Developing a Teaching Statement: How do I articulate my beliefs about teaching?

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“What brings a teaching philosophy to life is the extent to which it creates a vivid portrait of how a person is intentional about teaching practices and committed to career.” -Chism (1998)
Learning Objectives

• Learn from others and reflect on your own teaching identity.
• Apply the five facets of effective teaching statements in your own context.
• Articulate the relationship between student-centered goals, instructional methods, and assessment in your own teaching.
• Refine your own student-centered goals.
What words or phrases come to mind when you consider the following:

An effective teacher is…

Chat Cascade
Think on your own for about a minute and when we give you a cue, share in Chat!
What is a Teaching Statement?

• Also called a philosophy of teaching or teaching interest statement
• 1-2 pages, present tense, first person
• A reflective document (centered on your own experiences)
  
  Example: “Lecturing is an outdated and inefficient way of teaching” vs. “When I lecture, I incorporate short activities which allow students to…”

• The abstract of the teaching portfolio
• Always a document in progress
• Consider your audience
Why do I need a teaching statement?

Why should I spend time writing it down, why can’t I just do it?”

- Chism (1998)

Improves teaching:

- Promotes **reflective** practice, which can improve teaching through **focus** on instructional choices (Chism, 1998; Kearns & Sullivan, 2011)

- Can **share** it with students so they understand your instructional decisions (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998; Schonwetter, Sokal, Friesen, & Taylor, 2002)
Why do I need a teaching statement?

**Job Market:**

- Common component of faculty *applications* (Meizlish & Kaplan, 2008)
- Important to search *committees* (Landrum & Clump, 2004; Bruff, 2007)
- Will help you articulate, synthesize, and prioritize your ideas about teaching and learning for *job talks* (Chism, 1998; Kearns & Sullivan, 2011)
“If at all possible, your statement should enable the reader to imagine you in the classroom, teaching. You want to include sufficient information for picturing not only you in the process of teaching, but also your class in the process of learning.”

– Helen G. Grundman, *Writing a Teaching Philosophy Statement*
The 5 Facets*

1. Value of teaching
2. Student-centered goals
3. Instructional methods
4. Assessment
5. Personal development

* When writing your teaching statement, you can consider these 5 facets, but not all have to be included

Sources: Axelrod & Cooper, 1993; Goodyear & Allchin, 2001; Schonwetter, Sokal, Friesen, & Taylor, 2002; Meizlish & Kaplan, 2008; Nilson, 2010; Kearns & Sullivan, 2011
The 5 Facets

1. The Value of Teaching

• What gives teaching meaning to you?
• Why is it important for your students to achieve their learning goals?
• Demonstrates a connective theme about your teaching
The 5 Facets

2. Student-centered goals

What knowledge or skills do you foster in your students?

Are your objectives:

• content-oriented?
• process-oriented?
• interpersonally-oriented?
• career-oriented?
• lifelong-oriented?

Can you identify a connective theme?
Student-Centered Goals

Breakout Rooms

• Make note of your breakout room number
• Introduce yourselves to your group
  • What's something you have in common
• On your own, draft a couple of student-centered goals in your group's breakout room chart (only the first column)
• Share your student-centered goals with each other
  • Are they specific? What additional information would you want (if any)?
  • Do you see a theme across the goals?
The 5 Facets

3. Instructional Methods

Why do you teach in the ways you do?

What teaching strategies or pedagogical tools do you use to achieve your goals?

What types of learning experiences do you create for your students?
Student-Centered Goal → Instructional Methods
Are you including strategies for teaching inclusively?

What **actions** do you take to create a positive learning environment?

• student-centered
• teacher-student rapport

How do you address diverse student **identities** and **experience** in the classroom?

How do you achieve inclusiveness of these perspectives?
Goals & Instructional Methods: Excerpt 1

By establishing student engagement with course material, I aim to develop their critical thinking skills. One of the ways I do so is by assigning several writing assignments throughout the semester. These assignments vary based on the course and include: response papers, in-class writing assignments, formal research papers and short answer essay questions on exams. Through these assignments I offer students critical feedback and help them develop their critical thinking skills.
Goals & Instructional Methods: Excerpt 2

By emphasizing the scientific process in lecture, I teach students how to think and write like scientists. In L113: Biology Lab and Discussion, I recognized that my students had a deficiency in interpreting their own experimental results and presenting them in a scientific manner. To address this, we spent the next lesson analyzing data from real journal articles and critiquing the authors’ representation and interpretation. I created a handout with examples of misleading data so they could avoid misrepresenting their own results, as well as identify these errors in journal articles or media sources.
Breakout Rooms

• In your breakout rooms, review the Before and After Excerpts

  • What did you notice?
  • What specific changes did she make?
  • How did these changes influence your understandings of her approach to teaching?
  • What, if any, additional revisions would you suggest to the After version?
Breakout Room Activity: Before

Students are encouraged to draw from their own experience and the experience of family and friends as patients and consumers of healthcare, while also challenged through role play and other interactive activities, to assume the perspective of other actors within the healthcare system (i.e., healthcare providers, private insurers, pharmaceutical industry representatives, etc). Concepts such as drug pricing and rising insurance premiums are communicated to convey their complexity, while their component features are also simplified in a way that is understandable to a beginner audience. As an instructor, I draw significantly from clinical experience in oncology case management to bring to life the patient impact of local Indigent Care policies, the Affordable Care Act’s Medicaid expansion, and other local, state, and national healthcare policies.
Breakout Room Activity: After

I design interactive classroom activities to encourage students to similarly draw from their own experience and the experiences of family and friends as patients and consumers of healthcare, while also challenging them through role-play exercises to assume the perspective of other actors within the healthcare system. For example, in one activity for the Texas healthcare system class, students track healthcare bills in the Texas Legislature and present these bills to their classmates. Their classmates are organized into teams representing healthcare provider professional organizations, private insurers, and pharmaceutical industry representatives during these presentations. These teams give feedback to the presenter regarding the reasons why their members would likely support or oppose the proposed Legislation. Activities like this invite students to analyze real proposed policies and comprehend the perspectives that various interest groups bring to policy debates.
Debrief

• What did you notice?
• What specific changes did she make?
• How did these changes influence your understandings of her approach to teaching?
• What, if any, additional revisions would you suggest to the After version?
The 5 Facets

4. Assessment

What types of assessments do you use and why?

How do you enable students to *demonstrate their knowledge in diverse ways*?

How do you use assessments to *contribute* to learning?

How do you use assessments to improve your teaching?

How does it connect with your goals and teaching methods?
5. Personal Development

How have you grown?
What challenges do you face?
What is your vision for the teacher you want to become?
What steps will you take to get there?
Tips!

• Weave in course offerings/experience, but this is not a cover letter!
• Discipline-specific
• Be concrete and specific
• Avoid jargon, buzzwords, & empty phrases; convey enthusiasm and sincerity (Kearns & Sullivan, 2011)
• Include a "hook" or immediately engage the reader from the beginning.
• Have several colleagues read your statement
• Read examples
Going Forward

Meet with a Drake Institute Staff Member to Review Your Teaching Statement

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Resources
Drake Institute Philosophy of Teaching Webpage
Drake Institute Teaching Portfolio Webpage

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