Developing a Teaching Philosophy Statement

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What words or phrases come to mind when you consider the following:

• A good teacher is…

• The core of teaching and learning is…
Objectives

• Consider the purpose for writing a teaching philosophy
• Learn strategies for vividly articulating your beliefs about teaching
• Learn what to include in your philosophy and how to structure it

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

“Why should I spend time writing it down, why can’t I just do it?”

-Chism (1998)

**Implements teaching:**
Stimulates reflection which can provide focus for your instructional strategies and improve your teaching (Chism, 1998)

**Employment:**
Will help you articulate, synthesize, and prioritize your ideas about teaching and learning for job interviews (Chism, 1998)
Literary techniques

“What brings a teaching philosophy to life is the extent to which it creates a vivid portrait of how a person is intentional about teaching practices and committed to career.”

-Chism (1998)

• Storytelling
• Themes
• Metaphors
Metaphors to guide your thinking

Is there a metaphor that best captures your beliefs about teaching and learning? (Chism, 1998)

- **Teacher as orchestra conductor**
  - Symphonizes students from diverse backgrounds and prior knowledge

- **Teaching as a toolbox**
  - Possesses a variety of pedagogical tools – right tool for the problem
A teacher is like a captain of a ship, sailing on unknown waters with students, being together with them in good and bad times..
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.
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.
The 6 Facets

• Value of teaching
• Student-centered goals
• Instructional methods
• Learning environment
• Assessment
• Personal development

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

* When writing your teaching philosophy, you can consider these 6 facets, but not all have to be included *
The 6 Facets

1. The Value of Teaching

What gives teaching meaning to you?

Why is it important for your students to achieve their learning goals?
The 6 Facets

2. Student-centered goals

What knowledge or skills do you seek to foster in your students? (Chism, 1998)

Are your objectives:
- content-oriented?
- process-oriented?
- affectively-oriented?
- interpersonally-oriented?
- career-oriented?
- lifelong-oriented?
The 6 Facets

3. Instructional methods

Why do you teach in the ways you do? (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998)

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

What types of learning experiences do you create for your students? (Chism, 1998)
Relationship between goals and methods

How do you translate your teaching goals into action? (Chism, 1998)

*Describe* your instructional methods.

*Explain* how these *specific* teaching techniques help students gain *specific* types of knowledge or skill.
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<th>Goals</th>
<th>What you/your students do</th>
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The 6 Facets

4. Your Classroom Climate: relationships

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

What actions do you take to create these relationships?

- student safety/comfort
- teacher-student rapport
- expectations about and dealing with incivilities
The 6 Facets

4. Your Classroom Climate: diversity

How do you address diverse student *identities* (e.g. race, gender, nationality), *experience* (prior knowledge), and *economic backgrounds* in the classroom?

How do you achieve inclusiveness of these perspectives?
The 6 Facets

5. Assessment

What types of assessments do you use and why?

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

How do you use assessments to contribute to learning?

How do you use assessments to improve your teaching?
The 6 Facets

6. Personal 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?
General Tips

• **1-2 pages** in length (Chism, 1998)
• Typically written in **first person** (Chism, 1998)
• **Be concrete and specific**
• **Avoid technical terms** unless explicitly for specialists (Chism, 1998)
• Room for **creativity**, but depends on audience (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998)
• Weave in course offerings/experience (but remember, it’s a statement of your **philosophy**!)
Final suggestions

• Have several colleagues read your statement

• Self-evaluate using available rubrics

• Read examples
  http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tstpum
Center for Teaching and Learning

Visit the GSI website
https://ctl.utexas.edu/services/graduate-student-development

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References


Teaching metaphor slides retrieved from: http://www.slideshare.net/bcole/teachers-and-teaching-metaphors-presentation