ON-TRAC
The Organizational Network for Teaching as Research Advancement and Collaboration
Teaching Philosophy

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What is a teaching philosophy or teaching statement?

Teaching philosophies (also known as teaching statements) describe your views and approach to teaching. The statement is important not only because many search committees expect this to be included in your academic job search dossier but also because the process of writing the statement requires you to reflect on your approach to teaching and learning. The statement is a self-reflective statement of your beliefs about teaching and learning, and it should include concrete examples of what you do or anticipate doing in the classroom. Teaching philosophies are typically between one and four double-spaced pages but may be longer or shorter depending on your circumstances

How do I write a teaching statement?

- Begin by writing down your values, attitudes, and beliefs about teaching and learning
- Organize these ideas into themes to assist you in organizing the essay
- The organization should become the major sections of your statement
- Use specific examples. If you are new to teaching draw on examples from professors whose teaching style you admire.

Prompts for Adding Specific Examples to Your Draft

- **General Statement:** "I enjoy lecturing, and I'm good at it. I always make an effort to engage and motivate my students when I lecture."
    1. This statement needs specific examples of activities that take place in your classroom to engage and motivate students. Create a scene for the reader.

Assessing Your Teaching Philosophy Draft

- Compare your draft to other teaching philosophies by instructors in your discipline. You might also ask a colleague or professor to review your draft and offer you recommendations for revision. Review a teaching philosophy rubric http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/tutorials/philosophy/assess/rubrics/index.html

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Teaching Philosophy Checklist

- *Purpose & Audience*
  1. Is there a clear focus or theme(s)?
  2. Are the language and tone appropriate without relying on trite phrases or jargon?
  3. Would it hold the audience's attention?

- *Voice*
  1. Is it focused on you as a teacher and written in a personal style? The statement should provide the reader with an idea of who you are as a teacher or who you aspire to be as a teacher.
  2. Does the statement reflect a genuine concern for the beliefs and arguments presented?

- *Beliefs/Arguments/Claims & Illustrative Support*
  1. Is your statement engaging, specific, and easy to understand?
  2. Does it describe your goals and expectations of learners?
  3. Is your statement grounded in your discipline?
  4. Are your beliefs/arguments/claims supported by examples or evidence?
  5. Did you include specific examples of strategies, methods, or theories to achieve teaching and learning goals?

- *Conventions*
  1. Are your headings, transitions, and paragraph design appropriate to the content?
  2. Is the length and thematic structure appropriate to the content?
  3. Are there any grammatical, typographical or spelling errors?

Resources:
Credit for much of the information included in this document should be given to the following two resources. Each site has additional information, including sample statements that you will find useful while developing your teaching statement.

University of California Riverside, Grad-Success

http://www.tadp.ucr.edu/2010/04/why-you-need-a-teaching-philosophy-even-if-you-think-they-are-bunk/

University of Minnesota, Center for Teaching and Learning, Writing your Teaching Philosophy

http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/tutorials/philosophy/