Philosophy of Teaching Statement

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Creative Commons: Lisa Stringfellow
“Teaching is the responsibility that demands the most immediate attention and consumes the most time and energy of new faculty.”

“Hiring institutions desire that applicants be teaching ready.”

(Adams, 2002; Kearns & Sullivan, 2011)
Learning outcomes: By the end of this session, participants will be able to

1. Identify personal preferences in key areas of teaching and learning
2. Describe the structure of a teaching philosophy statement
3. Construct a teaching philosophy statement
4. Recognize elements of a teaching portfolio
Teaching portfolio components (handout)

- Teaching philosophy statement
- Context & description of courses
- Teaching & learning strategies
- Other teaching & learning activities
- Assessing and improving teaching effectiveness
Learning activity:
What is your teaching philosophy?

Whether we’ve studied teaching and learning, taught a class, or not, we all have a philosophical framework for teaching.

Do you prefer...
Teaching philosophy statement is a personal narrative that showcases sincere beliefs, directions for future growth, and usually one to two pages in length. It should avoid vague statements, unsubstantiated claims, emotive language, and jargon.
Learning activity (handout)

- Discipline-specific examples of teaching philosophy statements
  [http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tstump](http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tstump)

- What do you notice of interest on the teaching philosophy statement sample?
Teaching philosophy statement structure

The Five-Paragraph Essay

- Title
- Quote (optional)
- Thesis statement
- Narrative (Body)
- Summary

1. Title

• Identify yourself and the document
• Examples…
  – Statement of Teaching Philosophy for Dr. Mary Jones
  – The Value of Teaching: A Statement of Teaching and Philosophy by Dr. John Smith
2. Quote (optional)

- Provides the reader with early insight into your thinking
  - Proverb
  - Maxim
  - Saying
  - Excerpt from a text

- Cite appropriately
“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
3. Thesis statement

• State your teaching and learning principles in 1-3 sentences
• The rest of your statement must support these principles
• You may use questions; be sure to answer

• Having trouble?...next slide
Q: What are the potential benefits of education? To students? To society?

- A: The potential benefits to society of education are...

- A: The potential benefits to students of education are...

- A: Education promises to provide society with...

- A: Students benefit from education by...
4. Narrative:
What is teaching & learning to you?

a. Theoretical framework
b. Goals
c. Design & implementation
d. Assessment & evaluation
e. Documentation & reflection
Learning activity

- Think of a best learning experience. Why was it effective? What did the teacher do?

--or--

- Think of a great teacher. What made that teacher great?
4a. Theoretical framework

- Think of a best learning experience. Why was it effective? What did the teacher do?

- Learning takes place when...

- Think of a great teacher. What made that teacher great?

- A great teacher...
4b. Goals

- What goals do you have for students as learners in
  - the specific subject matter?
  - the discipline?
  - general?

- After completing your course
  - what do you want students to know and be able to do?
  - how do you hope students are changed?
  - what do you want students to wonder about?
4c. Design and implementation

- What kind of learning environment helps you achieve your goals?
- What is your role as the teacher?
- What is the students’ role?
- What teaching strategies do you use? Why?
Teaching strategies

1. What teaching strategies do you see or hear in the video?

2. What strategy would you like to use in your classroom?
Instructional strategies (handout)

- Lecture
- Drill and practice
- Compare and contrast
- Concept mapping
- Case study
- Problem solving
- Field trips
- Simulations
- Role-play
- Journal writing
- Questioning
- Discussion
4d. Assessment & evaluation

- What is the purpose of assessment?
- What assessments do you use? Why are these effective?
- Do you assess students’ prior knowledge? Why? If so, how?
- What is your basis for assigning grades?
4e. Documentation & reflection

• How do you document your teaching?

After analyzing…

– What have you learned about your teaching?
– What have you learned about student learning?
5. Summary

Reflect back over your thesis statement and narrative…

State the 1-3 main messages you hope to leave with the reader of your statement.
Not a one-size fits all approach

Other formatting options include:

Great moments

Great and not-so-great moments

The story

The metaphor

(Kearns & Sullivan, 2011)
Resources

1. Discipline-specific examples of teaching philosophy statements:  http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tstpum

2. TAMU Center for Teaching Excellence’s *Teaching for Tomorrow* videos:  http://vimeo.com/tamucte/videos


4. **Texas A&M Faculty Teaching Resource**

5. Graduate Teaching Consultants:  
   **Texas A&M Center for Teaching Excellence**
Summary: During this session, what did you learn about…

1. Your teaching preferences?
2. Yourself as a teacher?
3. Teaching philosophy statements?
4. Beginning your teaching portfolio?
Philosophy of Teaching Statement

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Questions?

