



Writing a Teaching Philosophy Statement

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What is a Teaching Philosophy Statement?

- “A polished, narrative statement similar to that describing one's goals as a researcher.” (Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, Harvard University)
- “Descriptions of how the teachers think learning occurs, how they think they can intervene in this process, what chief goals they have for students, and what actions they take to implement their intentions.” (Nancy Van Note Chism, Ohio State University)

Today's Learning Goals

After successfully completing this workshop you will be able to:

- list components that can be included in a teaching statement.
- begin writing a teaching statement.

Purposes of a Teaching Philosophy

- Self-reflection
- Introduction to a teaching portfolio
- Academic job applications

Statement Characteristics

- Brief (1-2 pages)
- Well written
- Reflective and personal
- Evidence based
- Includes specific examples
- Highlights strengths and accomplishments

Strategies for Getting Started

- Big Questions of Teaching (Goodyear and Allchin, 1998)
 - What motivates me to learn about this subject?
 - What do I expect to be the outcomes of my teaching?
 - How do I know when I've taught successfully?

Strategies for Getting Started

- Concrete aspects of teaching (O'Neal, Meizlish, and Kaplan, 2007)
 - Why do you teach?
 - What do you believe or value about teaching and student learning?
 - How do your research and disciplinary context influence your teaching?
 - What is your approach to evaluating and assessing students?

Preliminary Writing Exercises

- Write a letter addressed to someone outside of academia on the joys and challenges of teaching.
- Make a list of the qualities of an effective teacher.
- “Free-write” on a memorable experience in the classroom that you experienced or observed. Consider what went well, what you might do differently, and why.

Preliminary Writing Exercises

- Develop your “dream course.”
- Imagine yourself in your ideal academic position.
- Begin with concrete details.

(Beth Fisher, Washington University in St. Louis)

Reviewing Sample Statements

- Review the sample teaching statement.
 - What are the strengths of the statement?
 - What suggestions would you offer to the author of the statement?
- Share your recommendations with a colleague.

A Few Concluding Thoughts...

- You already have a teaching philosophy.
- Ground your philosophy in your discipline.
- Gear your philosophy to the institution to which you are applying for a position.
- Balance your statement with the classroom so that your statement does not sound utopian.
- Utilize on-campus resources.

On-campus Resources

- Kaneb Center for Teaching and Learning
kaneb.nd.edu
- University Writing Center
writingcenter.nd.edu
- English for Academic Purposes
cslc.nd.edu/programs/eap/

Resources

- Bain, Ken. “What the Best College Teachers Do”
- McKeachie, Wilbert J. “Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers”
- Vick Julia Miller, and Jennifer S. Furlong. “The Academic Job Search Handbook”
- Kaneb Center-kaneb.nd.edu