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Developing a Teaching Philosophy Statement

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Developing a Teaching Philosophy Statement

The practice and the need it addresses

Developing a Teaching Philosophy Statement

In the college of education it is common practice for students to write multiple versions of a concise and direct teaching philosophy statement (1,000-1,500 words). While there is not one correct format for composition, some basic criteria should include:

- Why questions – why am I teaching?
- What questions – what is the purpose of _____?

These why and what questions should be centered around context and might address some of the following areas:

- Role and responsibilities
- Expertise and/or content area
- Relationships
- The learning environment
- Beliefs, Values, goals

Writing a teaching philosophy statement is essential to the teaching practice and can be beneficial to a variety of stakeholder groups (students, faculty, administration). This document serves to solidify your philosophy on teaching and bridge theory and practice. The benefits include:

- Clarity and rationale for teaching
- Organization
- Personal and professional development

Evidence this practice benefits UNLV Students

Benefits in the Present and Future Context

Evidence of the benefits of a teaching philosophy statement for UNLV students has the potential to be significant both in the present and future contexts. A professor sharing a personal teaching philosophy statement with students might contribute to the development of:

- Clear expectations
- More productive student engagement
- Open communication
- Respect and rapport

It would also benefit students and faculty across the university by enhancing the practice of the faculty and student body, specifically working toward the core themes of UNLV. A more reflective and evaluative faculty and school population offers potential implications in future interdisciplinary student achievement, creative action, and fostering community partnerships.



Resources and where to find them

Examples across Higher Education

Graduate colleges often provide examples that can be adapted. The teaching philosophy assignment for my students within the college of education is adapted from Cornell University: <http://gradschool.cornell.edu/pathways-success/prepare-your-career/career-guide/teaching-philosophy-statement>

Teaching Philosophy Assignment College of Education, Dept. of T&L

Introduction (Past)	Why did you decide to become a teacher? What steps did you take to become a teacher (walk through the decision)?
Current Philosophy (Present)	Values – what is the purpose of school? What is the importance of education to students and society? Beliefs – what do you believe is your role as a teacher?
Goals (Future)	What are your short and long-term goals for your career?

Example from University of Minnesota: <https://cei.umn.edu/support-services/tutorials/writing-teaching-philosophy>

How other UNLV teachers might adopt this practice

Temporal and Ecological Approach

Write a personal philosophy statement! Use a temporal and ecological approach:

A temporal approach means to consider your teaching philosophy from a linear past, present, and future perspective.

- What are your past experiences that have made you the teacher you are? What is your present context and the structural factors that influence your philosophy? What are your future short and long term goals?

An ecological approach means that the philosophy should focus on two key questions:

- What do you care about? What are some of your strengths?

References

(Caukin & Brinthaupt, 2017; Goodyear & Allchin, 1998; Hegarty, 2015; Schönwetter, Sokal, Friesen, & Taylor, 2002).

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