

DEVELOPING A REFLECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICE AND PHILOSOPHY

Goal: To engage questions as a centerpiece in developing a teaching philosophy. What is a reflective teaching practice? How can continued reflection on your teaching practice improve the learning environment in your classroom/lab/studio/presentation? What are the greater aims of your teaching? How can you bring these aims into the classroom? What methods do you use to implement your goals?

College and university faculty members from a variety of academic disciplines discuss their thoughts on teaching and their own experiences as learners and teachers to advance their practice. Thinking and questioning your practice as a teacher will create a setting for growth. Do your goals achieve outcomes? Do your students learn effectively? In what ways can you challenge yourself as a teacher?

In a broad sense, what does effective teaching involve? How do you implement effective methods in a classroom? Communicating well, planning goals and objectives, teaching to a diverse body of learners, and assessing outcomes are all essential components of effective teaching.

Learning Outcome: A beginning teaching philosophy that will inform your course descriptions, syllabus and class project. Bring a hard copy of your philosophy to the next class.

Methods and Assignment:

1. Review aspects of a reflective teaching approach discussed by any of your own past faculty which parallel your own philosophy or situation as a teacher. In what ways does this relate to your own classroom experiences?
2. List examples where an instructor has elicited feedback in the classroom to gauge students' understanding or lack of within a lecture or studio. How did the instructor then change his/her methods? Did this further the class's understanding of the material? If so how? In not what would have been more effective?
3. Review philosophies by faculty/graduates on risdcollegiateteaching.com tabs' Seminars and Advice.
4. **Prepare a draft or an outline of your own teaching philosophy.**
5. Review:

Teaching Philosophy Readings and Guides

<http://cei.umn.edu/support-services/tutorials/writing-teaching-philosophy>

<http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/philosophy.html>

Teaching Philosophy Statement dos and don'ts: (From Cornell University Center for Integrative Research, Teaching and Learning)

- Don't give idyllic BUT empty concepts
- Don't repeat your CV
- Do research on the teaching institution and disciplinary trends
- Do keep it short (1–2 pages)
- Do provide concrete examples and evidence of usefulness of teaching concepts
- Do discuss impact of methods, lessons learned, challenges and innovations—how did students learn?
- Do discuss connections between teaching, research, and service

Answer these questions to get started:

- The purpose of education is to_____.
- Why do you want to teach your subject?
- Students learn best by_____.
- When you are teaching your subject, what are your goals?
- The most effective methods for teaching are_____.
- I know this because_____.
- The most important aspects of my teaching are_____.

Basic Competency of Assignment

Philosophy declares your point of view and your experiences in effective learning.

You give evidence of your philosophy in examples in the classroom.

You are able to declare several components of your philosophy and transition between these.

You are able to build on your principles and go into more detail as you move through the document.

Advanced Competency of Assignment

The document includes analytical, empirical, and evidentiary elements.

Classroom implementation and examples are specific with the multi-layered components highlighted.

Subdivisions or subsets of thoughts are categorized or clustered and are not scattered throughout the statement.

Larger ideas are supported by individual experience, examples and knowledge.

One's own expertise and knowledge base are valued and incorporated into the teaching methodologies.