

VISIBLE  BODY®

Emerging Trends in Life Science Teaching Methods

A survey of 600+ educators





About this survey and its results

One of our approaches to product development at Visible Body is to think of it as a problem-solving exercise. What problems can we help solve for life sciences instructors and their students? Critical to this approach is conducting research to understand the methods and materials life sciences instructors use, the challenges and pressures they face, and how they generally feel about teaching. These insights help inform how we create software that supports instructors and students.

In 2023 we reached out with a survey to a segment of instructors subscribed to Visible Body's education newsletter. The survey included questions aimed at understanding what traditional teaching methods and innovations they currently used, and how that would change in the near future. Over 600 instructors from the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, and Australia responded.

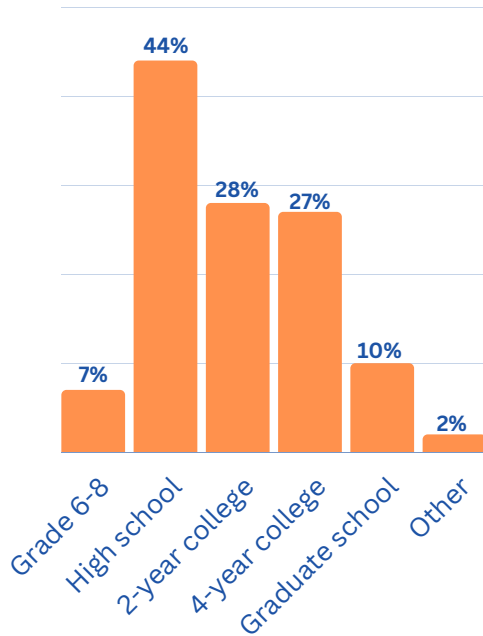
Key Takeaways

The data we collected and the trends we noticed are represented in the following pages. In general we noted the move towards technology continues, that it is driven by many in the education community, and that time and money remain perennial concerns:

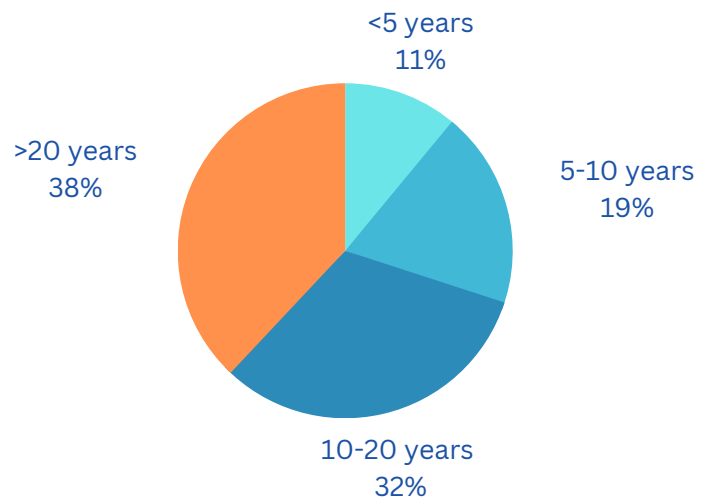
- Most instructors rely on textbooks today but do not think they will in the near future
- Instructors are moving towards affordable technology solutions for homework and for labs
- In addition to a personal interest to adapt curriculum, teaching methods were influenced by school directives and strategies, and students' preferences and expectations
- The top challenges for instructors included finding time to evolve the curriculum and keeping students engaged and motivated
- When we asked instructors how they feel about their teaching in the future, most listed excited and motivated!

The survey respondents

Types of teaching institutions



Years of teaching experience



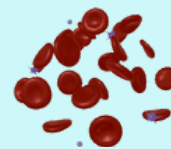
Of the 600 respondents...



272 teach general biology



349 teach anatomy and/or physiology



275 teach other courses (health sciences, kinesiology, microbiology, etc)



