

# Teaching philosophies reconsidered: A conceptual model for the development and evaluation of teaching philosophy statements

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## ABSTRACT

Increasingly, the requirements of applicants to academic faculty positions, promotion and tenure procedures, nominations for teaching awards, or other application processes for innovative teaching grants worldwide include a teaching portfolio or dossier or a statement of teaching philosophy. Current literature provides a spectrum of approaches to constructing a teaching philosophy statement. While these resources provide practical utility, this literature generally lacks conceptual models that provide clear operational definitions and comprehensive frameworks for the process of generating or evaluating a teaching philosophy statement. However, this literature does illustrate the complexity of the task. Each teaching philosophy statement reflects not only personal beliefs about teaching and learning, but also disciplinary cultures, institutional structures and cultures, and stakeholder expectations as well. This synergy among self, discipline, and institutional context guided the development of a conceptual model for constructing a teaching philosophy statement. Based on the authors' survey of the literature, a conceptual model was developed, and then refined in a series of three workshops that included input from graduate students, academic faculty, faculty developers, and academic managers (administrators). The resulting conceptual framework includes the six dimensions commonly found in a survey of faculty teaching philosophies: the purpose of teaching and learning; the role of the teacher; the role of the student; the methods used; evaluation and assessment of teaching and learning; and also includes two framing devices – a metaphor or a critical incident and a device for acknowledging the impact that contextual factors have on teacher decision making. This paper describes the development of this conceptual model, and provides an evaluation rubric that can be applied to assess teaching philosophy statements generated using the proposed framework.

## Introduction

Across higher education institutions world-wide, applicants to academic faculty positions, teaching awards, teaching grants, academic faculty promotion and tenure are increasingly required to present not only a curriculum vitae that demonstrates research and teaching expertise, but also a teaching portfolio or dossier, together with a statement of teaching philosophy (SEDA, 2002). This trend is particularly strong in the UK, where this requirement has become an important national development (ILT, 2002). For prospective candidates, many of these critical application components can be quite daunting. This is

especially the case with the statement of teaching philosophy (Richlin, 1995). For instance, one study (Perlman, Marxen, McFadden & McCann, 1996) examined cover letters, curricula vitae, and teaching statements of 82 doctoral candidates and 74 PhD applicants for an assistant professor position. Although the job advertisement requested a specific statement on teaching, most candidates failed to emphasize teaching. Many candidates reported that they have never reflected on what they do when they teach and that they have never systematically written about their teaching philosophies and goals. Moreover, they received little or no guidance from their academic advisors on this matter because most advisors have

not generated teaching philosophy statements in their own academic careers.

While many articles focus on teaching portfolio or dossiers, less is known about statements of teaching philosophy. Even articles describing the teaching portfolio or dossier frequently fail to describe how to develop a teaching philosophy statement (Day, Robberecht & Roed, 1996). Current literature provides a spectrum of approaches, together with the reasons for utilizing, and the processes required for developing, a teaching philosophy statement. Articles that do provide readers with guidance on how to create a statement of teaching philosophy often do so with few clear operational definitions, or little analysis of the components identified in a definition. In some cases, the definitions have to be derived indirectly from a larger definition of a teaching portfolio or dossier. As a result, even though these resources provide practical utility, they often lack the academic rigour provided by strong conceptual underpinnings. What is missing in the current literature is a conceptual model that provides the user with a clear operational definition and comprehensive guidelines for the processes of generating and evaluating teaching philosophy statements.

In order to provide effective guidance for creating a teaching philosophy statement, it is imperative to provide a clear operational definition and an analysis of its key components. Once a clear definition is articulated, specific guidelines can be developed for both the writers (e.g., future and current faculty) and the evaluators (e.g., students, colleagues, and academic managers) of the teaching philosophy statement. This paper presents a working model that will provide the guidance, academic rigour, and practical utility required to generate and evaluate teaching philosophy statements in contemporary hiring, tenure and promotion contexts. The description of this working model provides an operational definition, identifies key functions of teaching philosophy statements from the literature, sets forth a conceptual model, demonstrates the model's practical utility, and poses some questions for future development.

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### Operational definition

Based on a comprehensive literature review, the following operational definition is proposed: *A teaching philosophy statement is a systematic and critical*

*rationale that focuses on the important components defining effective teaching and learning in a particular discipline and/or institutional context. Several components of this definition are elaborated below.*

First, a teaching philosophy statement is systematic, connecting the writer's thoughts on teaching and learning in a logical fashion. Given that the development of a teaching philosophy statement involves a complex process of gathering, assimilating, analysing, reflecting upon, and evaluating and adapting thoughts on effective teaching and learning, it is helpful to express this thinking in some organized fashion for both the writer and the reader.

