Developing a Teaching Philosophy Statement
Joanna Gilmore (Joanna.Gilmore@austin.utexas.edu)

1. Value of teaching
   - Why are you a teacher? What do you bring to your teaching that makes you special?
   - Why teach your discipline, the kinds of classes you teach?
   - Possibly, a thesis for the rest of the essay.

2. Student-centered goals
   - What knowledge or skills do you seek to foster in your students? Are your goals...
     o Content/knowledge-oriented?
     o Process/skill-oriented?
     o Affectively/interpersonally-oriented?
     o Life-long/career-oriented?

3. Instructional methods
   - What teaching strategies or pedagogical tools do you use to achieve your goals?
   - What types of learning experiences do you create for your students? (Van Note Chism, 1998)
   - Why do you teach in the ways you do? Explain how these specific teaching techniques help students gain specific types of knowledge or skill. (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998)

4. Learning environment
   - What are your expectations for teacher-student/student-student interaction and relationships?
   - What actions do you take to create this relationship?
   - How do you achieve inclusiveness of diversity in your classroom?

5. Assessment
   - How do you determine if students are meeting your goals?
   - What types of assessments do you use (e.g. tests, papers, etc.) and why?
   - How do you enable students to demonstrate their knowledge in diverse ways?
   - How do you use assessment to improve your teaching?

6. Professional development
   - What role does teaching play in your personal growth and development?
   - Where does teaching fit in the picture of your career and lifelong goals?
   - How do you want to grow as a teacher?

Sources: Axelrod & Cooper, 1993; Goodyear & Allchin, 2001; Kaplan, O’Neal, Meizlish, Carillo, & Kardia, Schonwetter, Sokal, Friesen, & Taylor, 2002
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Components</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Needs work</th>
<th>Weak</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals for student learning: What knowledge, skills, and attitudes are important for student success in your discipline? What are you preparing students for? What are key challenges in the teaching-learning process?</td>
<td>Goals are clearly articulated and specific and go beyond the knowledge level, including skills, attitudes, career goals, etc. Goals are sensitive to the context of the instructor's discipline. They are concise but not exhaustive.</td>
<td>Goals are articulated although they may be too broad or not specific to the discipline. Goals focus on basic knowledge, ignoring skills acquisition and affective change.</td>
<td>Articulation of goals is unfocused, incomplete, or missing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enactment of goals (teaching methods): What teaching methods do you use? How do these methods contribute to your goals for students? Why are these methods appropriate for use in your discipline?</td>
<td>Enactment of goals is specific and thoughtful. Includes details and rationale about teaching methods. The methods are clearly connected to specific goals and are appropriate for those goals. Specific examples of the method in use within the disciplinary context are given.</td>
<td>Description of teaching methods not clearly connected to goals or if connected, not well developed (seems like a list of what is done in the classroom). Methods are described but generically, no example of the instructor's use of the methods within the discipline is communicated.</td>
<td>Enactment of goals is not articulated. If there is an attempt at articulating teaching methods, it is basic and unreflective.</td>
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<td>Assessment of goals (measuring student learning): How do you know your goals for students are being met? What sorts of assessment tools do you use (e.g., tests, papers, portfolios, journals), and why? How do assessments contribute to student learning? How do assessments communicate disciplinary priorities?</td>
<td>Specific examples of assessment tools are clearly described. Assessment tools are aligned with teaching goals and teaching methods. Assessments reinforce the priorities and context of the discipline both in content and type.</td>
<td>Assessments are described, but not in connection to goals and teaching methods. Description is too general, with no reference to the motivation behind the assessments. There is no clear connection between the assessments and the priorities of the discipline.</td>
<td>Assessment of goals is not articulated or mentioned only in passing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creating an inclusive learning environment, addressing one or more of the following questions: - How do your own and your students’ identities (e.g., race, gender, class), background, experience, and levels of privilege affect the classroom? - How do you account for diverse learning styles? - How do you integrate diverse perspectives into your teaching?</td>
<td>Portrays a coherent philosophy of inclusive education that is integrated throughout the philosophy. Makes space for diverse ways of knowing, and/or learning styles. Discussion of roles is sensitive to historically underrepresented students. Demonstrates awareness of issues of equity within the discipline.</td>
<td>Inclusive teaching is addressed but in a cursory manner or in a way that isolates it from the rest of the philosophy. Author briefly connects identity issues to aspects of his/her teaching.</td>
<td>Issues of inclusion are not addressed or addressed in an awkward manner. There is no connection to teaching practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure, rhetoric and language: How is the reader engaged? Is the language used appropriate to the discipline? How is the statement thematically structure?</td>
<td>The statement has a guiding structure and/or theme that engages the reader and organizes the goals, methods, and assessments articulated in the statement. Jargon is avoided and teaching terms (e.g., critical thinking) are given specific definitions that apply to the instructor's disciplinary context. Specific, rich examples are used to bolster statements of goals, methods, and assessments. Grammar and spelling are correct.</td>
<td>The statement has a structure and/or theme that is not connected to the ideas actually discussed in the statement, or, organizing structure is weak and does not resonate within the disciplinary context. Examples are used but seem generic. May contain some jargon.</td>
<td>No overall structure present. Statement is a collection of disconnected statements about teaching. Jargon is used liberally and not supported by specific definitions or examples. Needs much revision.</td>
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**Rubric for Statements of Teaching Philosophy** developed by Matt Kaplan, Chris O'Neal, Debbie Mezlish, Rosario Carillo, and Diana Kardia
Developing a Teaching Philosophy Statement

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Goals

• Understand why a teaching philosophy is important

• Be knowledgeable about what a teaching philosophy should include

• Begin to reflect on your beliefs about teaching and learning

KEEP IN MIND: There are not many rights and wrongs. This is YOUR philosophy.
Why do I need a teaching statement?