Thank you!
Teaching Portfolio Reflection Process Guide

The teaching portfolio is made up of two components: (1) a narrative description of teaching, 8 to 10 pages in length, double spaced, and (2) a set of appendices containing information (artifacts of teaching) that support the claims made in the narrative. The following table provides an overview of the topics to be addressed in the teaching portfolio, a list of reflection cues to assist you in thinking about each topic and suggestions for supporting documentation. This information is not intended to be a template for portfolio production, but rather as a catalyst for your reflection and a framework for the process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflection Topics</th>
<th>Reflection Cues</th>
<th>Process Documentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy of learning and teaching that drives your classroom performance.</td>
<td>Why am I a teacher? • Why do I teach the way I do? • What motivated me to select a career path that includes teaching? • What is my personal definition of a great teacher and what experience formed that definition? • What do I believe about learning and teaching? • How do I approach learning? • What does learning look like when it happens? • When learning does not happen – what has gone wrong? • What do I want my students to know and be able to do when they leave my course? • How do I hope that students are changed by experiencing my course? • What do I want students to wonder about as a result of taking my course? • Why do I choose the teaching strategies/methods that I use? • Why do I select particular assignments/experiences for my students? • What synonyms for “teacher” would accurately describe what I believe myself to be, or what I would like to be, for my students?</td>
<td>A description of materials that have helped to form your beliefs about teaching and learning. Materials that demonstrate growth and change in your thinking about teaching and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context and description of your courses.</td>
<td>What do I teach? • How long have I been teaching? • What are the learning objectives of the courses I teach? • What level (s) are the students (Undergraduate/Graduate)? • How many students? • Required /Elective? • Majors/Non-majors? • Do I supervise teaching assistants? • Do I chair or serve on graduate committees?</td>
<td>List of course titles, numbers, credit hours and enrollments. Record of supervision of honors or graduate courses. Course goals and objectives. Course curriculum. Articulation with other courses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other activities that support/inform learning and teaching.</td>
<td>Outside of my actual classroom teaching, what do I do that is related to teaching? • Advising? • Textbook editing/consulting? • Serving on curriculum committees? • Presenter/Facilitator for teaching workshops? • Mentoring? • Continuing Education Activities?</td>
<td>Evidence of effectiveness working with students outside the classroom. Evidence of other teaching-related activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efforts to assess and improve learning and teaching effectiveness.</td>
<td>What do I know about my teaching effectiveness and how do I know it? • What do I know about how well my students are learning and how do I know it? • Am I teaching all of my students or just the ones who learn the way I do? • Am I sensitive to differences (ability, culture, ethnicity, gender, learning styles, race, etc.) that may have an impact on learning in my classroom? • Do I need to update my course to reflect current research on learning? • If I overheard my students talking about my class, what would I want them to be saying? • What would they be saying? • What, specifically, do I want to improve about my teaching? • What are my short-term and long-term goals with regard to improvement of my teaching? • What steps am I taking (or have I taken) to improve my teaching? • Where do I go from here?</td>
<td>Student evaluation results. Peer observation/evaluation reports. Mid-semester evaluation results. Periodic one-minute evaluation results. Course goals/objectives and student performance. Response to evaluation results. Participation in teaching improvement activities. Evidence of use of multiple teaching methods and strategies. Evidence of growth and change in teaching. Pre-post tests/attitude surveys. Unsolicited letters regarding your teaching. Election/appointment to teaching committee Honors or awards received for teaching. Exit interviews/alumni testimonials regarding teaching.</td>
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# Teaching Philosophy Statement

Questions for Reflection and Writing Prompts (Coppola, 2002)

<table>
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<th>Component</th>
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| 1. Title        | Identify yourself and the document Examples…  
• Statement of Teaching Philosophy for Dr. Mary Jones  
• The Value of Teaching: A Statement of Teaching and Philosophy by Dr. John Smith |       |
| 2. Quote        | • Optional  
• Cite appropriately |       |
| 3. Thesis        | • State your teaching and learning principles in one to three sentences  
• The rest of your statement must support these principles  
• You may use questions; be sure to answer  
• What are the benefits of education? To students? To society? |       |
| 4. Narrative     | a. Theoretical framework  
• Think of a best learning experience. Why was it effective? What did the teacher do? Learning takes place when…  
• Think of a great teacher. What made that teacher great? A great teacher…  
• What metaphor captures the essence of a positive learning experience? Explain.  
• What synonym for teacher accurately describes what you believe yourself to be, or want to be, for your students? |       |
|                 | b. Goals  
• What goals do you have for students as learners in  
  • the specific subject matter?  
  • the discipline?  
  • general?  
• After completing your course  
  • what do you want students to know and be able to do?  
  • how do you hope students are changed?  
  • what do you want students to be? |       |
| c. Design & implementation | • What kind of learning environment helps you achieve your goals?  
• What is your role as the teacher?  
• What is the students’ role?  
• What teaching strategies do you use? Why? |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| d. Assessment & evaluation    | • What is the purpose of assessment?  
• What assessments do you use? Why are these effective?  
• Do you assess students’ prior knowledge? Why? If so, how?  
• What is your basis for assigning grades? |
| 5. Documentation & reflection | • How do you document your teaching? After analyzing…  
• What have you learned about your teaching?  
• What have you learning about student learning? |
| 6. Summary                   | What are the one to three main messages you want a reader to take away? |