Second, a teaching philosophy statement is a critical rationale. At its centre is a distinctive set of aims, values, beliefs and convictions that provide an organizing vision of the teacher's direction and a rationale towards which his or her efforts are geared (Ebel, 1983; Symth, 1986). These aims should show literacy in, as well as an alignment with or commitment to, teaching and learning theories that are appropriate to the students' characteristics (such as age, goals and motivation), the institutional context (such as the specific discipline culture and the institutional mission), and to oneself (one's teaching identity, manifested in particular teaching strengths and natural 'fits'). As well, a critical rationale will exhibit congruence between these various components of the teaching philosophy statement, demonstrating the significant amount of assimilative, analytical and evaluative thought that precedes the articulation of it.

Third, a teaching philosophy statement focuses on specific components that the writer defines as critical to the teaching and learning processes in a particular post-secondary setting. Different theoretical perspectives on teaching and learning identify a broad range of possible components. For teaching, they could include teaching behaviours, teaching methods, content structure, and assessment (Feldman & Paulsen, 1998; McKeachie, 1999). For learning, these important dimensions could include student learning styles, learning contexts, cognitive structures, learning strategies and student motivation (Bruning, 1994; McKeachie, Pintrich, Lin, & Smith, 1986; Svinicki, 1991). An explanation of the writer's conception of the teaching and learning dynamic will provide insights about how they teach and how their teaching has an impact on student learning. Subsequently, the criteria for judging the extent to

which a teacher's practice exhibits features that are essential to good teaching should be considered in the context of this critical rationale.

Finally, a teaching philosophy statement needs to be sensitive to contextual factors such as the particular discipline in which the teaching and learning takes place and the 'organizational necessities, student experiences, and political climates' (Brookfield, 1990, p. 196) that characterize an institution. The context within which one works presents both opportunities and constraints, and one's teaching will to some extent reflect the characteristics of an individual situation. Just as disciplinary culture influences teaching beliefs and conventions (Stark & Latucca, 1997), so do institutional contexts. For example, teaching sociology in an undergraduate denominational college will manifest itself differently from teaching sociology in a graduate research institution, as the environment sets parameters for the teacher. These parameters include institutional mission and the role of teaching within the institution; the expectations of students and the goals for graduates of the programme; faculty academics' workload; the physical, financial, and human resources; the support available for teaching; and the worldview of the institution. Effective teaching results from a synergy among learning principles, personal characteristics, and discipline and institutional cultures. A teaching philosophy statement can be critical to illuminating this complex interaction.

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## The purposes of a teaching philosophy statement

A review of the literature demonstrates that a teaching philosophy statement has been assigned many purposes:

- clarifying what good teaching is; providing a rationale for teaching;
- guiding teaching behaviours; organizing the evaluation of teaching;
- promoting personal and professional development;
- encouraging the dissemination of effective teaching.

Together, these components support the importance of a teaching philosophy statement and contribute to the development of a comprehensive model.

## Clarifying 'good teaching'

A teaching philosophy statement provides a conceptualization of a teacher's approach to teaching by laying the foundation for articulating and clarifying teaching and learning beliefs, student learning goals, and personal development (Brookfield, 1990; Day et al. 1996; Goodyear & Allchin, 1998; Kreber, 2001; McKeachie, 1999; McLoughlin, 2000; Murray, 1995). Articulating a conceptualization of how teaching and learning processes occur and how they contribute to one another is fundamental to the teaching philosophy (Chism, 1998). This function of the teaching philosophy statement involves a good understanding of current teaching and learning theories and can include values important to a teacher's beliefs about education (Atkinson, 2000). Next, defining teaching excellence takes into account student learning goals such as 'content goals, process goals, and career and life-long goals' (Chism, 1998, p. 2). Finally, this perspective frequently describes both teaching intentions and personal development goals.

## Providing the rationale for teaching and guiding teaching behaviours

The teaching philosophy statement can also provide the rationale for the writer's teaching behaviour (Brookfield, 1990; Goodyear & Allchin, 1998; Kreber, 2001). As a broad philosophical statement of teaching practice, it translates the conceptualization of teaching into action by providing a set of principles that justifies how one teaches (Chism, 1998). For instance, this can include

how teachers conduct classes, mentor students, develop instructional resources, or grade performances . . . instructional strategies used . . . display creativity, enthusiasm, and wisdom . . . what they want a student to experience in their classroom, the labs they oversee, the independent projects they supervise . . . their energy level, the qualities they try to exhibit as a model and a coach, the climate they try to establish in the setting in which they teach (Chism, 1998 p. 2).

