

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

- Brief (1-2 pages)
- Avoid technical terms and jargon
- Narrative, first-person approach
- Reflective and personal
- Tailored to your audience
- Representative of your experience and practice
- A showcase for your strengths
- A place that points to your development as a teacher
- The foundation for your teaching portfolio

Possible Components

- Beliefs about the teaching-learning process, e.g.,
 - Role of the teacher
 - How students learn/diversity of learning styles
 - Purpose of grades and evaluation
 - Disciplinary context
 - Issues of inclusion and retention
- Goals for students, e.g.,
 - Content goals
 - Process goals/skills (e.g., problem solving skills)
 - Goals for attitude/motivation
 - Career and lifelong goals
- Implementation of the philosophy
 - Concrete, discipline-specific examples
 - Examples of alignment between goals, methods, and assessment
- Growth and development
 - Changes made/obstacles overcome
 - Goals for the future
- Accomplishments in teaching
 - Curricular efforts
 - Professional development efforts
 - Grants/scholarship of teaching and learning projects
 - Teaching awards
 - Publications on teaching and learning

For sample teaching philosophy statements, see
<http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tstpum.html>