

Writing a good teaching statement

Mine Çetinkaya-Rundel

April 12, 2016

Sta 771S - Teaching Statistics

Feedback from teaching session

Reflection / feedback

Writing a good teaching statement

What is a teaching statement?

- Purposeful and reflective essay about the authors teaching beliefs and practices
- Includes not only ones beliefs about the teaching and learning process, but also concrete examples of the ways in which he or she enacts these beliefs in the classroom
- Gives a clear and unique portrait of the author as a teacher, avoiding generic or empty philosophical statements about teaching

Source: <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/teaching-statements/>

Why write a teaching statement?

- Faculty hiring and promotion/tenure processes require it
- “The act of taking time to consider ones goals, actions, and vision provides an opportunity for development that can be personally and professionally enriching. Reviewing and revising former statements of teaching philosophy can help teachers to reflect on their growth and renew their dedication to the goals and values that they hold.” - Nancy Van Note Chism, Professor of Education at IUPUI

What's in a teaching statement?

- Your conception of how learning occurs
- A description of how your teaching facilitates student learning
- A reflection of why you teach the way you do
- The goals you have for yourself and for your students
- How your teaching enacts your beliefs and goals
- What, for you, constitutes evidence of student learning
- The ways in which you create an inclusive learning environment
- Your interests in new techniques, activities, and types of learning

Where should your teaching statement live?

- Public, on your website
- A note on your website saying it's available upon request

Tips

- Make it brief and well written (1-2 pages for hiring, 3-5 pages or more for promotion/tenure)
- Use first-person narrative
- Avoid cliches – especially ones about how much passion you have for teaching
- Be specific – concrete examples to help reader visualize you in the classroom
- Be discipline specific – explain how you advance your field through teaching
- Avoid jargon and technical terms, as they can be off-putting to some readers
- Don't repeat your CV
- Be humble – mention students in an enthusiastic, not condescending way, and illustrate your willingness to learn from your students and colleagues
- Revise – teaching is an evolving, reflective process, and as you evolve as a teacher your teaching statement should evolve with you

Reflection questions to help you you get started

- Why do you teach the way you do?
- What should students expect of you as a teacher?
- What is a method of teaching you rely on frequently? Why don't you use a different method?
- What do you want students to learn? How do you know your goals for students are being met?
- What should your students be able to know or do as a result of taking your class?
- How can your teaching facilitate student learning?
- How do you as a teacher create an engaging or enriching learning environment?
- What specific activities or exercises do you use to engage your students? What do you want your students to learn from these activities?
- How has your thinking about teaching changed over time? Why?