Part of a teacher's political survival strategy is also found in the security of a teaching philosophy statement, in that it explains the relation between teaching and other academic purposes (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998). According to Brookfield (1990), a teaching philosophy statement provides the

stability and direction during the storms of ambiguity most teachers face in their teaching careers. Without a clear sense of purpose, the teacher is often left to the direction of others as to his or her roles, aims, and functions within the institution. A well-developed and carefully conceived teaching philosophy statement will strengthen the teacher's ability to confidently express his or her opposition to inappropriate or unethical institutional decisions and/or directives.

### Organizing the evaluation of teaching

A teaching philosophy statement becomes the 'foundation by which to organize evaluation' (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998, p. 103) by giving the teacher an opportunity to articulate a conceptualization of teaching for administrative decision-making (Murray, 1995). For the teacher, this becomes significant in that there are many situations in which teaching is evaluated in academic careers: applying for faculty appointments, promotion and tenure procedures, nominations for teaching awards, or other application processes for innovative teaching grants (Chism, 1998). As an important component of a teaching portfolio or dossier (ILT, 2002; Lyons, 1998; Murray, 1995; O'Neil & Wright, 1997; SEDA, 2002; Seldin, 1998), the statement of teaching philosophy should emphasize 'the products of good teaching' and highlight the 'solid evidence about the quality of teaching effectiveness' (Millis, 1991, p. 221). The teaching philosophy statement becomes the thesis for the teaching portfolio or dossier, in that it provides the conceptual framework for the teaching evidence revealed through reflective explanations of samples of effective teaching (Shore et al., 1991). Provided with the teacher's statement of teaching philosophy, evaluators (e.g., academic managers) are better able to focus on the specific teaching qualities viewed as important by the particular teacher. In other words, it gives the evaluators a context in which to assess the teacher's teaching achievements. As a result, the degree of the teacher's accomplishment of his or her own goals can be more meaningfully assessed.

The responsibility of supporting and rewarding the teaching efforts of academic faculty belongs, in part, to academic managers (Seldin, 1993), who in turn can have a direct impact on the valuing of the teaching role at a particular university campus (Braskamp & Ory, 1994; Goodyear & Allchin, 1998). Moreover, having access to teaching

philosophy statements provides academic managers with the current teaching trends among academic faculty (Seldin, 1993). Thus, a clear teaching philosophy statement defines the parameters of effective teaching, thereby guiding academic managers in making decisions of hiring, promotion and tenure, and increasing their awareness of current teaching trends.

### Promoting personal and professional development

A teaching philosophy also promotes personal and professional growth, development, and renewal (Baker & Mezel, 1988). In essence, it is a living document that changes and is refined over time. As part of the teaching portfolio or dossier, it 'acts as a stimulant to self-improvement' (Seldin & Annis, 1990, p. 201). Personal and professional development includes going beyond teaching techniques by becoming more aware of and in tune with one's inner teacher and by discovering one's true identity and integrity in the teaching role (Palmer, 1998). It promotes the 'reflective practitioner' (Schön, 1987) and may engage the teacher in the scholarship of teaching by encouraging the teacher to discover, integrate, apply, and reflect on the impact that teaching is having on students (Boyer, 1990). For instance, it includes reflecting on 'how one has grown in teaching over the years, what challenges exist at present, and what long-term goals are projected . . . how one's concepts and actions have changed over time', and 'a vision of the teacher one wants to become' (Chism, 1998, p. 2). Part of this dynamic and reflective process requires the teacher to record in the teaching philosophy statement what he or she has discovered, learned, and created (Botstein, 1990). This, in turn, leads to a renewed dedication to and a stronger ownership of the goals and values that the teacher holds and a more positive attitude toward teaching (Chism, 1998; Millis, 1991).

### Dissemination of teaching

The teaching philosophy statement also encourages the dissemination of effective teaching to students, colleagues and institutions (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998). Students exposed to the teaching philosophy statement are more likely to understand the teacher's priorities and rationale, the intended impact on student learning, and thus

feel a sense of control over their learning in the classroom environment. Points of exposure to the teaching philosophy statement include the teacher's introduction to the course, the course syllabus and explanation of assignments, and the approaches to teaching and learning. The student-teacher relationships also benefit from this interaction (Zubizarreta, 1995), which is thought to increase student retention (Braskamp & Ory, 1994). Moreover, this interaction is thought to provide an 'important element of credibility students seek in their teachers' (Brookfield, 1990, p. 19). In other words, it helps a teacher's 'students feel that they are under the influence of someone who is moved by well-thought-out convictions and commitments' (Brookfield, 1990, p. 195).

