

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



ConTEACHi

2021 sessional academic staff event

Note: this Zoom session is being recorded. Please turn off your video camera should you wish to.

All access pass to writing your Teaching Philosophy Statement

Facilitator: Gina Saliba

Moderator: Gavin Smith



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

With respect for Aboriginal cultural protocol and out of recognition that its campuses occupy their traditional lands, Western Sydney University acknowledges the Darug, Eora, Dharawal (also referred to as Tharawal) and Wiradjuri peoples and thanks them for their support of its work on their lands (Greater Western Sydney and beyond).



Why write a Teaching Philosophy Statement?

- CV/Resume
- Helps you to reflect on your own teaching
- Highlights your beliefs, approaches and strengths in regards to your educative practice



What is a Teaching Philosophy Statement

- Description of your values, goals, beliefs in relation to teaching & learning
- Uses evidence from your teaching
- Helps shape your curriculum

“The act of taking time to consider one’s goals, actions, and vision provides an opportunity for development that can be personally and professionally enriching.” (Vanderbilt University)



RECIPE

TITLE: _____

PREP TIME _____ TOTAL TIME _____

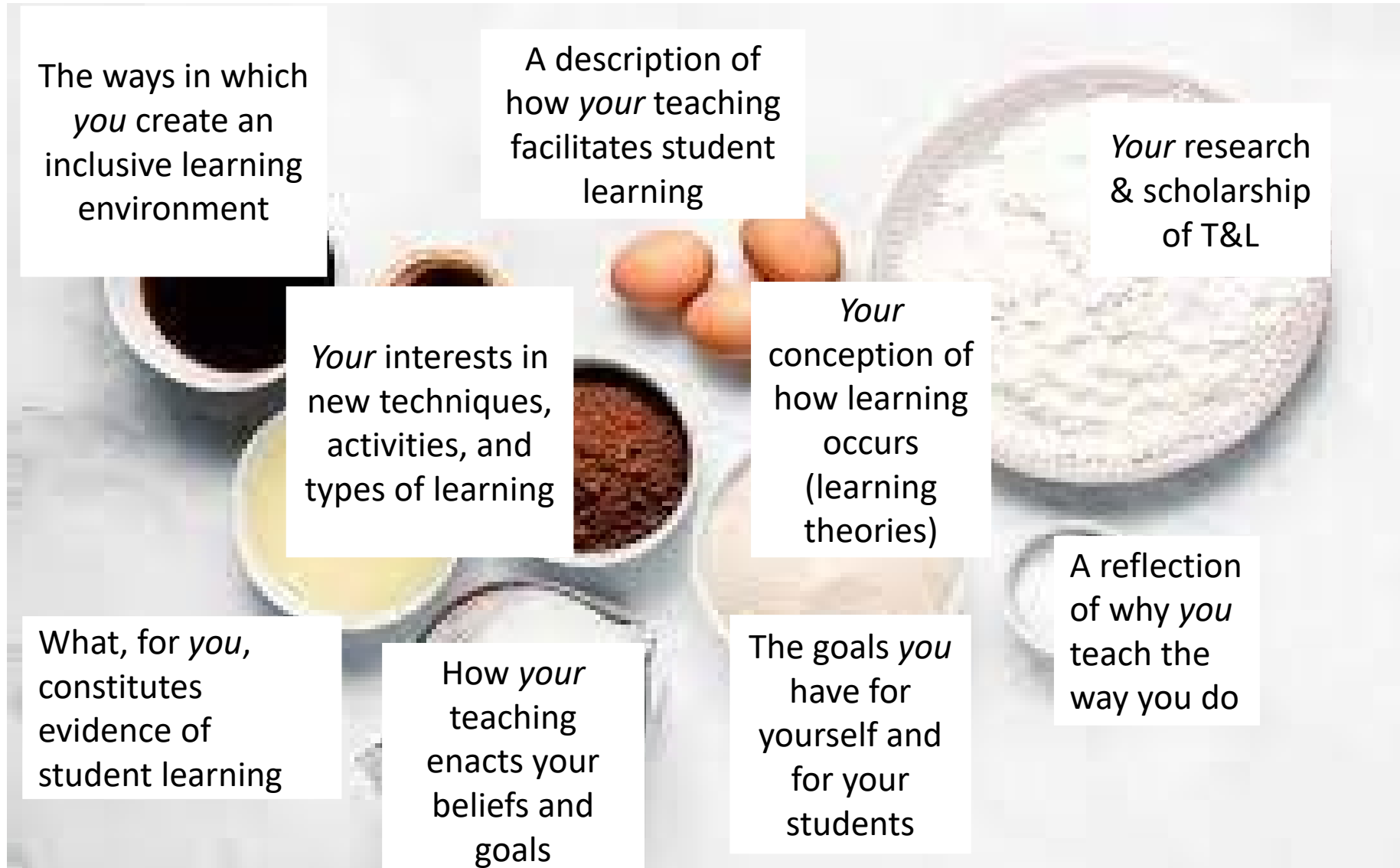
INGREDIENTS

NOTES:



 Image ID: 308434178 www.depositphotos.com

What are the ingredients of a TPS?



TPS Cake!

“If at all possible, your statement should enable the reader to imagine you in the classroom, teaching. You want to include sufficient information for picturing not only you in the process of teaching, but also your class in the process of learning.”

– Helen G. Grundman (2006)



Exercise 1

Go to Menti.com

Enter code: **6289 6448**

Q: Why do you want to teach?



Exercise 2: Thinking as a teacher

On a sheet of paper draw a metaphor of you as a teacher.

What metaphor does the picture suggest about your teaching?

Example:

Jeweller: Designing learning in a multi-faceted way.

Student 'engagement' is key. Scaffolding student learning to allow them to shine.



(Adapted from Apps, J. (1991). Mastering the Teaching of Adults. Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Co., pp. 23-24)

Thinking as a teacher

- **Lightbulb**- You attempt to illuminate the minds of your learners.
