

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENTS

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Teaching philosophy statements

- What is a teaching philosophy statement?
 - Why write one?
 - How do you write one?
 - How do you use one?
-

What is a teaching philosophy statement?

- How do you teach?
 - Why do you teach the way you do?
 - How do you know that you're being effective?
-

Nota bene

- ❑ no required content or set format
- ❑ ~ 1-2 pages long
- ❑ your statement is a writing sample
- ❑ different versions needed for different audiences

Be sure to:

- *“Hook” the reader from the beginning*
 - *Include specific examples*
-

Why write a teaching philosophy statement?

- for an academic job application
 - to prepare for the interview process
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A well-written teaching philosophy statement...

...allows readers to “see” you in the classroom.

...is memorable and unique.

...shows that you are an effective teacher.

...shows that you are reflective.

How do you write a teaching philosophy statement?

- Organize your thoughts
 - Choose a format
 - Draft your statement
 - Show it to others
 - Revise your statement
-

Organize your thoughts

Consider your experiences as a teacher and a learner.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

- Articulate what you want students get out of your courses.

WHAT ARE YOUR STRATEGIES?

- List effective teaching strategies for realizing those goals.
 - What obstacles exist to student learning, and how do you help students overcome them?

WHAT IS YOUR EVIDENCE?

- Identify evidence of your teaching effectiveness



Choose a format

□ Common formats:

- Essay/narrative

- Question and answer

- "Creative" (poem, extended metaphor)



Draft your statement

Include:

Your goals

- ❑ Your beliefs about effective teaching

Your strategies

- ❑ Include specific examples

Your evidence

- ❑ Proof that your students are learning
-

Writing tips

- ❑ Use the personal voice – “own” your assertions.
- ❑ Avoid grammatical/syntactical errors.
- ❑ Use active verbs.
- ❑ Be discipline specific.
- ❑ Use the first sentence/paragraph to draw readers in.
 - Consider writing it after you’ve drafted the rest of your statement.



Show your statement to others

- ❑ Your faculty advisor/other faculty members
- ❑ Graduate student colleagues
- ❑ Sheridan Center staff

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Revise your statement

- Consider the suggestions of others.
 - Proofread, proofread, proofread.
 - Don't trust the "spell-checker".
 - Read your statement aloud.
 - Ask someone outside of your discipline to proofread it.
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Sample statements

□ Sample A

□ Sample B



Use the first sentence to draw readers in

“I was acting like an oyster when it happened. Ten weeks into my first semester teaching French at Brown University, instructing a beginning language course, and I had resorted to pantomime – the foreign language teacher’s dubious best friend...”

Include specific examples

“I place individual students, rather than an abstract “class,” at the forefront of my preparation, presentation, and evaluation. My efforts to seek and develop commitments - to the goals of an intellectually challenging and stimulating course; to continuing education in Classics; and to a liberating, life-long appreciation of language, literature, and culture – begin on the first day of class. In addition to collecting routine information (email, major, etc.), I ask students to describe their ideal class and to complete sentences such as “At the end of the course, I will think it was successful if...” and “I learn best when my teacher....” Beyond providing valuable information about students’ needs and expectations, this exchange begins to establish a climate of shared responsibility that promotes an open, challenging learning environment.”

How do you use a teaching philosophy statement?

- Send it
 - Offer to send it
 - Bring it with you
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Online Resources

- Sheridan Center's website:

www.brown.edu/sheridan_center/consulting/jobmarket.html#philos

- Sheridan Center's Resource Library

Good luck!
