

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

WHAT IS IT?

A one to two-page document that clearly articulates the value you put on teaching, the goals you have for student learning, and teaching and assessment strategies you will use.

WHY MIGHT YOU NEED ONE?

- stand-alone statement for job application
- centerpiece of a teaching portfolio (job application, award, other)
- centerpiece for an annual review or RPT package
- content for a job talk – pedagogy talk
- content for a cover letter for teaching job
- self-reflection tool

WHAT ARE CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD ONE? **

- offers evidence and examples
- conveys thoughtfulness and reflection about teaching
- communicates that the person values teaching
- is student/learner centered
- is well written (free of jargon, grammatical or spelling errors)

WHAT SHOULD A READER LEARN ABOUT THE AUTHOR? **

- goals for learning
- strategies to enact those goals in the classroom
- strategies to measure those goals
- approaches to creating inclusive learning environments

**Meizlish, D. & Kaplan, M. (2008). Valuing and evaluating teaching in academic hiring: A multidisciplinary, cross-institutional study. *The Journal of Higher Education, Vol. 79, No. 5*, pp. 489-512

EXAMPLE – TOOL TO ASSIST WITH WRITING A TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Think about a teaching experience. Identify a 'learning moment' that either opens up or shuts down for your students (or you!). This moment could be something you remember as a challenge, a success, a perplexing event.

Some examples of 'critical moments':

- A time the class understands a complex concept.
- A student asks you a question you cannot answer.
- The first time you successfully facilitate a discussion among students that involves vigorous disagreement.
- A 'light bulb' moment you have about how to better teach a challenging concept.

How did you respond in those moments – for better or for worse? If you didn't respond as you would have hoped, what might you do next time?

Through engagement in this exercise, assumptions underlying your teaching philosophy may emerge!

Adopted from Ellis, D. (2000). Developing a teaching philosophy statement: A special challenge for graduate students. Journal of Graduate Teaching Assistant Development, 7(1), 85-92