

Introduction to Teaching Statements

Your teaching statement is a **persuasive essay** designed to persuade your readers that you are an excellent teacher. The teaching statement may be called a statement of teaching philosophy or a statement of teaching interests, and is typically part of your application materials, and part of your promotional review (tenure) package. As with any persuasive essay, the more **concrete examples** you can give to support your statements, the more persuasive it will be.

Explore the Philosophy Behind Your Teaching

Questions adapted from Mastering the Teaching of Adults, J. Apps, 1991, Kreiger Publishing, Malabar, FL, pp. 27-35.

- ❖ Create a list in response to the following prompt: "When I teach, I:"
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- ❖ Look at the list you wrote, and consider why you do what you do.
- ❖ What do you hope to accomplish when you teach?
- ❖ Why do your students want to learn?
- ❖ How would you describe your thoughts on learning? Have any teachers, experiences, or resources influenced your thoughts?

Critical Moments

Exercise adapted from Good Talk About Teaching, by Parker Palmer, 1993, Change, v.25 (6), p. 8-13.

Think about a course you have taught. What were the "critical moments" when, depending on your response, a learning opportunity either opened or closed for the students. Pick one or two moments that stand out for you and describe your response – for better or for worse. If you think your response was not ideal, what would you do differently if you encountered a similar situation? Would one of these critical moments work as an example in your teaching statement?

Examine what you do, or what you will be asked to do

- ❖ What courses will you teach (from job announcement) or do you teach (for promotional review)?
- ❖ What type of institution is it?
- ❖ What size are the classes?
- ❖ Who are the students?