

WRITING A STATEMENT OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

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1

3 THINGS THAT MATTERS

Understanding your audience.

Writing from what you know.

Do you want to continue reading?

2

THE 5 PARAGRAPH ESSAY

A compelling quote. It gets exemplified, and the reader understands how/why it is important to you.

Thesis statement to essay: sets up propositions.

this is the claim

Paragraphs 2, 3, & 4: three separate ideas that are led by thesis sentences and provides clarity/focus.

this is the evidence that warrants the claim

Summary paragraph: synthesis

does the reader now understand the claim? ³

GOPEN & SWAN STRATEGY

American Scientist (Nov-Dec 1990), Volume 78, 550-558.

"Preparation to teach the contents of a text versus to understand it personally may influence the mental representations that are created from text."

Teaching is a creative act, an organizational activity, and a social contract.

- The value of teaching in learning.
- I teach introductory organic chemistry, which is a course for first-year students at the University of Michigan.
- One of the most remarkable insights I have had is about the nature of student errors.

Educating and mentoring are not activities that can be turned on and off at will.

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ADVICE

Write intentionally – framework, outline, no stream of conscience

Share with trusted others (who will need guidance to review)

Write a lot and edit back

Write personally, not with inflated distance; it is your story

Do not try to tell your complete story; just tell a good story

Consider avoiding all current “hot button” and buzz words

Include the future

Be aware of your audience (esp. with straw man arguments)⁵

5 SENTENCE WRITING EXERCISE

A quote – if you have one

P1: Thesis sentence (paragraph) for the entire statement. Focus on one concrete theme and give 3 propositions that derive from and support this claim.

P2-4: Statements of evidence. Exemplify the claim with specific evidence, incidence, strategy, etc., in a way that feeds each claim and cycles back to the thesis of the statement.

Summary: A statement that should be a self-evident conclusion, deeper and more interesting than P1, but clearly reflecting what you really needed 3-4 paragraphs to tell the reader in order to convey the understanding.

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