When provided with the opportunity to share formally with colleagues, the teaching philosophy statement has the potential of promoting professional dialogue, growth, and development (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998; Lyons, 1998). As teaching philosophy statements are exchanged, scholarly dialogues on teaching may be encouraged. With campus-wide discussions, the expectations of effective teaching and innovative teaching are enhanced, and the valuation and role of teaching on campuses may be affected. This in turn provides the foundation that 'contributes to developing a productive culture of teaching' (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998, p. 104). Professionally, opportunities to develop a collective identity with other academic faculty even in diverse contexts, provide a common context for the pursuit of a shared purpose of effective teaching. This common purpose is particularly effective if the stated institutional goals include effective teaching. Academic faculty members who are aligned with the mission statement of the university are more likely to receive support for their teaching. 'It is this definition of relationship to the community that will support their work and help them survive and flourish in the university' (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998, p. 110).

As a narrative description of one's conceptualization of teaching, the teaching philosophy statement takes on many purposes. In doing so, it has both personal and community utility, enhancing the scholarship and professional development of the teacher as well as the culture of teaching through engagement of students, colleagues and academic managers. Thus, constructing a 'personal portrait' of one's perception of teaching (Goodyear & Allchin, 1998), becomes a potentially powerful process.

In addition to its potential to optimize success in hiring, tenure, promotion and teaching competitions, a well-designed teaching philosophy statement also provides opportunities to engage in 'the scholarship of teaching' (Hutchings & Shulman, 1999; Trigwell, Martin, Benjamin, & Prosser, 2000). Increasingly, the scholarship of teaching is defined as a systematic inquiry about teaching that is guided by clear goals, an explicit design, assessment of outcomes, and reflective analysis, and that is shared with peers in ways that can contribute to the development of teaching (Hutchings & Shulman, 1999; Trigwell et al., 2000). These characteristics are at the heart of the proposed framework for developing and evaluating teaching philosophy statements. This framework advocates a critical assessment of the congruence of teaching beliefs, practices and goals, and of how teaching develops over time, in response to this assessment. Furthermore, the teaching philosophy statement is articulated in a format that can be peer reviewed and shared with colleagues. As such, the teaching philosophy statement serves as a powerful guide in four important domains of the life of a teacher-scholar: the personal, the public, the professional, and the pedagogical.

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### Writing guidelines for a teaching philosophy paper

Requiring a teaching philosophy statement of graduate students and faculty academics is one thing, but explaining how to implement a construct such as a teaching philosophy statement is quite another. Given that there are few general prescriptions for its construction, developing a teaching philosophy statement is perceived as a challenging task. The main reason is that the evaluation standards for teaching philosophy statements are so elusive. In a workshop on the topic of teaching philosophy statements during the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education conference in 2001, approximately 35 faculty academic members, academic managers and faculty developers indicated a general frustration with the lack of precedent and guidance in knowing how to approach their respective tasks of constructing and evaluating teaching philosophy statements (Schönwetter, Taylor, Sokal, & Friesen, 2001).

