Teaching Philosophy

Teaching philosophies are self-reflective narratives that provide your audiences with a statement of your beliefs about teaching and learning.

1. **Audience:** Your audience is likely the hiring committee charged with selecting a candidate for the position, but that committee is also comprised of your future colleagues, should you be hired.

2. **Purpose:** The teaching philosophy has several purposes, including the following:
   A. To introduce yourself to the university and your potential colleagues.
   B. To provide a sense of who you are as a teacher.
   C. To introduce the teaching portfolio.
   D. To set the tone for your career trajectory.
   E. To serve as a means for your own personal evaluation.
   F. To illustrate your successes.

3. **Organization:** Your teaching philosophy should include the following components:
   A. Introduction: Begin with a broad assessment of your teaching approach, including your teaching objectives and strengths and weaknesses.
   B. Paragraph I: Discuss how you make that broad teaching approach work. Include the following:
      I. Teaching techniques.
      II. Learning strategies.
      III. Course content.
      IV. Efforts to teach critical thinking, lifelong learning skills, problem solving skills, etc.
      V. Efforts to teach skills that can be used within the discipline and beyond.
   C. Paragraph II: Describe how you reach students with different learning styles.
      I. Active learning: Describe activities that engage students in and outside of class.
      II. Student-centered learning: Provide examples of how you facilitate students’ learning.
      III. Connect your methods nationally, at the state level, and then locally.
      IV. Give examples of your strategies—field trips, classroom speakers, collaboration, various projects, assigned outside of class lectures, etc.—explain how they help student learning outcomes.
   D. Paragraph III: Describe how you incorporate non-traditional teaching strategies, including the following:
      I. Use of technology in the classroom.
      II. Use of technology outside the classroom.
      III. Use of assignments that engage the students with technology.
   E. Paragraph IV: Illustrate your ability to function in a role other than a teacher. Include any of the following examples:
      I. Facilitating graduate students’ learning based upon ideas for seminar classes.
      II. Facilitating bringing guest speakers to the college.
      III. Participating in committee work.
F. Paragraph V: Describe how you assess both your students and yourself.
   I. Provide scores and comments from student assessments.
   II. Provide faculty assessment of your teaching.
   III. Provide your assessment of your students (examinations, take-home-work, classroom participation, etc.).
   IV. Connect your students’ successes back to your teaching skills.
   V. End this paragraph with an offer to send a dossier or to refer to your dossier or teaching portfolio.

4. Format:
   A. The teaching philosophy is about 2-3 pages long.
   B. Use headings and subheadings.
   C. Use bullets.
   D. Use 12-point Times New Roman font.

5. Writing Considerations:
   A. Tailor your teaching philosophy to the position for which you are applying.
   B. Focus on the aspects of your teaching that will make you a good fit into that particular program.
   C. Include courses you may have created or that you will create.
   D. Include any pedagogical contributions you have made to your department (teaching materials, supplemental course materials, work on book adoption committees, etc.).