- **Gardener** - Your goal is to cultivate the mind by nourishing, enhancing the climate, removing the weeds and other impediments, and then standing back and allowing growth to occur.
- **Body builder**- You exercise and strengthen minds so learners can face the heavyweight learning tasks of the future.
- **Bucket fillers** - You pour information into empty containers with the assumption that a filled bucket is a good bucket. In other words, a head filled with information makes an educated person.
- **Challenger** - You question learners' assumptions, helping them see subject matter in fresh ways and develop critical thinking skills.
- **Travel guides** - You assist learners' along the path of learning. You create engaging/interesting learning journeys and adventures.
- **Music Conductor**- you supervise the learning process, making certain that sufficient inputs are present and that the outputs are consistent and in tune with the inputs.
- **Artist** - Teaching has no prescriptions and the ends are not clear at the beginning of the process. The entire activity is an aesthetic experience.
- **Applied scientist** - You apply research findings to teaching problems and see scientific research as the basis for teaching.
- **Fashion Designer** - You use various teaching skills and are able to analyse teaching situations, apply scientific findings when applicable, and incorporate an artistic dimension into teaching.

Guidelines for TPS

Make your TPS
brief and well
written

Make it specific
rather than
abstract

Avoid jargon
and technical
terms

Be humble



Use a
narrative,
first-person
approach

Be discipline-
specific

Be sincere
and unique

Revise

TPS extracts/tasters

Example 1

Teaching has been a major part of my life since 1988. My philosophy of teaching is learner-centred and emphasizes the importance of the learner's active participation in the construction of meaning. I believe we need to remember that our students are individuals, bringing with them a diverse range of experiences, interests and abilities, which will inform their learning. In this context the role of the teacher is very much one of providing an environment where the students can contribute, interact and experiment while building their own knowledge from materials provided by the teacher or by other students or located by themselves. A necessary element in this learning environment is that the students must feel at ease, have fun, and be given the opportunity to develop good cooperative learning relationships with each other and also with the teacher.

