



CENTER FOR
TEACHING & LEARNING

Constructing a convincing teaching statement

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Why is writing a teaching statement so darn difficult?

- Few opportunities to discuss teaching in thoughtful, intellectually-rigorous ways.
- The genre itself is unclear: what exactly are search committees asking for?
- The pressure to be original
- Teaching is a huge, complex endeavor: it's hard to summarize in one to two pages!

Basic rules/suggestions:

1. Stick to 1-2 pages
2. Avoid general platitudes
3. Don't explain how much you love teaching or your students: show it!
4. Give a couple of concrete examples: allow the reader to *see* you teaching!
5. Connect your teaching to your research.
6. Think of your teaching statement as a *writing sample*: edit, edit, edit.
7. Capitalize on the fact that you are teaching at one of the only Hispanic-Serving research institutions! Discuss how you teach diverse students.
8. Don't try to appear an expert: show them that you know *how to become* a better teacher.

How to begin:

1. Describe your most successful teaching moment. Write down everything about it (what was the assignment, who were the students, what was the context?) without stopping for 15 minutes (don't worry about spelling, etc.).
2. Read what you've written. What did you do that allowed this moment to happen? What teaching strategy does this illustrate? What values about education does the moment illustrate? What does it say about you as an emerging teacher?
3. Go back to your original story and summarize it as succinctly as humanly possible. Connect your specific story to a basic value about teaching.
4. What book or workshop changed your ideas about teaching? If you haven't encountered any good articles/books about pedagogy, I recommend you read at least one, preferably something about teaching inclusively. Here are some recommendations: Ken Bain, *What the Best College Teachers Do*; Alicia Chavez, *Teaching Across Cultural Strengths*; Claude Steele, *Whistling Vivaldi*;
5. Attend teaching workshops through the Center for Teaching and Learning: <https://ctl.unm.edu/instructors/support/workshops/index.html>
6. Revise, revise, revise. Ask a friend, preferably someone outside of your department, to read it and comment. Reach out to resources at the Graduate Resource Center and Center for Teaching Excellence.



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Additional Resources

Some good examples of statements:

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

Further tips (how to begin a statement, using evidence, available resources, etc.):

<https://www.cmu.edu/gcc/handouts/Teaching%20Philosophy%20Handout.pdf>

<https://www.physiology.org/doi/pdf/10.1152/advan.00123.2010>

A readable essay about teaching statements:

<http://www.chronicle.com/article/4-Steps-to-a-Memorable/124199/>