95% lecture/teach in a classroom



65% lead a lab



57% develop/oversee curriculum



94% teach in person



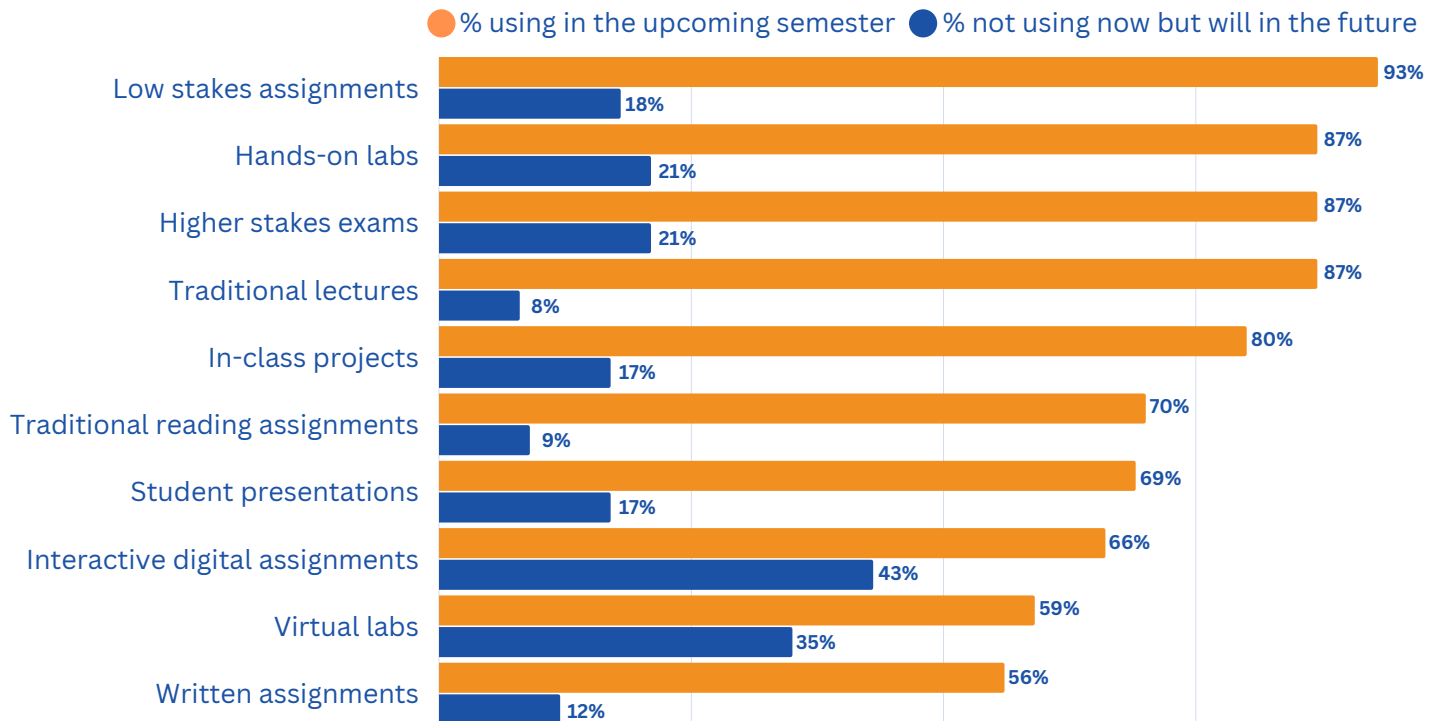
24% teach asynchronously online



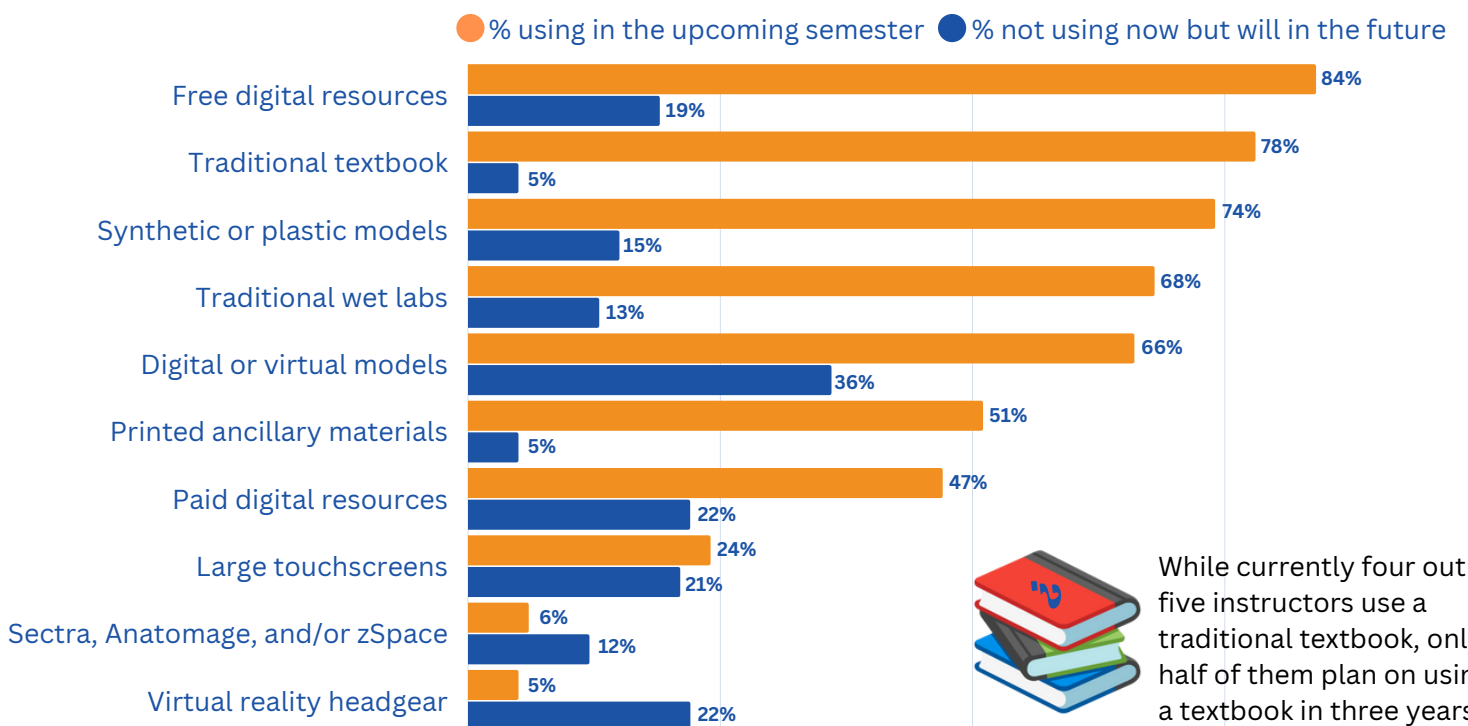
14% teach synchronously online

Traditional instruction methods such as quizzing and tests are almost universally