

Teaching Philosophy Statement (TPS): Writing Prompt and Pre-Writing Strategies

I. Writing Prompt

Situation and Audience

As you are preparing to apply for faculty positions, write a brief essay that will help your potential colleagues understand your core approach to teaching. In this essay, describe and illustrate your teaching approach with specific examples drawn from the courses that you are prepared to teach, and may be asked to teach, in the types of faculty positions for which you are applying.

Include discussion of your **goals** for student learning and your **methods** for helping your students achieve those goals, as illustrated by the **examples** you include. Demonstrate your **preparation to teach a range of courses** (different topics; introductory to advanced-level courses; and different types of courses-- e.g. large lecture courses, small seminars, laboratory courses, first-year courses, senior-capstone courses, graduate courses). If relevant to your field, also describe how your approach will apply to mentoring undergraduates in research. Demonstrate that you have thought about how you will respond to specific **challenges** involved in teaching in your discipline.

Style and Format

Organize your essay to present ideas in a logical order. Use the first-person pronoun and a concise, engaging writing style. Keep your examples brief, but specific. Your completed essay should be **1-2 pages, single-spaced**. If your approach to teaching is indebted to someone else's ideas or research, make that clear with an appropriate citation, but make sure that your ideas predominate in this essay. (Do not include numerous citations to secondary sources.)

II. Pre-Writing Strategies

1. Reflect with Exploratory Writing

Explore your commitment to—and stake in—teaching in your discipline. Write for 5 minutes, without worrying about style or how your ideas “sound,” answering the following question: *What are the most challenging, interesting, or exciting aspects of teaching?*

2. Generate Potential Content

A. Re-read the writing prompt, then use this table as a rough guide for generating content that you might include in your TPS. After you complete the table, complete parts B and C, below.

Goals: What do I want my students to learn? What should they know, and be able to do, as a result of completing one of my courses?	Methods: What approaches can help my students learn what I want them to learn? How do I engage students to participate actively in their own learning during class?	Examples: Why/How is each method useful in a specific course and for teaching specific students? (Show your breadth of preparation to teach—e.g. courses of different topics, types, and levels—introductory to advanced.)

B. On your notes above, circle or put an asterisk next to any goal, method, or example that will allow you to discuss what you find to be *most challenging, interesting, or exciting about teaching* from your earlier exploratory writing.

C. Make a note here of any gaps in your preparation—or your ideas—that you would like to address while writing the teaching philosophy statement.