

## Writing a Teaching Philosophy

Reflect upon the 'big' questions of teaching (O'Neal, Meizlish, & Kaplan, 2007):

- "What motivates me to learn about this subject?"
- What do I expect to be the outcomes of my teaching?
- How do I know when I've taught successfully?
- Why do I teach?
- What do I believe or value about teaching and student learning?
- If I had to choose a metaphor for teaching/learning, what would it be?
- How do my research and disciplinary context influence my teaching?
- How do my identity/background and my students' identities/backgrounds affect teaching and learning in my classes?
- How do I take into account differences in student learning styles in my teaching?
- What is my approach to evaluating and assessing students?" (p. 2)

In a *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, Lang (2010) provides tips for writing a teaching philosophy:

1. "Begin with the End": consider how a student who walks out of your classroom at the end of the semester will be different than that same student at the beginning of the semester (para. 7)
2. "Be Specific": provide a description of a particularly innovative strategy you have implemented. How did you know it was effective? (para. 14)
3. "Cite your sources": who influenced your philosophy and helped you become the teacher you are today? (para. 19)

Iowa State University provides a robust article about writing a teaching philosophy statement. Here are some tips from their website:

- Write in first person
- Consider covering objectives, methods, and evaluation: what are your objectives as a teacher, how will you achieve those objectives, and how will you measure your teaching effectiveness?
- A teaching philosophy should reflect the nuances of your discipline

It may be helpful to preview the philosophy statements of other faculty members. The University of Minnesota provides some examples, just search for 'Teaching Philosophy Samples'.

References:

Iowa State University (n.d.). Writing a Teaching Philosophy Statement. Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching. Retrieved from <http://www.celt.iastate.edu/faculty/document-your-teaching/writing-a-teaching-philosophy-statement>

Lang, J. M. (2010, August 29). 4 Steps to a Memorable Teaching Philosophy. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://www.chronicle.com/article/4-Steps-to-a-Memorable/124199>

O'Neal, C., Meizlish, D., & Kaplan, M. (2007). Writing a statement of teaching philosophy for the academic job search. *CRLT Occasional Papers, Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, University of Michigan*, No. 23. Retrieved from [tinyurl.com/teachphil](http://tinyurl.com/teachphil)