used, but digital and virtual assignments are on the rise.

Which assignments will you use during the upcoming semester? Which do you expect to use three years from now?



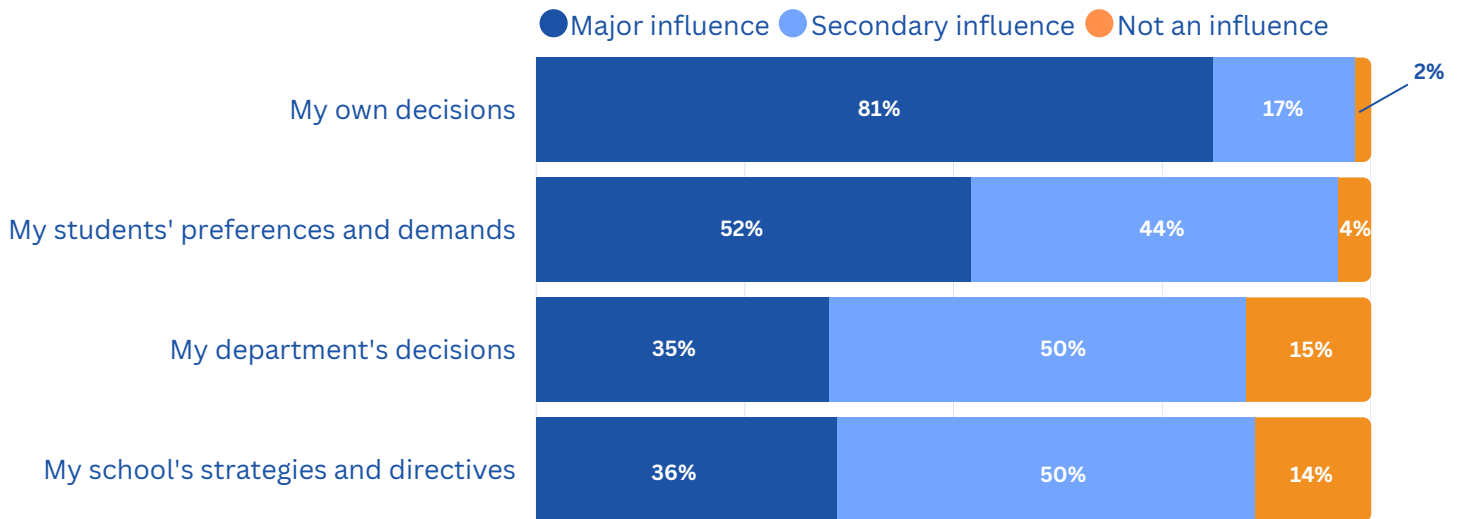
Which instruction methods will you use during the upcoming semester? Which do you expect to use three years from now?



