

Philosophy of Teaching Statement

Every teacher has a teaching philosophy, whether articulated or not. It motivates the large and small actions taken in planning and executing plans. What you have learned in your Warner School program should enable you to articulate your teaching philosophy in a rigorous and understandable way. A philosophy of teaching statement for a job application is usually about one page long but for this assignment you may need two pages—certainly no more.

Audience: A philosophy of teaching statement has multiple audiences:

- **yourself**, as it will help you synthesize and articulate your vision and beliefs about multiple aspects of teaching (e.g., your theories of learning, views of students and their capabilities, classroom set-up and management, collegial role), and help you set broad goals for the kind of teacher you want to become;
- **future employers**, as it will demonstrate your vision of the kind of teacher you are or plan to become, and what kind of addition to their faculty you would make;
- **Warner School faculty members**, both those involved in your program and those who might read your portfolio (the Statement may form the starting point for your Portfolio Narrative).

Components: A philosophy of teaching statement should include these elements:

- **your beliefs about how people learn, and specifically learn languages.** You need both to refer to specific learning theories and to make it clear you know what these theories mean in relation to theories of second language learning and the practice of teaching them;
- **your goals for students in terms of your content as well as other aspects of learning** (e.g., critical thinking, media literacy, participation in democracy, social awareness) and what kinds of teaching methods and activities you would use to achieve these goals;
- **your beliefs about students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds** in the classroom, that is, how social context affects your teaching and students' learning, and your commitment to teaching all students, no matter what their backgrounds;
- **how standards (state, national organization) inform how you plan and execute instruction;**
- your **strengths as a teacher** and how you plan to **address areas you feel need improvement.** Provide examples to illustrate your claims.
- If you are **teaching both ESOL and a FL**, you may interweave your beliefs about each area in the document, or you may choose to focus on just one language.

Writing style for a Statement of Teaching Philosophy

Take the time to write your statement carefully!

- Use the first person, but avoid starting each sentence with “I”.
- Avoid using a lot of jargon or theories that may not be familiar to school administrators.
- Be informal but not too casual—make a professional impression, but don't too heavy on specialized terminology or overly formal language.

- Sell yourself, but adopt a humble tone—you are not expected to know everything about teaching at this point in your career, and if you sound like you do, the response may be very skeptical.
- This assignment will require multiple drafts! Have as many people as possible read your statement before you submit it to any of the three real audiences listed above, looking for inconsistencies, gaps, unclear areas.
- Pay attention to your use of verb tenses—you will shift from present (beliefs) to past (experiences) to future (future) to conditional (hypothetical situations), as appropriate.