Teaching Philosophies: A Glimpse Into Your Classroom to “Hook” an Interview

2.28.2017

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“Hooking” the Interview Agenda

- Overview of the Teaching Philosophy (TP)
- Teaching Philosophy Brainstorming Ideas
- Key Elements of a Teaching Philosophy
- Hiring Committee Suggestions
How is a Teaching Philosophy Different Than A...

resume?

transcript?

cover letter?
What is a Teaching Philosophy

- 1-2 page statement about your teaching & learning beliefs, values and goals
  - “Elevator” teaching philosophies: 1-2 sentences

- Demonstrates you’ve been reflective and purposeful about your teaching

- Helps reviewers visualize your classroom - stand out & be the perfect catch

“If at all possible, your statement should enable the reader to imagine you in the classroom, teaching. You want to include sufficient information for picturing not only you in the process of teaching, but also your class in the process of learning.”

- Helen G. Grundman
Brainstorming for Standing Out

What are a few words you would expect in a teaching philosophy?

“student-centered, active learning, diversity...”

- Think of a metaphor that helps you articulate your beliefs & values about teaching & learning...
- What was it about your favorite teacher that was so great...
Brainstorming Prompts (for) Attraction

- Remember that time you felt great or terrible...
  - As a student ... As an instructor
  - Why, what happened? What about that experience was great?
- How does this relate to your ideal classroom (as an instructor)
  - How do you teach what you teach?
  - Why do you teach that way (why is this important to you to teach that way)

How do your answers align with your beliefs, values & goals?
Key Elements in a Teaching Philosophy

- **How & What you teach**
  - Instructional strategies
    - subject
    - level of class

- **Beliefs & Values**

- **Why you teach the way you do**
  - How students learn
    - year of student
    - prior knowledge

- **Student success**

- **Effective teaching**

- **Are these two different?**
Fishing a Bit Deeper: Student Success

- How do you address student success? (individual / group)
  - What do you define as student success?
    - How does your discipline / field define student success?
    - What are your goals for your students?
  - How do you measure success?
  - How do you use evidence?

How can I articulate success?!
Fishing a Bit Deeper: Effective Teaching

- How do you articulate effective teaching?
  - What does effective mean?
  - How do you measure effectiveness?
  - What would those measures look like when teaching is effective?
  - What strategies do you have for improvement?

How can I show effective teaching?
Putting Your Teaching Philosophy Together

- Not one right way to do it - though there are many wrong ways!

- Clear & concise

- Beliefs, values & goals are consistent throughout

- Organization is logical & statement flows well
  - Could circle around but be weary of jump

- Reread, reflect, revise & review rubrics throughout
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Components</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Needs work</th>
<th>Weak</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals for student learning: What knowledge, skills, and attitudes are important for student success in your discipline? What are the key challenges in the teaching-learning process?</td>
<td>Goals are clearly articulated and specific and go beyond the knowledge level, including skills, attitudes, career goals, etc. Goals are sensitive to the context of the instructor’s discipline. They are concise but not exhaustive.</td>
<td>Goals are articulated although they may be too broad or not specific to the discipline. Goals focus on basic knowledge, ignoring skills acquisition and affective change.</td>
<td>Articulation of goals is unfocused, incomplete, or missing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enactment of goals (teaching methods): What teaching methods do you use? How do these methods contribute to your goals for students? Why are these methods appropriate for use in your discipline?</td>
<td>Enactment of goals is specific and thoughtful. Includes details and rationale about teaching methods. The methods are clearly connected to specific goals and are appropriate for those goals. Specific examples of the method in use within the disciplinary context are given.</td>
<td>Description of teaching methods not clearly connected to goals or if connected, not well developed (seems like a list of what is done in the classroom). Methods are described but generically, no example of the instructor’s use of the methods within the discipline is communicated.</td>
<td>Enactment of goals is not articulated. If there is an attempt at articulating teaching methods, it is basic and unreflective.</td>
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<td>Assessment of goals (measuring student learning): How do you know your goals for students are being met? What sorts of assessment tools do you use (e.g., tests, papers, portfolios, journals), and why? How do assessments contribute to student learning? How do assessments communicate disciplinary priorities?</td>
<td>Specific examples of assessment tools are clearly described. Assessment tools are aligned with teaching goals and teaching methods. Assessments reinforce the priorities and context of the discipline both in content and type.</td>
<td>Assessments are described, but not in connection to goals and teaching methods. Description is too general, with no reference to the motivation behind the assessments. There is no clear connection between the assessments and the priorities of the discipline.</td>
<td>Assessment of goals is not articulated or mentioned only in passing.</td>
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<td>Creating an inclusive learning environment, addressing one or more of the following questions: • How do your own and your students' identities (e.g., race, gender, class), background, experience, and levels of privilege affect the classroom? • How do you account for diverse learning styles? • How do you integrate diverse perspectives into your teaching?</td>
<td>Portrays a coherent philosophy of inclusive education that is integrated throughout the philosophy. Makes space for diverse ways of knowing, and/or learning styles. Discussion of roles is sensitive to historically underrepresented students. Demonstrates awareness of issues of equity within the discipline.</td>
<td>Inclusive teaching is addressed but in a cursory manner or in a way that isolates it from the rest of the philosophy. Author briefly connects identity issues to aspects of his/her teaching.</td>
<td>Issues of inclusion are not addressed or addressed in an awkward manner. There is no connection to teaching practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure, rhetoric, and language: How is the reader engaged? Is the language used appropriate to the discipline? How is the statement thematically structured?</td>
<td>The statement has a guiding structure and/or theme that engages the reader and organizes the goals, methods, and assessments articulated in the statement. Jargon is avoided and teaching terms (e.g., critical thinking) are given specific definitions that apply to the instructor’s disciplinary context. Specific, rich examples are used to bolster statements of goals, methods, and assessments. Grammar and spelling are correct.</td>
<td>The statement has a structure and/or theme that is not connected to the ideas actually discussed in the statement, or organizing structure is weak and does not resonate within the disciplinary context. Examples are used but seem generic. May contain some jargon.</td>
<td>No overall structure present. Statement is a collection of disconnected statements about teaching. Jargon is used liberally and not supported by specific definitions or examples. Needs much revision.</td>
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Hiring Committee Suggestions - Don’ts

