



Writing a Teaching Philosophy Statement

Key Functions of a Teaching Statement

- Describe a context for your teaching
- Showcase your personal style of teaching
- Provide evidence of effective teaching
- Demonstrate self-reflective practice and development

Key Characteristics of a Teaching Statement

- Organized, selective, representative
- It is a document about your teaching, not teaching in general
- Integrated – each element supports and is supported by other elements
- Document evolves as your teaching does
- Includes information about student learning, not just what you (the instructor) did

The self-reflective process of creating your philosophy statement is at least as important as the product.

Ask yourself: If a stranger read my teaching philosophy statement, would they have a good idea what my teaching is about? Would a colleague reading it trust me to teach their students?



Important things to remember

- Readers may be viewing many of philosophy statements. Make it easy for them to learn what they need to know about your teaching.
- Consider what will make you stand out in a positive way. It will not be through unsubstantiated claims, buzzwords, or excessive effusiveness.

Questions and Prompts to Get you Started

How do you conceptualize learning?

- Students learn best by/when/who

How do you conceptualize teaching?

- The role of the teacher is
- The purpose of education is to
- What does it mean to “teach?”
- What are your personal values in the context of a teaching professional?

What are your goals/objectives for your students?

- How do you know that the students have learned what you would like them to learn?

The most effective methods for teaching are

- I know this because
 - Why do you select certain teaching strategies?

What are some *specific* methods and techniques that you use in your teaching to achieve your goals for your students?

- The most important aspects of my teaching are
- Which aspects of your teaching are you trying to improve?
- Why do you teach?
- Where do you get your passion for teaching?
- Do my classroom practices, course objectives, syllabi, grading policies, and other materials reflect my teaching philosophy?
- Are my teaching strategies and methods linked to my beliefs about teaching and learning?

Teaching Philosophy Statement Dos and Don'ts

- Do keep it short (1000 words)
- Do use the present tense and first person
- Do help your reader understand what it is like to be a student in your classroom.
- Do situate within institutional, unit, and disciplinary trends (know your audience)
- Do mention students, not just course content
- Do provide concrete examples and evidence of successful teaching practices
- Do discuss impacts of methods, lessons learned, challenges and innovations—how did students learn?
- Do discuss connections between teaching, research, and service, if appropriate
- Do demonstrate how and that your methods are effective
- Do ground it in your discipline, but avoid jargon that those outside your field may not understand
- Don't write about idealistic, but empty, concepts (avoid jargon and buzzwords)
- Don't repeat your CV
- Don't be a know-it-all, but do demonstrate that you are a reflective and thoughtful teacher
- Don't be condescending about your students
- Do proofread and make sure that it is well-written