

# Documenting Your Teaching: Writing a Teaching Philosophy Statement

A teaching philosophy statement is a reflective essay on your conception of teaching and learning and how you operationalize those beliefs. It gives you a voice to supplement and expand upon what student and peer evaluations offer.

## Characteristics of a Teaching Philosophy Statement

- No one set format
- Generally 1 – 3 pages in length
- Write with the audience in mind

Who is going to read this and for what purpose?

If for colleagues in your own department or college, is there a departmental, college or university initiative that you could address based on your teaching practice?

If for a job application, how does your teaching address the position requirements and the specific departmental/college culture?

- Link your philosophy to your practice

Provide a few short and specific examples in the philosophy statement

Let the reader "see" you in the classroom

- Make it reflective and personal (not generic)
- Make it memorable and unique

What sets your philosophy and practice apart from others?

Is there something you can highlight?

- Own your philosophy

These are your beliefs about teaching and learning

## A Good Teaching Philosophy Statement Contains All or Most of the Following

- Who and what you teach (address this early in the statement to provide context)
- Your teaching goals
- Student learning outcomes
- How you conceptualize your role as a teacher
- How you teach and assess your students
- Why you teach as you do / How you think students learn best
- Specific examples of implementation of your philosophy (link philosophy and praxis)
- Evidence of reflective practice/professional growth (what you have learned from your teaching or professional development activities and how you applied this to your teaching)

## Resources

These web sites give advice, provide examples, and link to other resources:

- The Ohio State University, University Center for the Advancement of Teaching, <http://ucat.osu.edu/professional-development/teaching-portfolio/philosophy>
- University of Michigan, Center for Research in Learning and Teaching, <http://crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tstpts>
- Vanderbilt University, Center for Teaching, <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/cft/guides-sub-pages/teaching-statements>