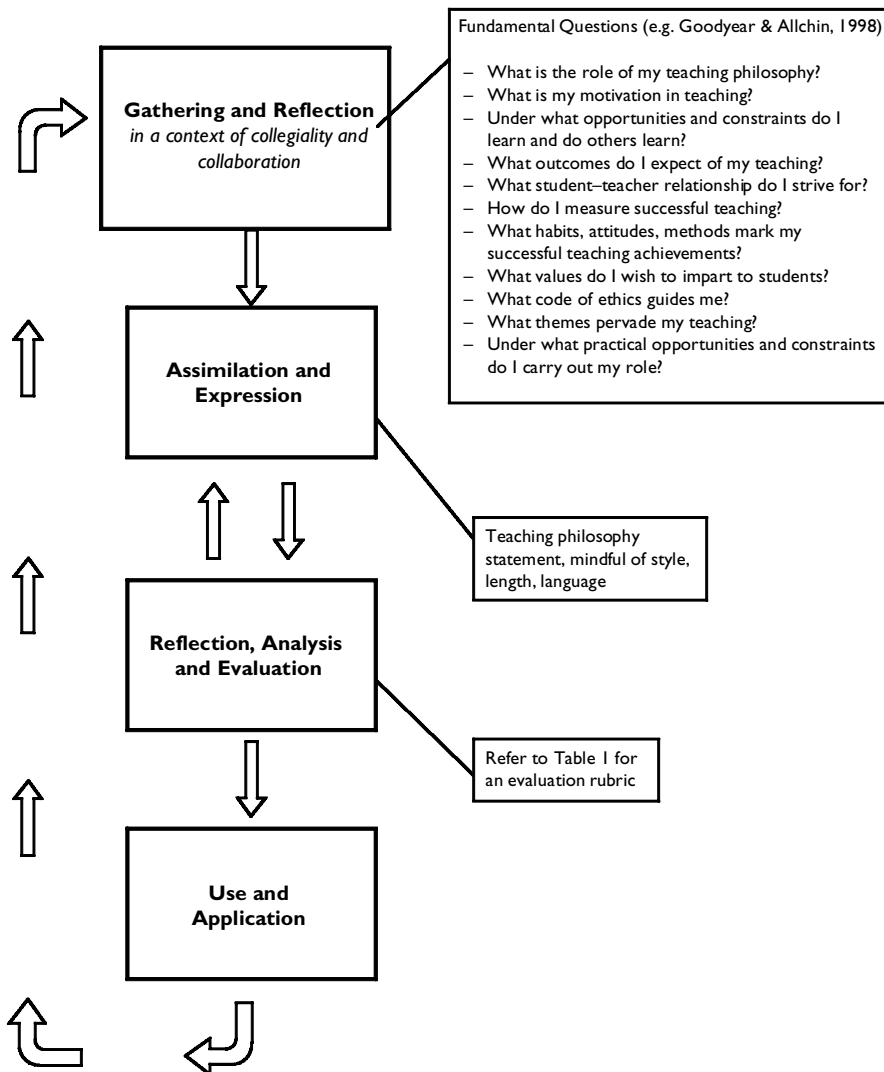
It is ironic that that many faculty academics have successfully worked through a philosophical

defence of their research, yet experience difficulty in producing a statement that bears evidence of their teaching practices. Is it possible to develop a process or protocol that would guide writers through a stepwise reflective process of expressing their teaching philosophy? The literature provides ample guidance to assist faculty academics in gathering information about their teaching and interpreting its meaning, and in synthesizing and expressing this interpretation in a teaching philosophy statement (Figure 1). A systematic analysis of the literature on teaching philosophies also offers answers to

commonly asked questions about teaching philosophy statements.

**How much effort does it require?**

Developing a teaching philosophy statement takes time and effort. For most it is a life-long process. As a fluid and dynamic process, evolving over time and requiring continuous reflection, the teaching philosophy statement must be revisited throughout one’s career (Chism, 1998).



**Figure 1** Evolution of a Teaching Philosophy Statement

### Should a teaching philosophy statement be a private or a shared enterprise?

Several authors (Edgerton, Hutchings, & Quinlan, 1991; Seldin, 1990; Watkins, 1990) recommend developing a teaching philosophy statement through a consultation process with a colleague, a professional development officer or even in consultation with the department chairperson. In contrast, Richlin (1995) recommends that faculty academics work on course portfolio or dossiers privately in order to minimize professional risk, and that the teaching philosophy statement be written last, not first. These differences reflect the diversity in academic communities and suggest that a range of approaches can be successful, depending on individual preferences and on local discipline or institutional cultures.

### Should a teaching philosophy statement follow a particular format?

Various sources have suggested different forms of expression for teaching philosophy statements. These include a value system, a policy statement, a list of objectives and how they are achieved, an essay, or an art form (Atkinson, 2000; Goodyear & Allchin, 1998; Lyons, 1998; O’Neil & Wright, 1997; Rodriguez-Farrar, 1997; Seldin, 1993; Weber, 1997; Zubizarreta, 1995). Ideally, having a standard format would provide consistency for evaluation and promotion/tenure decisions. However, such standardization would not accommodate diverse disciplinary cultures and would come at the expense of creativity. Conceptual models for generating a teaching philosophy statement, such as the one in Figure 2, offer the utility of having a standard framework for teaching philosophy statement development that allows for the

