface level—I wanted students to feel more connection to their own research programs. The class format therefore began with guided reading of research papers (which is still an important skill!) but progressed in each unit to students proposing their own replication and extensions. Each unit culminated by inviting one of the authors of the original papers to hear students propose their extensions. As students were free to take the research in any direction they chose, they had far more say in what determined a successful outcome for themselves. Additionally, the 'stakes' of assignments were couched in terms of the opportunity to have valuable discourse about one's proposal, rather than in an arbitrary letter grade.

Excellence in teaching is not an innate property, but rather a skill honed through practice and direct feedback. To this end, I have sought training in pedagogy throughout my academic career. While I entered graduate school with protected time for research such that teaching was never a funding necessity, I nevertheless pursued a teaching fellowship through the US Department of Education. Through this fellowship, I developed both my outlook on and implementation of teaching psycholinguistics through mentored teaching experience and bi-weekly cohort meetings. Additionally, I have enrolled in coursework through the department of educational leadership, and taught a first-year experience course outside of my department. These opportunities allowed me to develop effective, accessible, and student centered curricula. In a faculty role, I am excited to continue meeting students where they are and learning alongside them.

Attached in case of interest are two representative teaching evaluations from the past two semesters.