**Additional Resources**

1. Discipline-specific examples of teaching philosophy statements: [http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tstpum](http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tstpum)
3. TAMU Faculty Teaching Resource: teaching.tamu.edu
**Instructional Strategies**

**Lecture, a direct instruction technique:**
- Can be used to impart new information, explain, clarify, and organize, difficult concepts, model a creative mind at work, and analyze and show relationships among seemingly dissimilar ideas
- Should represent one of multiple instructional strategies in the instructor’s repertoire
- Can include active formats such as the energy shifts lecture which alternates mini lectures and discussions
- Is an example of a teacher-centered instructional technique
- Can cause students to lose interest if activity is not maintained

**Drill and Practice, a direct instruction technique:**
- Promotes the acquisition of knowledge and skill through repetitive practice
- Can be used for the memorization of terms or problem-solving
- Is effective for learners new to the concept or experiencing learning problems
- Should be followed by more meaningful learning activities
- Should include explicit feedback from the instructor; such as how to get the correct answer
- May include paper based or computer based systems

**Compare and Contrast, a direct instruction technique:**
- Highlights similarities and differences between things
- Helps students identify distinguishing characteristics between two or more ideas or concepts
- Develops classification skills
- Includes examples such as charts and Venn diagrams
- Can be used when reading or listening is required

**Concept Mapping, an indirect instruction technique:**
- Involves the development of a web diagram for exploring connections between a large amount of information
- Consists of cells that contain a term or concept and links that explain the relationship between the cells
- Can be used to assess students’ understanding

**Case Study, an indirect instruction technique:**
- Involves the use of stories or scenarios for analysis and discussion
- Often based on actual events
- Should include sufficient detail to stimulate analysis from a variety of viewpoints and perspectives
- Is effective because it places the student in the position of problem solver
- Provides students with a context to apply previously learned skills and engage in creative reasoning
- Requires students to develop realistic solutions
- Is ideal for law, business, history, medicine and many other discipline

**Problem solving, an indirect instruction technique:**
- Requires that student focus on knowing the issue, consider all possible factors, and find a solution
- Students learn about the topic through real-world situations/problems
- Helps students develop “flexible knowledge”; develops application skills
- Students may work in groups or individually.

Adapted from *Instructional Strategies Online at* [http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/PD/instr/categ.html](http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/PD/instr/categ.html)
Field trips, an experiential instruction technique:
- Is activity oriented and offers exposure to “real” people, processes, or events
- Should include a clear statement by the instructor about what the field trip will accomplish (e.g., learning outcomes)
- Should include a debriefing session for students to share their learning
- May also include virtual field trips

Simulations an experiential instruction technique:
- Are instructional scenarios where the students are laced in a “world” defined by the instructor
- Ask students to demonstrate proficiency in reacting to simulated situations/problem situations
- Can be administered individually or in groups
- Can be difficult to set-up; hard to score
- Are enjoyable and a source of motivation for students
- Assess higher order thinking skills
- Include a self-assessment

Role-play, an experiential instruction technique:
- Allow students to act out characters in a predefined situation
- Should allow students to take risk-free positions
- Helps student understand the range of concerns, values, and positions surrounding an issue or event
- Can involve higher order thinking

Journal Writing, an independent study instruction technique:
- Assumes student write to learn, meaning they write about topics of personal interest, note their observations, and connect new information with what they already know
- Involves active engagement and the opportunity to clarify and reflect on their learning
- Can be used throughout the class session or periodically
- Should involve the instructor commenting on students’ thoughts (e.g. constructive remarks, questions, encouragement)

Questioning, an instructional skill:
- Can bring about a high degree of student participation
- Should include a mix of low and high level cognitive questions
- Must obtain student attention before question is asked
- Calls for responses should be distributed between volunteers and non-volunteers

Discussion, an interactive instruction technique:
- Includes an oral exploration of the topic, object, concept or experience
- Can include small or whole group class settings
- Stimulates thought, wonder, explanation, reflection and recall
- Promotes positive group interaction

Adapted from Instructional Strategies Online at http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/PD/instr/categ.html