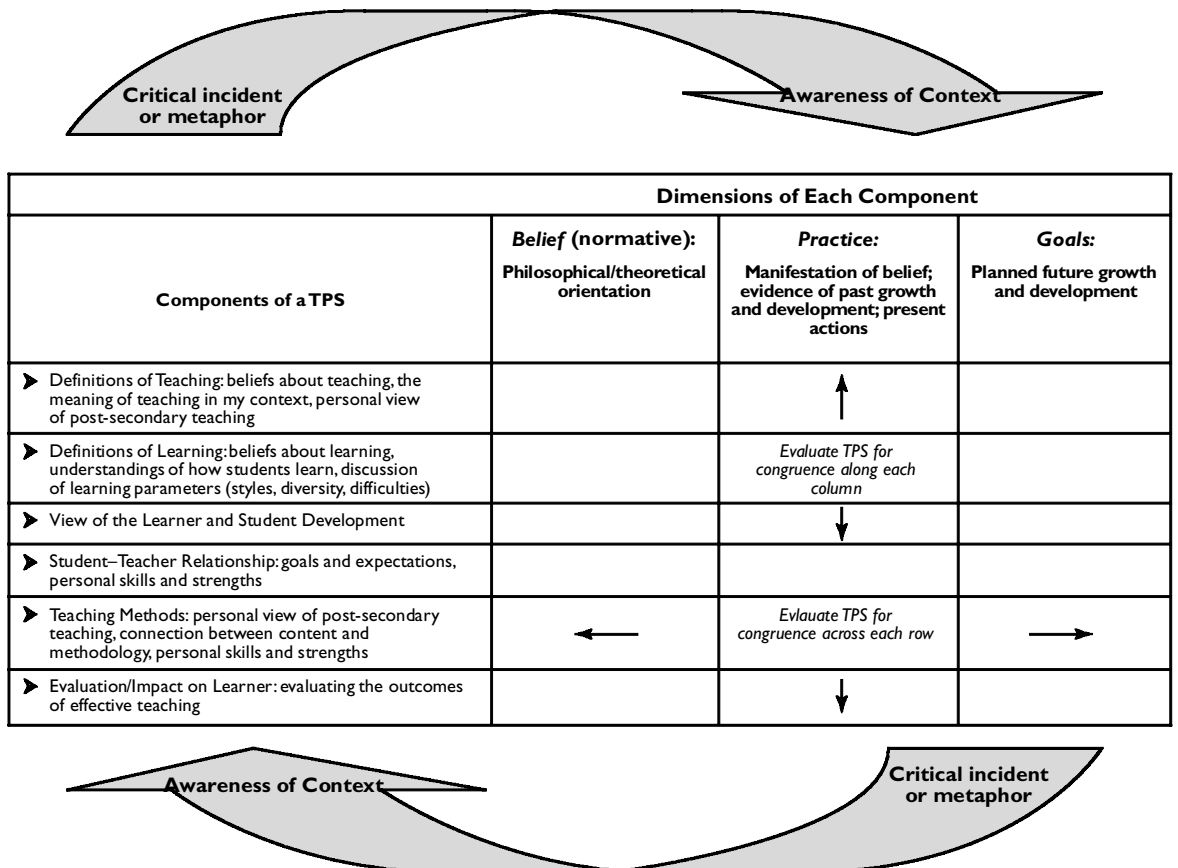


Figure 2 Model for developing a Teaching Philosophy Statement

persuasive expression of different personal and cultural views, while insuring consistent categories of information across statements. As such, the model in Figure 2 is offered as a framework for articulating the teaching philosophy statement that reflects the influence of the research literature as well as the views of the workshop participants.

Within this general framework, there are some more specific format guidelines. The literature recommends that each teaching philosophy statement should be maintained in two formats: one for personal reflection and growth, and the other to be provided to students and academic managers for evaluation (Boyer, 1990; Chism, 1998). There are also suggestions on the recommended length of the document. Chism (1998) and Kreber (2001) suggest that teaching philosophy statements be relatively short, with a length of one to two pages. As a part of a teaching portfolio or dossier, the writer may feel that he or she can clearly represent his or her philosophy within this length constraint given the support of other portfolio or dossier content. Although teaching portfolio or dossiers are increasingly finding a place within hiring, promotion, and tenure processes, the authors have observed a disconcerting trend. Traditionally, teaching portfolio or dossiers contain a wide range of various types of information regarding one's personal teaching career, including course outlines, student evaluations, special honours and recognition, as well as a brief statement of teaching philosophy. However, in the hiring process in particular, there is a growing trend to request the submission of teaching philosophy statements as stand-alone indicators of past teaching achievement, current competence, and future potential. While this use was not originally intended and may no longer be preventable, the potential for misuse of teaching philosophy statements may be reduced by promoting widespread understanding and consensus on clear and comprehensive definitions and guidelines for developing and evaluating teaching philosophy statements. In light of the current expectation that the teaching philosophy statement may be the only representation of the applicant's teaching, the suggestion of one to two pages of text might be inadequate.