**Improves teaching:**
- Stimulates reflection which can improve your teaching (Van Note Chism, 1998)
- Share it with students so they understand your instructional decisions (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998)
Why do I need a teaching statement?

**Job market:**
• Required for faculty applications (Van Note Chism, 1998)

• Important to search committees (Landrum & Clump, 2004)

• Will help you articulate, synthesize, and prioritize your ideas about teaching and learning for job talks (Van Note Chism, 1998)
Reflect & Share

When you hear the phrases...

The heart of teaching and learning is...

The heart of teaching and learning in my field is...

What comes to your mind?
The 6 Facets

1. Value of teaching
2. Student-centered goals
3. Instructional methods
4. Learning environment
5. Assessment
6. Professional development

Sources: Axelrod & Cooper, 1993; Goodyear & Allchin, 2001; Kaplan, O’Neal, Meizlish, Carillo, & Kardia, Schonwetter, Sokal, Friesen, & Taylor, 2002
#2 Student Centered Goals

What knowledge or skills do you seek to foster in your students?

(Van Note Chism, 1998)

Are your goals...
- Content/knowledge-oriented?
- Process/skill-oriented?
- Affectively/interpersonally-oriented?
- Life-long/career-oriented?
#3 Instructional Methods

What teaching strategies or pedagogical tools do you use to achieve your goals?

What types of learning experiences do you create for your students?

(Van Note Chism, 1998)

**Why** do you teach in the ways you do? Explain how these *specific* teaching techniques help students gain *specific* types of knowledge or skill.

(Goodyear & Allchin, 1998)
#4 Learning Environment

What are your expectations for teacher-student/student-student interaction and relationships?

What actions do you take to create this relationship?

How do you achieve inclusiveness of diversity in your classroom?
#5 Assessment

How do you determine if students are meeting your goals?

What types of assessments do you use (e.g. tests, papers, etc.) and why?

How do you enable students to demonstrate their knowledge in diverse ways?

How do you use assessment to improve your teaching?
#6 Professional Development

What role does teaching play in your personal growth and development?

Where does teaching fit in the picture of your career and lifelong goals?

How do you want to grow as a teacher?
The 5 Paragraph Essay Format

• Paragraph 1:
  – Why are you a teacher?
  – Why teach your discipline, the kinds of classes you teach?
  – Thesis for the rest of the essay

• Paragraph 2:
  – Goal #1
  – Instructional Strategy #1
  – Assessment #1

• Paragraph 3:
  – Goal #2
  – Instructional Strategy #2
  – Assessment #2

• Paragraph 4:
  – Goal #3
  – Instructional Strategy #3
  – Assessment #3

• Conclusion
  – How do you plan to grow as a teacher? (e.g. learning from students)
  – Pulling together all the big ideas of your essay and saying a little more.
Often people start with a metaphor to guide their thinking (Van note chism, 1998).
A teacher is like a captain of a ship, sailing on unknown waters with students, being together with them in good and bad times, but...
In the long-distance obstacle course that is teaching, a good teacher always knows during the first lesson where she wants the majority of her students to be during the last lesson.
Teaching is like trying to make a copy of Michelangelo's David out of play dough. You wrangle with it and struggle, but you have to constantly work to keep the dough warm and pliable.
Teaching is like parenthood – it requires enthusiasm, commitment and an enormous amount of patience.
Teachers grow and cultivate the seeds of knowledge they plant within their students.
Teaching is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.
A great teacher is a great coach—he provides structure and discipline for learning, clearly defines and sets high standards, models intellectual curiosity and openness to new ideas expected from students, and helps students find their own voices and unique talents, though they may differ from his own.
Teaching is like skipping stones. Students are the stones and the ripples of water created are the infinite effects of teaching, whether you see the final product or not.
General Tips

• Make it quick and easy to read
  – One to two pages in length (Van note chism, 1998)
  – Topic sentences for each paragraph
  – Use technical terms only if you are writing for specialists (Van note chism, 1998)

• Make your philosophy “come to life”
  – Provide vivid examples
  – Show your passion and honesty
  – Room for creativity (e.g., quotes, poems, songs, art forms), however acceptance depends on audience (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998)
• Ensure your philosophy is consistent with evidence in your teaching portfolio

• May need to be somewhat differentiated for different content areas; kinds of instructional settings (e.g., online classes, seminars, large classes, laboratory classes); student ages/backgrounds; institutions

• Read exemplary grad student philosophies at http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tstpum

• Have several colleagues read your statement and someone from outside your field

• Self-evaluate using rubrics
References


Teaching metaphor slides retrieved from: http://www.slideshare.net/bcole/teachers-and-teaching-metaphors-presentation
Thank you for your attention!

• Other questions or comments?

• Did we reach today’s goals?
  • Complete evaluation