

U N I V E R S I T Y O F C A L I F O R N I A , M E R C E D

CRTE Workshop

Writing a Teaching Philosophy

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April 25th, 2013

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Outcomes

By the end of the workshop, you will:

- Understand the purpose of a teaching philosophy
- Know the do's and don'ts
- Be able to identify the basic components
- Brainstorm ideas for your own philosophy
- Know where to find additional resources on the subject
- Be able to outline/draft your own teaching philosophy.

What's the purpose of a teaching philosophy?

- Communicate to your students.
- Apply for jobs.
- Apply for teaching awards.
- Tenure and promotion file.

Do's

- Keep it short – 2 pages!
- Use first person, present tense.
- Organize well and make it readable.
- Active voice language
- Authentic, specific examples.
- Be aware of audience.
 - Researching
 - Teaching

Don'ts

- Use words you don't understand or nobody else understands
- Be wildly creative, e.g., writing in rap
- No peer review
- Over-confident

Basic components of a teaching philosophy

1. Goals for student learning
2. Enactment of goals/teaching methods
3. Assessment of goals
4. Creating an inclusive learning environment
5. Structure, rhetoric, and language

Goals for Student Learning

- What most interests you about your discipline?
- What do you hope students will appreciate about your discipline?
- What knowledge, skills, and attitudes are important for student success in your discipline?
- How are these disciplinary knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to students' academic, personal, and professional success?
- It is also useful to consider discipline-specific considerations with teaching and learning.

Goals for Student Learning

Activity 1:

- ❖ Take 3 minutes to outline your goals for student learning, and then share with your partner.

Enactment of goals (Teaching methods)

- What do you see as the relationship between the student, the teacher, and their responsibilities?
- How are these relationships and responsibilities reflected in your teaching methods?
- *How do these methods contribute to your learning goals for students?*
- Why are these teaching methods appropriate to use in your discipline?
- How are your teaching methods attentive to diverse student expectations and needs?

❑ Use specific examples!

Assessment of goals (*student learning*)

- What learning assessment tools do you use (e.g., tests, papers, portfolios, and/or journals) and why?
- How do you know your learning goals are being achieved through the use of your teaching methods?
- What do the learning assessments say about your teaching?

Assessment of goals (*teaching*)

- What do your teaching assessments say about your teaching?
- What are your strengths as a teacher?
- How will you improve students' achievement of these learning goals?
- What aspects of your teaching are you working on now?

Enactment and assessment of goals

Activity 2:

- ❖ Talk to your neighbor about one example of your teaching methods or/and assessment method. (3 minutes)
- ❖ Based on your experiences, what have you done to improve your teaching? (3 minutes)

Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment

- Emphasize the integration of inclusive teaching and learning throughout the statement.
- Avoid the isolated “diversity paragraph.”
- Example 1

Structure, Rhetoric, and Language

Complaints from search committee chairs:

- Teaching jargon
- Weak thematic structures
- So what shall we do?

Review your Draft!

- Use a rubric (handout).
- Ask a peer to review your outline.
- Consult CRTE staff.
- Read examples.
<http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tstpum>
- Students Assessing Teaching and Learning center can arrange classroom observations for you.
- Example 2

Brainstorming ideas

A teaching philosophy expresses your beliefs about teaching and learning.

Activity 3

- ❖ If you had to choose a metaphor for teaching/learning, what would it be and why?
- ❖ Take a minute to write down one belief you have about teaching and learning. Share with partner.

FAQ

- *What should I do if I don't have a lot of teaching experience upon which to base my statement of teaching philosophy?*
 - Experience as a student
 - Experience mentoring students in the lab, independent study, or elsewhere
 - Talk about your approach to teaching in these settings and the lessons you would take to your own classroom
- Example 3

Draft your teaching philosophy

Final Activity:

Take a few minutes to pull together the various ideas you've had during this presentation by creating a rough outline for your teaching philosophy.

Further Resources / References

- “Resources and practices to help graduate students and postdoctoral fellows write statements of teaching philosophy” <http://advan.physiology.org/content/35/2/136.long>
- University of Michigan CRLT, See CRLT Occasional Paper #23 Writing a Statement of Teaching Philosophy for the Academic Job Search; and sample statements from a variety of disciplines <http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tstpum.php>
- Faculty Focus, <http://www.facultyfocus.com/free-reports/philosophy-of-teaching-statements-examples-and-tips-on-how-to-write-a-teaching-philosophy-statement/>
- Princeton University, McGraw Center: A clear and thoughtful guide for developing a teaching statement <http://www.princeton.edu/mcgraw/library/for-grad-students/teaching-statement/>
- “The Professor is In,” The Dreaded Teaching Statement, 8 Pitfalls <http://theprofessorisin.com/2011/09/16/thedreadedteachingstatement/>

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Thank you!

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