Developing a Statement of Teaching Philosophy

Sheila Corrall
scorrall@pitt.edu

Department of Information Culture and Data Stewardship
What Is a Statement of Teaching Philosophy?

“A teaching philosophy statement is a concise, compelling illustration of you as an instructor, a useful reflexive examination of your teaching, and a necessary component of many academic job applications”

(University Center for Teaching & Learning, 2017)
Workshop Outline

• Introduction and orientation
  – definition and scope of a teaching philosophy statement
• Activity 1
  – articulating your beliefs about learning and teaching
• Activity 2
  – articulating your goals for learning
• Activity 3
  – articulating your style of teaching
• Activity 4
  – articulating your practices
• Review and conclusion
What is the Scope of a Teaching Statement?

- Developed through individual reflection, but often with peer support/feedback, and usually intended for a wider audience
- Written in the first person, typically 1-2 pages (1,000 words)
- Used in job applications, promotion cases, grant submissions, course syllabi, personal webpages, strategy documents, etc.
- Key components include your beliefs and thoughts about
  - how learning occurs and how a teacher can facilitate or intervene,
  - what goals you have for your students (e.g., knowledge/skills/abilities),
  - how you prefer to behave and interact with learners, and
  - what methods of instruction, assessment, and evaluation you use.
- Give specific personal examples to illustrate your practices and explain the disciplinary/institutional context of your work
- Include quotes or references to illuminate points if applicable
Activity 1
– articulating your beliefs about learning and teaching

1. Complete the following sentence:
   For me, learning occurs best when...

2. Consider the following questions:
   How can a teacher facilitate or intervene in the learning process to help learning to occur?
   Who or what has influenced, informed or inspired your approach to teaching?
### Orientations to Teaching and Learning

**Teaching-centred or Learning-centred?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching/learning orientation of academic teachers</th>
<th>Desired learning outcomes</th>
<th>Expected use of knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imparting information</td>
<td>Recall of atomised information</td>
<td>Within subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transmitting structured knowledge</td>
<td>Reproductive understanding</td>
<td>Within subject for future use</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing and facilitating understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping students develop expertise</td>
<td>Change in ways of thinking</td>
<td>Interpretation of reality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preventing misunderstandings</td>
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<td>Negotiating understanding</td>
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<td>Encouraging knowledge creation</td>
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(Extracted and adapted from Samuelowicz & Bain, 2001, p. 306)

"From sage on the stage to guide on the side" (King, 1993, p. 30)
# Intention and Strategy Components for Five Approaches to Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intention</th>
<th>Teacher-focused</th>
<th>Student-teacher interaction</th>
<th>Student-focused</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information transmission</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Concept acquisition</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conceptual development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Trigwell & Prosser, 2004, p. 413)
The organizers of the 2006 LOEX-of-the-West conference for instruction librarians invited each attendee to share the title of one or two books that have influenced their instruction activities, teaching philosophy, or meaning of education and then to briefly describe the significance of the book(s).

*So, which books influence teaching in LIS?*
Which Books Influence Your Teaching?


Which Books Influence My Teaching?


(Corrall, 2014; 2016)
What Keywords Characterize My Teaching?

Flexibility – Personalization – Real-world engagement
Co-curricular activities (University of Pittsburgh MLIS)

• Self-managed learning (Cunningham, 1999)
• Experiential learning (Kolb, 1986)
• Constructive alignment (Biggs & Tang, 2011)
• Inquiry-based learning (Levy et al., 2010)
• Backwards design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005)
• Cognitive scaffolding (Cooper et al., 2003)

Authentic assignments – Deep discussion – Formative feedback
Holistic grading – Transparent teaching (Winkelmes, 2016)

“Modelling the process of research within the student learning experience”
Inquiry-based Learning Modes and Levels

**Discovery frame**
- Inquiry for knowledge building: building new knowledge

**Information frame**
- Inquiry for learning: exploring existing knowledge

**Key**
- Problem-based
- More support
- Less support
- Student research

**PRODUCING**
- Tutor/client-framed inquiry

**AUTHORING**
- Student-framed inquiry

**IDENTIFYING**

**PURSUING**

*Levy et al., 2010, p. 8*
Goals

“In your statement of teaching philosophy, you should not only consider what subject matter items you think students should learn, but also some of the broader issues that add value to the education students can be expected to obtain by working with you. You might also consider the question of why these goals are important...” (Coppola, 2002, p. 449)

Consider also how your goals should be expressed, e.g.,

- what students should know
- what students should be able to do
- how they would use their knowledge, skills and abilities
Activity 2  
– articulating your goals for learners learning

1. Consider the following question:
   *What goals do you have for students as*
   – *learners in the specific subject matter*
   – *learners in general*

2. Complete the following sentence:
   *As a result of working with me, my students develop...*
Activity 3
– articulating your style of teaching or learning facilitation

1. Consider the following question:
   \textit{How do you see your relationship with the learners you work with?}

2. Complete the following sentence:
   \textit{As a teacher, I prefer to be...}
Activity 4
– articulating your practices

1. Consider the following questions:
   *What methods do you use to support and assess learning?*
   *How do you evaluate your teaching?*

2. Complete the following sentence:
   *Methods I often use include...*
### Examples of Beliefs, Goals, Styles, and Practices Associated with Educator Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educator role</th>
<th>Beliefs: “Learning occurs best when...”</th>
<th>Goals: “My students develop...”</th>
<th>Style: “As a teacher, I prefer to be...”</th>
<th>Practices: “Instructional forms I often use include...”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td>It begins with the learners experience</td>
<td>Empathy and understanding of others</td>
<td>Creative, warm, affirming</td>
<td>Class discussion, journals, personal stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>New concepts are integrated into existing mental frameworks</td>
<td>Analytic and conceptual abilities</td>
<td>Logical, authoritative</td>
<td>Lectures, readings, written assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluator</td>
<td>Clear standards and feedback are provided</td>
<td>Problem-solving skills</td>
<td>Structured, outcome-oriented, objective</td>
<td>Laboratories, graded homework assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach</td>
<td>It takes place in a real-life context</td>
<td>Ability to work productively with others</td>
<td>Applied, collaborative, risk-taking</td>
<td>Field projects, role-plays, simulations</td>
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</tbody>
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“teaching is above all a profound human relationship”  (Kolb et al., 2014, pp. 218, 222)
References [see Readings & Resource List for full details of citations]