## What kinds of language are appropriate for a teaching philosophy statement?

Those experienced in evaluating teaching philosophies 'favor language and concepts that can be broadly appreciated' and recommend avoiding technical terms (Chism, 1998, p. 1). In most cases, 'a straightforward, well-organized . . . narrative, first person approach is preferred' (Chism, 1998, p. 1). While technical terms should be avoided, a writer should be aware of the language and terminology that is meaningful within a particular discipline.

With a general framework, such as the one in Figure 1, and these more specific guidelines from the literature on teaching philosophy statements, it is possible to develop a process or protocol that would guide writers through a stepwise reflective process of expressing their teaching philosophy. Furthermore, this approach accommodates personal preferences and different discipline and institutional cultures.

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## Evaluation guidelines

A review of the literature illuminates the disparity between the copious suggestions for developing teaching philosophy statements and the paucity of criteria by which to evaluate them. Those in a position to evaluate the teaching philosophy statements of others through processes such as hiring, tenure, promotion, honours and recognition, or simply as peer feedback on works-in-progress are faced with a unique challenge. They need to be cognizant of separating their evaluation of the specific views represented in the teaching philosophy statements of others from their evaluation of the quality of the teaching philosophy statement. Evaluation of the teaching philosophy may be difficult if the evaluator's personal teaching philosophy varies significantly from the one reflected in the writer's teaching philosophy statement. Evaluation of the teaching philosophy reflected in the writer's teaching philosophy statement is justified when the focus is to assess the extent to which it is grounded in teaching and learning theory and demonstrates fluency with theory. In some situations, congruence with a programme, departmental or institutional vision for teaching and learning may also be considered. However, negative evaluation of the teaching philosophy based simply on personal disagreement



or difference of worldview and teaching orientation is unjustified.

Table 1 presents a rubric based on valid and credible evaluation criteria for teaching philosophy statements that transcend specific paradigms, orientations or worldviews reflected in the content of a teaching philosophy statement. Grounded in the literature on teaching philosophy statement development, reflecting some of the categories of description of approaches to scholarship of teaching (Trigwell et al., 2000), and validated through the authors' work with graduate students, faculty academics, academic managers and faculty development professionals from post-secondary institutions across Canada, the criteria included in Table 1 were identified as critical criteria for the evaluation of each component of the teaching philosophy statement. This rubric has been developed to rectify our criticism of the lack of evaluation models as well as to increase the practical utility of our proposed model for developing teaching portfolio or dossier statements. Furthermore, in providing an evaluation rubric to academic managers, faculty academics, faculty and academic developers and potential faculty, the assessment criteria become explicit and transparent, fostering greater understanding and cohesiveness in the process as well as maximizing perceptions of fairness.

The proposed rubric allows academic managers to evaluate the quality of the teacher philosophy statement with regard to its level of development. A well-developed teaching philosophy statement will demonstrate not only knowledge and comprehension of teaching and evaluation strategies, but will also demonstrate analysis, synthesis and evaluation of the strategies within the context of the academic faculty member's own beliefs. As such, the teaching philosophy statement will demonstrate critical thinking as proposed by Bloom (1956) rather than simply listing techniques with no critical reflection. As an academic faculty member's knowledge and understanding of the dynamics of teaching and learning increase and change, so too will the teaching philosophy statement change, constantly entertaining opportunities for improvement. As such, it is an evolving statement (Seldin & Annis, 1990), 'reflecting on the choices that result in exemplary teaching' (Millis, 1991, p. 271). The proposed rubric therefore centres on the cohesion and integration of the writer's knowledge, beliefs and practices and provides the academic manager with criteria by which to evaluate the level of critical

reflection (Bloom, 1956) evident in the teaching philosophy statement.

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### **Model for constructing a teaching philosophy statement**

This synergy among self, discipline and institutional context combined with the research literature reviewed above, guided the development of a model for constructing a teaching philosophy statement (Figure 2). An earlier version of the model was 'workshopped' with graduate students, faculty academics, academic managers, and faculty development professionals from post-secondary institutions across Canada. These discussions contributed to refining the model for developing teaching philosophy statements outlined in Figure 2, and to the rubric for evaluating teaching philosophy statements outlined in Table 1. The model and the evaluation rubric remain works-in-progress and are set forth for further reflection, analysis and modification. They are not presented as exhaustive or conclusive criteria for developing a teaching philosophy statement. However, in most cases, they parallel the six dimensions found in a recent study on faculty academics' teaching philosophies (Scott, Chovanec, & Young, 1994):

- the purpose of teaching and learning; the role of the teacher;
- the role of the student; the methods used;
- evaluation and assessment of teaching and learning;
- contextual factors that influence decision making.