- Being vague
- Be someone you are not
  - Phone interview & portfolio will show true self
- Write it last minute - *hook will not take*
- Write one for all potential jobs
- Use jargon without explanation
- “My passion is teaching... or I have a passion for teaching”
  - Do NOT use the word passion or rely on sentimentality
Hiring Committee Suggestions - Do...

- Be clear & concise
  - Concrete examples & evidence for support
  - Don’t ramble

- *Catch their eye* - Be memorable in a *good way*
  - Centered around a belief, value, quote, experience or pivotal moment

- “Write it yourself” - googling & reviewing examples can stifle writing

- Know your audience

- Revise
  - Critical feedback from others inside and outside discipline
  - Use a rubric
Beyond the Basics: WWHW

- Think about alignment between your teaching philosophy & your teaching portfolio
  - Documentation of teaching
  - Evidence of student learning
  - Teaching effectiveness evaluations
  - Professional development reflections
  - Contributions to teaching at your institution (publications, service, reviews, honors, awards, recognitions)

- Don’t be drab, be a great catch
  - “teaching statements are as drab as they are predictable”
“Hook” that Interview

- What, who, how, why surrounding your beliefs & values about teaching & learning
  - Job searches, fellowships, awards or pursuing promotion & tenure
  - Mechanism for reflecting & refining your teaching practices

- Start now & reflect often
  - Have a running document of your ideas (dated)
  - Summarize thoughts periodically
  - Talk with others
Thank you

- Any questions?

- Resources
  - Teaching philosophy rubrics:
    - [http://www.crlt.umich.edu/sites/default/files/resource_files/TeachingPhilosophyRubric.pdf](http://www.crlt.umich.edu/sites/default/files/resource_files/TeachingPhilosophyRubric.pdf) (one in presentation)
    - [https://teach.its.uiowa.edu/sites/teach.its.uiowa.edu/files/docs/docs/Teaching_Philosophy_Rubric_ed.pdf](https://teach.its.uiowa.edu/sites/teach.its.uiowa.edu/files/docs/docs/Teaching_Philosophy_Rubric_ed.pdf)
    - [http://medsci.indiana.edu/m620/sotl_08/teaching_philrubric.pdf](http://medsci.indiana.edu/m620/sotl_08/teaching_philrubric.pdf) (quite extensive)
    - [http://www.lmu.edu/Assets/Centers+%26+Institutes/Center+for+Teaching+Excellence/Rubric+Teaching+Philosophy+Statement+Rubric.pdf](http://www.lmu.edu/Assets/Centers+%26+Institutes/Center+for+Teaching+Excellence/Rubric+Teaching+Philosophy+Statement+Rubric.pdf) (pre / post type assessment)
  - Teaching Style Inventory: [http://longleaf.net/teachingstyle.html](http://longleaf.net/teachingstyle.html)
  - Implicit Bias Quizzes: [https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html)
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Effective teaching

Beliefs & Values

Why you teach the way you do

Student success

How & What you teach