While currently four out of five instructors use a traditional textbook, only half of them plan on using a textbook in three years.

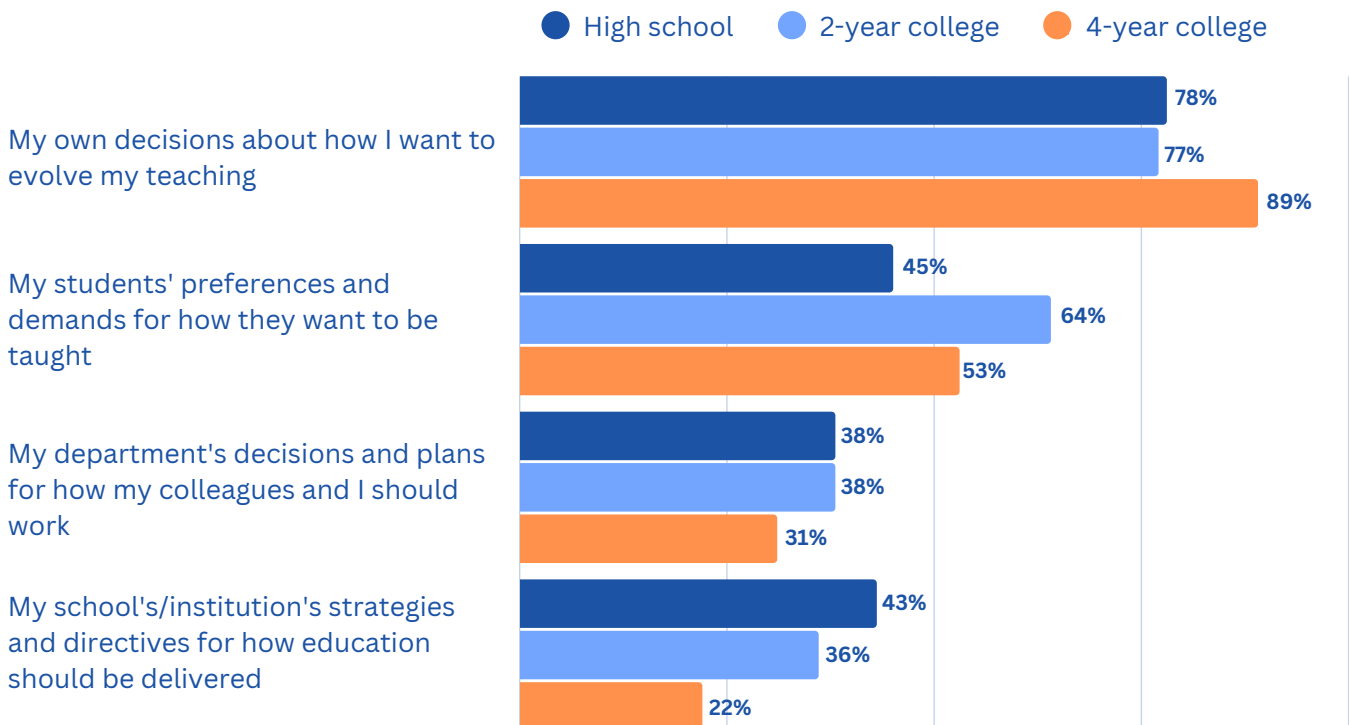
While instructors for the most part feel that they have agency over how their courses are taught, they tend to feel pressure from the outside.

Which of the following do you see influencing changes in your teaching in the future?



Four-year college instructors are mostly reliant on their own decisions and are least reliant on outside pressures.