<http://www-staff.it.uts.edu.au/~laurel/Teaching/Teaching.htm>

TPS extracts/tasters

Example 2

I value honesty, endeavour, peace and service to others. This may not be terribly fashionable but these values guide how I live my life. It goes without saying that they extend into my teaching. In this paper I outline my teaching philosophy considering teaching and learning, my role and methods and my understanding of the students' perspective. Throughout I put my thoughts in context.

Teaching and learning are difficult to define. Cranton and Carusetta (2002, p169) define teaching as “a specialised form of communication with the goal of fostering student learning”. In addition to its communicative nature they emphasise that teaching is constructed socially within a specific context and is acquired by “experience, reflection and discourse” (p169). I chose this definition simply because it resonates with my current understanding of teaching. I have been teaching ... for over a decade with little formal preparation until recently and have progressed and evolved as a teacher because of the experience, my reflection on it and discussion with others.

Anonymous, University of Canberra

Let's start baking



Why do you teach the way you do?



What should students expect of you as a teacher?



What is a method of teaching you rely on frequently? Why don't you use a different method?



What do you want students to learn? How do you know your goals for students are being met?



What should your students be able to know or do as a result of taking your class?



How can your teaching facilitate student learning?



How do you as a teacher create an engaging or enriching learning environment?



What specific activities or exercises do you use to engage your students? What do you want your students to learn from these activities?



How has your thinking about teaching changed over time? Why?

TPS brainstorming template



Developing your Teaching Philosophy

Use this worksheet to brainstorm your teaching philosophy and outline some ideas or statements you might include in a teaching philosophy. **Do not include everything from this brainstorming document in your teaching philosophy statement, but select the things that are most impactful, most personal, or most relevant.**

1. Why do I teach the way that I do?

- What do I believe about knowledge? Learning? Understanding? Meaning? How do these terms relate to one another?

- What motivates and excites *me* to learn in my discipline?

Next steps

1. Keep writing

2. Buddy up

3. Further reading and resources

[4 Steps to a Memorable Teaching Philosophy](#) (Chronicle of Higher Education)

[Teaching Philosophies and Teaching Dossiers Guide](#) (Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning, University of Calgary)

[Examples of Teaching Philosophy statements](#) (University of Michigan)

[Example of a Teaching Philosophy Statement](#) (University of Southern Queensland)



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- What do I believe about knowledge? Learning? Understanding? Meaning? How do these terms relate to one another?
- What motivates and excites *me* to learn in my discipline?
- What is my most memorable experience as a student?
- What kinds of specific objectives do I set for my students?

2. How do I teach?

- How do my motivations for or beliefs about teaching manifest in my teaching practice?

- What would an observer see if they sat in on one of my classes? What are 2-3 *specific* techniques I use in my teaching?

- What are the 2-3 most important things my students learn from my discipline?

- How do I convey a passion for my discipline?

- How do I make my classroom welcoming? What are my beliefs and commitments to inclusive teaching?

3. What is my teaching experience? What courses can I teach?

- What kinds of training in teaching do I have? How specifically has it prepared me to teach?
- How have mentors or teachers had a positive impact on me? What kind of student-teacher relationship do I strive to achieve? Why?
- What units/subjects have I taught? Describe the student cohort. How do I changed my teaching style to suit the diversity of students and learning styles?
- What kinds of classes am I capable and motivated to teach? (Think about topics, size of units/subjects, courses/programs undergrad/postgrad students.

- How do I differentiate my teaching style for different types of classes (consider different content, different learning styles, diversity of students)?

4. How do I know that my teaching is effective?

- How do I assess student learning and success? What kinds of assessments do I use? Why?
- What authentic, project-based, or innovative assessment strategies do I use or plan to use?
- How do I know when I have taught something effectively? What formal and informal strategies do I use to assess the effectiveness of my teaching?
- What steps have I taken to improve my teaching? What, in particular, have I changed in response to feedback?
- What goals do I have for myself as a teacher and how do I plan to reach them?

