

8 Tips for Teaching Presentations

- 1) If they asked you to present on teaching, they care about teaching. Show your commitment to teaching as a vocation and your excitement about being in the classroom.
- 2) Think carefully about what you choose to teach. Ideally the committee should be familiar with the text or concept (and remember, they most likely won't be in your field). If you are teaching in front of students, start with a problem or idea or question or close reading that they can instantly engage with—this will put them at ease and get them talking.
- 3) Keep the scope of your presentation small and the stakes big.
- 4) Make sure your teaching persona comes across. Are you funny? Be funny! Super organized? Show that. Do you emphasize content delivery or collaboration? Whichever it is, demonstrate how that works in the classroom. This is their chance to get to know you as a teacher.
- 5) Go “meta.” You are demonstrating your teaching, but this doesn't mean you can't talk about what you are demonstrating or what it says about your values and ideas about teaching. Without this meta-commentary teaching demonstrations feel artificial.
- 6) Be specific! Examples are always more powerful than generalizations; stories are always more powerful than generalities. Let them know you are comfortable in front of a class (e.g. “When I teach this...”). You are helping them imagine what happens in *your* classrooms.
- 7) Show your awareness that different students require different teaching strategies (e.g. When I teach this course to freshmen I...; If I were teaching this to majors I would...”; At the graduate level students can...). Again, give examples of how a text/concept/idea might teach differently at different levels.
- 8) Handouts will help remind the search committee what you said after they have seen a whole slate of candidates. Catchy visuals are always good.

Sample Guidelines (also helpful if you are not given guidelines)

After your research presentation, we would like you to speak for approximately 20 minutes on how you would teach a particular text to an upper-level undergraduate class of English majors. The choice of text is entirely up to you, although we do find that canonical texts often work better for presentations because the audience members (mostly faculty and some graduate students) will more likely be familiar with them. As you organize your thoughts, you might consider some of the following questions: What issues might frame your discussion? What contextual information might be necessary to provide to students? What secondary sources might you provide? What textual passage(s) would you examine with students, and how would you lead them through an analysis of this passage? Is there an assignment that might come out of this discussion?