

Some Common Teaching Goals

Adapted from "Writing a Teaching Philosophy Statement" by Helen G. Grundman in the Notices of the AMS
Volume 53, Number 11 Dec 2006.

1. Communicate that "*discipline*" is fun
2. Detect and fill gaps in students' prior "*discipline*" knowledge
3. Develop a variety of problem-solving strategies
4. Develop basic computational skills
5. Enable and empower students
6. Enable students to make judgments based on quantitative or qualitative information
7. Enable students to read "*discipline*" effectively
8. Enable students to understand their own thought processes
9. Encourage a broader interest in "*discipline*"
10. Establish constructive student attitudes about "*discipline*"
11. Facilitate acquisition of life-long learning skills
12. Foster a desire to ask "*discipline*" questions
13. Foster critical thinking
14. Foster student discovery of "*discipline*"
15. Foster understand of key fundamental information
16. Teach the beauty of "*discipline*"
17. Improve students' confidence
18. Improve students' understanding of technology
19. Improve students' writing abilities
20. Increase the number of "*discipline*" majors
21. Increase the students' "*discipline*" knowledge
22. Model critical thinking and problem solving
23. Motivate students to make an effort to learn "*discipline*"
24. Open doors to other opportunities for students
25. Prepare future "*discipline*"
26. Prepare students for technical careers
27. Prepare students to be knowledgeable adults
28. Reduce "*discipline*" anxiety
29. Teach applications to other fields
30. Teach necessary skills
31. Teach fundamental concepts
32. Teach generalizing
33. Teach logic
34. Teach "*discipline*" writing
35. Teach students to work collaboratively

Consider your Audience

(Reproduced from Writing a Teaching Philosophy Statement. The Teaching Center at Washington University in St. Louis. <http://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/writing-teaching-philosophy-statement>)

When you write your teaching philosophy statement, try to anticipate questions that a search committee would want your statement to answer. Ask your faculty mentors and graduate students who have interviewed for academic positions what they think search committees are looking for; these individuals are your best sources for learning about the expectations and issues that are particular to your field. Consult the Web site of the school to which you are applying to get a sense of the school's mission and students, and the relative importance of teaching and research within the institution and the department.

Here is a list of potential questions that may be motivating search committees when they ask you to submit a statement of teaching philosophy:

1. Will this candidate be able to handle the teaching responsibilities of the job?
2. Does her approach to teaching suggest that she would be a good "fit" for our department and our students?
3. Does this candidate want to teach? If so, why?
4. If I were to step into a classroom and observe this candidate teaching, what would I see?
5. How do this candidate's research interests shape her teaching?
6. What will this candidate add to our department? What will our students gain from his classes? What will our department gain in terms of specific courses, new opportunities for students to develop their skills and knowledge, and interesting pedagogical approaches?
7. How does this candidate respond to the perennial challenges of teaching, such as motivating students to learn, evaluating student work, maintaining high standards in the classroom, and juggling teaching with other responsibilities we expect faculty to fulfill?

The Teaching Philosophy Statement is NOT a summary of the experiences on your CV, nor is it an article on pedagogy. It is a concise, specific discussion of the objectives and approaches you currently use, have used in the past, and plan to use in the future. Keep in mind that search committees are looking for *colleagues*. Reviewing in detail your past experience as a Teaching Assistant, without discussing specific methods or approaches you have developed and used in the classroom, may create an image of you as a *student* instead of a colleague.

Metaphors for Learning and Teaching

Learning

Journey

Dance

Banking (Freire)

Two-way street

Learner

Container

Disciple

Teaching

Coaching

Storytelling

Weaving

Lighting a lamp

Teacher

Yoda

Cicero

Matador

Guide

Midwife

Social worker

Classroom

Stage

Garden

Zoo

Studio

Others

No child left behind

Raising the bar

Quotations about teaching and learning

He who can does; he who cannot, teaches. What is more they are the only available teachers, because those who can are mostly quite incapable of teaching, even if they had the time for it.

-- George Bernard Shaw

You cannot teach a man anything; You can only help him to find it within himself -- Galileo

One test of the correctness of educational procedure is the happiness of the child. -- Maria Montessori

It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge. -- Albert Einstein

Teaching should be such that what is offered is perceived as a valuable gift and not as a hard duty

--Albert Einstein

Example isn't another way to teach, it is the only way to teach. --Albert Einstein

The authority of those who teach is often an obstacle to those who want to learn.

-- Cicero (Quoted by Montaigne)

If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people. -- Chinese proverb

Education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance. --Will Durant

Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one. --Malcolm Forbes

There are two types of education... One should teach us how to make a living, And the other how to live.

--John Adams

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire. --William Butler Yeats

Education is not a form of entertainment, but a means of empowering people to take control of their lives.

--Unknown

Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young.

The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young. --Henry Ford

Learning is not compulsory... neither is survival. --W. Edwards Deming

Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever. --Mahatma Gandhi

He who dares to teach must never cease to learn. --Richard Henry Dann

Nothing has more retarded the advancement of learning than the disposition of vulgar minds to ridicule and vilify what they do not understand. --Samuel Johnson

The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires. --William Arthur Ward