

## Writing a Statement of Teaching Philosophy

“Just because you have never written a statement of your teaching philosophy does not mean that you do not have a teaching philosophy. If you engage a group of learners who are your responsibility, then your behavior in designing their learning environment must follow from your philosophical orientation...What you need to do is discover what [your philosophy] is and then make it explicit.”

*Brian Coppola, “How to Write a Teaching Philosophy for Academic Employment,” American Chemical Society, Department of Career Services Bulletin, 2000, p.1.*

### Format and Basic Guidelines (i.e. conventions)

Teaching Philosophy Statements are most commonly:

- Brief (1-2 pages)
- Written in the first-person in a narrative style
- Reflective and personal
- Tailored to your audience
- Representative of your experience and practice

Teaching statements may also:

- Serve as a foundation for your teaching portfolio
- Showcase your strengths
- Point to your development as a teacher

Additional tips for success:

- Avoid technical terms and jargon
- Consider the statement a description of your *approach* rather than a *philosophy*
- Include examples from your teaching practice that give readers a window into your classroom.

## Possible Content:

When drafting and assessing content, consider your beliefs about and approach to...

- The teaching-learning process which might include:
  - Role of the teacher
  - How students learn
  - Purpose of grades and evaluation
  - Disciplinary context
  - Issues of inclusion and retention
- Goals for students. For example,
  - Content goals
  - Process goals and skills (e.g., problem solving skills)
  - Goals related to students' attitudes or motivations
  - Students' career and lifelong goals
- Implementing your philosophy which could include:
  - Concrete, discipline-specific examples
  - Examples of alignment between goals, methods, and assessment
  - Approaches for inclusive teaching and reaching diverse learners
- Growth and development as a teacher. Consider:
  - Changes you've made and obstacles you've overcome
  - Goals for future teaching.
- Accomplishments related to teaching which might include:
  - Curricular efforts
  - Professional development efforts
  - Teaching and learning projects (and associated grants or fellowships)
  - Teaching awards
  - Publications on teaching and learning

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