

Writing a Teaching Philosophy

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Introductions

- Name
- Department
- Interest in this Session
- Favorite Teaching Experience (as a Teacher or Student) and Why



Today's Goals

At the end of our session, you will be able to:

- Explain the purpose of a teaching philosophy
- Articulate the components of a teaching philosophy
- Identify the key ways to approach writing a teaching philosophy

Importance of Teaching Ability (Meizlish & Kaplan, 2008)

- 91.5% of faculty search committees in humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences ranked teaching ability as important/very important in the hiring process
- By institutional type, only doctoral-extensive institutions ranked research potential higher than teaching ability compared to bachelor's-, master's, and doctoral-intensive institutions

By discipline:

- In humanities – teaching ability had a significantly higher mean importance ranking than research potential
- In social sciences – no significant difference in rankings between teaching ability and research potential
- In natural sciences – research potential had a significantly higher mean importance ranking than teaching ability

Purpose of Teaching Philosophy

- A teaching philosophy is a brief, personal, reflective statement that gives your audience insight into your beliefs about teaching and learning in a classroom and in advising and mentoring students
- The purpose is to help your audience develop a clear picture of who you are as a teacher in the context of your discipline
- It is usually a 2-page first-person narrative with specific, concrete examples

Components of a Teaching Philosophy

Conception of
Teaching and
Learning

Goals for
Students

Teaching
Methods

Interactions
with Students

Assessment
of Learning

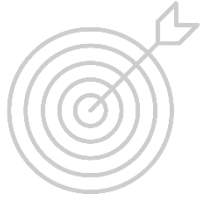
Commitment to
Professional
Growth



Conception of Teaching and Learning

Questions to consider:

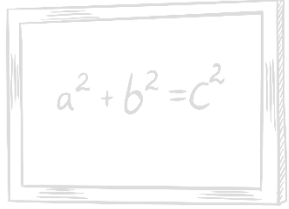
1. What are your values, beliefs, and aspirations as a teacher in your discipline?
2. Are there unique challenges to teaching in your discipline?
3. Are you teaching for mastery, competency, transformation, critical thinking, etc.?
4. How do you develop an inclusive learning environment?



Goals for Students

Questions to consider:

1. What knowledge should students obtain as a result of your teaching?
2. What skills should students obtain as a result of your teaching?
3. What dispositions should students obtain as a result of your teaching?
4. What concrete examples can you provide from specific courses you have taught?



Teaching Methods

Questions to consider:

1. What methods/strategies do you use to enact your teaching values, beliefs, and aspirations?
2. How do you engage students in the course content?
3. How have students responded to your methods/strategies?
4. Any new methods/strategies you plan to utilize?



Interactions with Students

Questions to consider:

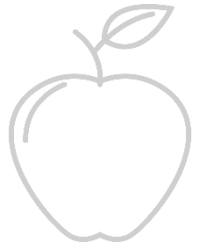
1. What excites you about working with students?
2. What experiences, expertise, and passion do you offer them? What do they offer you?
3. How do you build rapport and interact with students in your classroom?
4. What is your approach to advising and mentoring students?



Assessment of Learning

Questions to consider:

1. How do you assess student growth and learning?
2. What types of assignments do you use?
3. How do you grade and provide feedback?
4. What do you do when a student has not met the learning expectation?



Commitment to Professional Growth

Questions to consider:

1. How do you plan to continue to grow as a teacher?
2. How has your teaching evolved over time?
3. How will use student evaluations to improve your teaching?
4. Have you or do plan to engage in the scholarship of teaching and learning?

Now Organize and Write

- Components: Start by writing a paragraph for each component and refine
- Themes: Highlight ideas, concepts, and ideas that appear in your notes multiple times and consider these “themes” for your narrative
- The good old 5 paragraph essay approach: P1 – share main ideas and beliefs about teaching and learning, and state your teaching goals; P2-4 - provide a teaching goal with rationale and evidence that you are meeting your goals; P-5 - conclude with a summary of your teaching approach, professional development opportunities you have engaged in and will do moving forward, and courses you have taught and are interested in teaching



Create a “Hook”

- An anecdote about your experience as a student and how that influences your approach to teaching
- An anecdote where your teaching went very well and how that motivates you to continue to improve your craft
- An anecdote where your teaching went very poorly and what you learned from that experience

Remember to be Specific and Provide Examples

- “I value helping my students understand difficult information. I am an expert, my role is to model complex ways of thinking so that they can develop the same habits of mind as nursing professionals. This is accomplished through written responses to case studies, and me sharing how I would respond to the scenario at hand.”
- “As a teacher of writing, I am committed to using peer review in my classes. By reading and commenting on other students’ work in cooperative groups my students learn to find their voice, understand the importance of the connection between the writer and audience, and hone their editing skills. Small group work is indispensable in the writing classroom.”
- “I believe beginning physics students should be introduced to the scientific method so they develop critical thinking skills they can apply to their coursework and other areas of their lives. Dialogue is a crucial tool for teaching the scientific method.”



Editing and Revising

Ensure your philosophy:

- Is student-centered
- Demonstrates you value the teaching and learning process
- Establishes you are a reflective educator
- Provides specific, concrete examples of your teaching craft
- Is well written and clear

References and Resources

Meizlish, D., & Kaplan, M. (2008). Valuing and evaluating teaching in academic hiring: A multi-disciplinary, cross-institutional study. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 79(5), 489-512.

Georgia Institute for Technology Center for Teaching and Learning - <https://ctl.gatech.edu/>

National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity – <https://www.facultydiversity.org/dashboard>

University of Colorado Colorado Springs Faculty Resource Center - <https://frc.uccs.edu/>

University of Michigan Center for Research on Learning and Teaching - <https://crlt.umich.edu/>



Thank you!
Questions or Comments . . .