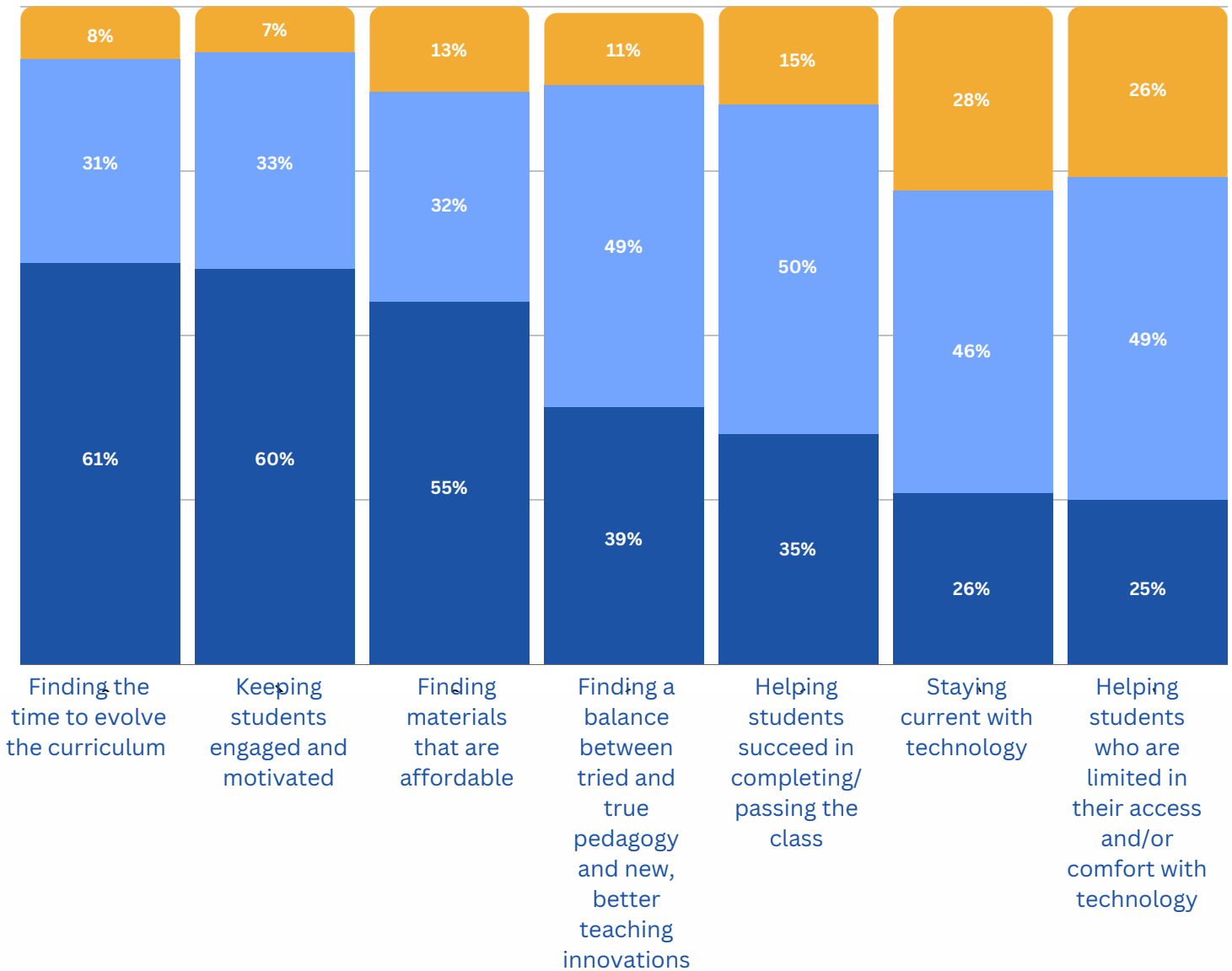
Major influences by instructor type



The majority of instructors regard the following three items as a major challenge in teaching: “finding time to evolve the curriculum,” “keeping students engaged and motivated,” and “finding materials that are affordable to my students and/or institution.”

