Developing a Teaching Philosophy Statement*

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*Adapted from Teaching Support Centre, Western University
Territorial Acknowledgement

- I acknowledge with respect the Muscogee-Creek Peoples upon who traditional territory the University of Georgia stands.
By end of today's session, you will be able to:
- **Reflect** on your view of teaching and learning
- **Identify** the key components of a teaching philosophy statement
- **Connect** your teaching and learning beliefs with intentional teaching actions
Outline for the Day

1. Definition and Purpose of Teaching Philosophy Statement (TPS)
2. Framing a TPS (metaphors, quotes, and visuals)
3. Components of TPS (supporting your philosophy)
4. What the CTL can do for you!
A teaching philosophy statement is a systematic and critical rationale that focuses on:

1. the important components defining **effective teaching**,  
2. their impact on **student learning** in the post-secondary setting  
3. and is sensitive to **contextual** factors
What is the Purpose of a Teaching Philosophy Statement?
Where does it fit?

- It is usually a stand-alone document: reflective, living, writing sample
- It is a central component of the Teaching Dossier or Portfolio
- Needs to align to other elements

**Teaching Philosophy Statement**
- Teaching Responsibilities (courses taught)
- Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness
- Teaching Innovations (methods / development)
- Student Sample Work
  (and, fingers crossed, your job talk and interview)
Teaching Philosophies are NOT...

- Cover letters or CVs
  - no evaluations, course names, awards, student quotes
- Empty
  - No specifics, clichés, not you
- A place to use jargon (or use it carefully)
  - Discipline specific or CTL words with no backup
- Insult other teaching strategies
  - “Lecture based teaching is the worst!”
What does it do? Combines your BELIEFS about teaching with your actual PRACTICE and helps you set GOALS for the future.

Can be difficult to articulate and make cohesive...
Reflection #1

What is your metaphor for teaching?

1

Connect the following images to your understanding of:
- Teaching
- Learning

2
What is your understanding of 1) teaching and 2) learning?
Reflection 1:

Share your metaphors with a neighbour!
Questions to Consider

How do you view yourself as a teacher?

How do you approach teaching?

How do students learn in your discipline?

How does learning occur?

What are typical learning objectives in your classroom and how do you achieve these?

What are the types of knowledge students learn in your class and how?

How do you engage and motivate students?
A Word on Metaphors, Analogies & Quotes...

1. **Metaphors provide:**
   - A way to think about yourself as a teacher
   - A framework for beliefs about teaching and learning

2. **Characteristics of a metaphor can be linked to behaviours in the classroom of teachers and students.**

3. **Used to create structure and cohesion and is then "removed"**
Metaphor: Carpenter

Metaphor Characteristics

• A craftsman and labourer who works long hours

• Builds the ‘skeleton’ of a home

• Their work is essential, but disappears beneath brick & drywall

Connection to Teaching and Learning

• I put a great deal of time and energy into all aspects of my teaching

• Lay out the key concepts of subject matter, but allow students to ‘decorate’

• Teacher is not central figure in classroom - students must take ownership of learning
More Metaphors...

- Mountain guide
- Journey
- Coach
- Gardener
- Play Director
- Choreographer
- Weatherman
- Sales Person
- Excavator
- Politician
- Cop
- Social Worker
- Bridge
- Photographer/Camera
- Farmer
A Teaching Philosophy Statement should be:

Between one and two pages long

An authentic, personal narrative (address job, institute, mission)

Evidence of your sincerely held beliefs

Representative of your experience and practice

A showcase for your strengths

A place that points to directions in your future growth

A writing sample

An effective abstract for your teaching portfolio

Adapted from: Coppola 2002
Key Components

Framework or Analogy
- What does a teacher do? How does learning occur?

Concrete examples
- Specific references to in-class activities
- Teaching methods
- Student / teacher interactions
- Assessment
- More often: inclusivity/equity statements

Teaching Context and/or Teaching Goals
first person, usually present tense
know your audience
ground in your discipline

Own it!

• Title/header
• To quote or not to quote?
• Thesis statement (metaphor/frame)
• Narrative 3 to 6 principles on which thesis statement is supported.
• Specific examples to support those principles.
• With references?
• Summary/Summative statement
Reflection 2:

I believe the role of the teacher is...

Students learn best by/when...

Framework/Metaphor/Analogy/Quote

Supporting Principle #1
Supporting Principle #2
Supporting Principle #3
Supporting Principle #4
Supporting Principle #5

Specific Example of #1
Specific Example of #2
Specific Example of #3
Specific Example of #4
Specific Example of #5

How I teach/ Why I teach

How you teach (implementation) to support your conceptualization of teaching:

Concept/Topic/Skill Learned
Concept/Topic/Skill Learned
Concept/Topic/Skill Learned
Concept/Topic/Skill Learned
Concept/Topic/Skill Learned