

Writing a good teaching statement

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September 4, 2018

Sta 771S - Teaching Statistics

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What is a teaching statement?

- Purposeful and reflective essay about the author's teaching beliefs and practices
- Includes not only one's 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/>

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Teaching philosophy

What is your teaching philosophy? Think, pair, share, and summarize in 1-2 sentences.

Why write a teaching statement?

- Faculty hiring and promotion/tenure processes require it
- Reflection

"The act of taking time to consider one's 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."

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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

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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
- Use 1-2 short but strong quotes from teaching evaluations
- 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

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Reflection questions to help 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?

Assignment: Write your teaching statement

- Assume this is for hiring (1-2 pages)
- First draft of your teaching statement is due Fri, Sep 21 at 3pm on Sakai
- Between Fri, Sep 21 and Tue, Sep 25 you will review one other person's statement
- On Tue, Sep 25 we will workshop teaching statements
- Final draft of teaching statement is due Tue, Oct 2 by class time on Sakai + printed in class (your printout should look nice printed in black and white!)