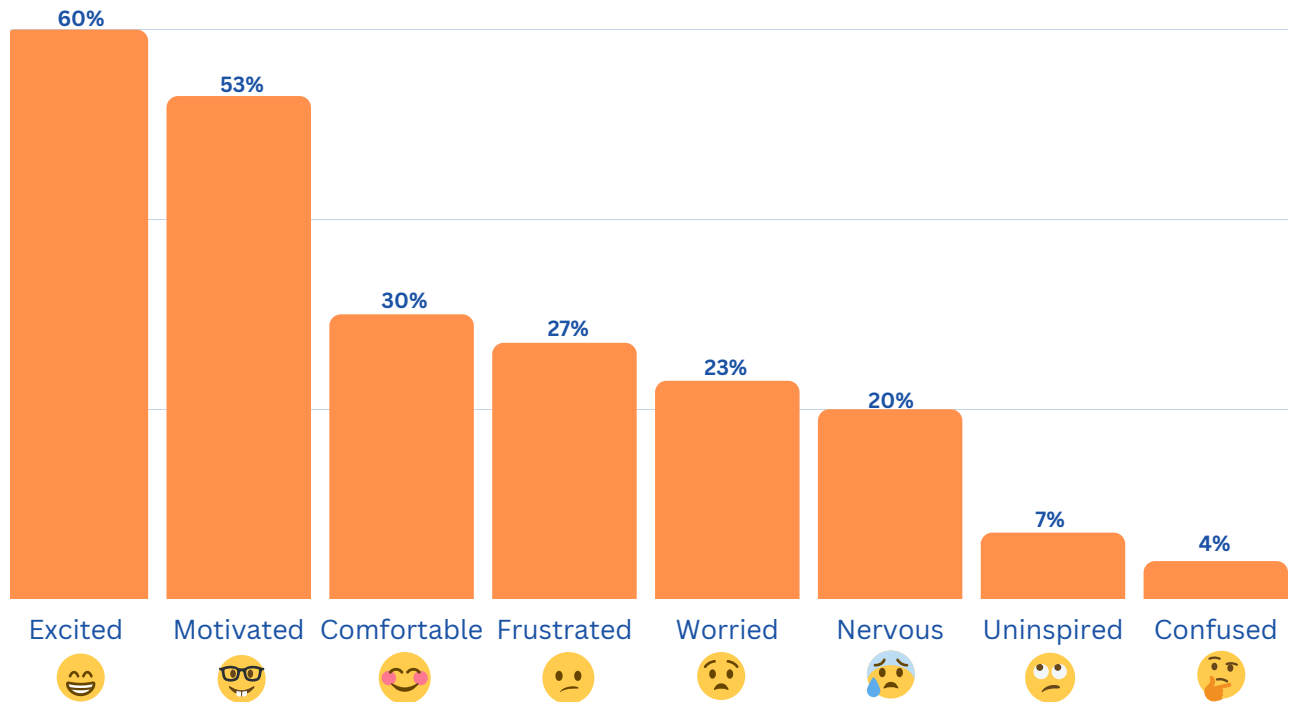
What are the biggest challenges you face as a teacher?

● A major challenge ● Somewhat of a concern ● Not a problem

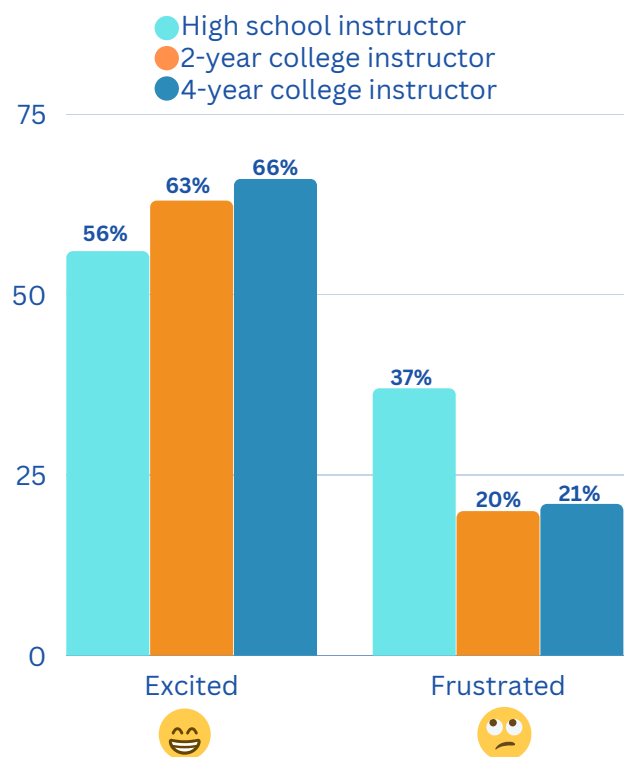


Despite the challenges of teaching life sciences, instructors mostly feel excited and motivated.

Which of the following adjectives describe your feelings as you think about teaching in the future?



Excited and frustrated by instructor type



High school, two-year, and four-year college instructors had notable disparities when it came to feeling **excited** and feeling **frustrated**.



Additional resources

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