Scott and her colleagues (1994) interviewed 14 professors about their teaching philosophies. While their study demonstrated wide variety in the teaching philosophies stated by the professors, it also demonstrated great similarity in the components addressed across them. For example, while some professors viewed themselves as experts in the classroom and others viewed themselves as co-learners in the classroom, both groups felt that a statement regarding the relationship between the student and the teacher in the learning environment was necessary to their teaching philosophies. As seen in Figure 2, the current model features the following six components and two framing devices.

**Table 1** Rubric for evaluating Teaching Philosophy Statements

Components	Ratings
Definitions of teaching and learning	<p><b>Superior:</b> The writer clearly and personally defines and discusses the terms <i>teaching</i> and <i>learning</i> and their relationship, while grounding the discussion within an extensive knowledge of the literature. Extensive and appropriate examples, and reflection on experiences with others are discussed.</p> <p><b>Average:</b> The writer defines and discusses the terms <i>teaching</i> and <i>learning</i> and their relationship, while grounding the discussion within some knowledge of the literature. Some appropriate examples and reflection on experiences with others are discussed.</p> <p><b>Poor:</b> The writer neither defines nor discusses the terms <i>teaching</i> and <i>learning</i> and their relationship, and/or does not ground the discussion within knowledge of the literature. The examples and reflection on experiences with others are inappropriate or missing.</p>
View of the learner	<p><b>Superior:</b> The writer clearly articulates his or her view of the learner within the classroom or other learning environment, and grounds this view within an extensive knowledge of the literature. The writer demonstrates superior understanding of the learners' characteristics and their influence on his or her success in the learning environment.</p> <p><b>Average:</b> The writer articulates his or her view of the learner within the classroom or other learning environment, and grounds this view within some knowledge of the literature. The writer demonstrates some understanding of the learners' characteristics and their influence on his or her success in the learning environment.</p> <p><b>Poor:</b> The writer fails to articulate his or her view of the learner within the classroom or other learning environment, and/or grounds this view within little or no knowledge of the literature. The writer demonstrates little understanding of the learners' characteristics and their influence on his or her success in the learning environment.</p>
Goals and expectations of the student–teacher relationship	<p><b>Superior:</b> The discussion of this relationship is congruent with the writer's definitions of teaching and learning and with his or her view of the learner. Grounded in an extensive knowledge of the literature, examples and reflections strongly illustrate both the nature of the student–teacher interactions as well as the identified critical elements of the relationship.</p> <p><b>Average:</b> The discussion of this relationship shows some congruence with the writer's definitions of teaching and learning and with his or her view of the learner. Grounded in some knowledge of the literature, examples and reflections illustrate either or both the nature of the student–teacher interactions and the identified critical elements of the relationship.</p> <p><b>Poor:</b> The discussion of this relationship shows little congruence with the writer's definitions of teaching and learning and with his or her view of the learner. Grounded in little or no knowledge of the literature, examples and reflections illustrate neither the nature of the student/teacher interactions nor the critical elements of the relationship.</p>
Teaching methods and evaluation	<p><b>Superior:</b> Grounded within an extensive knowledge of the literature as well as discipline-specific expectations and learner characteristics, the writer clearly demonstrates evidence of his or her superior ability to use a wide variety of teaching and assessment strategies. Selection of specific strategies are congruent with the writer's definitions of teaching and learning, views of the learner and understanding of the student–teacher relationship.</p>

*continued . . .*

**Table 1 (continued)** *Rubric for evaluating Teaching Philosophy Statements*

<b>Components</b>	<b>Ratings</b>
Personal context of teaching	<p><b>Average:</b> Grounded within some knowledge of the literature as well as discipline-specific expectations and learner characteristics, the writer demonstrates evidence of his or her ability to use a variety of teaching and assessment strategies. Selection of specific strategies are somewhat congruent with the writer's definitions of teaching and learning, views of the learner and understanding of the student-teacher relationship.</p> <p><b>Poor:</b> Grounded within little or no knowledge of the literature and with little evidence of consideration for discipline-specific expectations and learner characteristics, the writer fails to demonstrate evidence of his or her ability to use a variety of teaching and assessment strategies. Selection of specific strategies are incongruent with the writer's definitions of teaching and learning, views of the learner and understanding of the student/teacher relationship.</p>
Personal context of teaching	<p><b>Superior:</b> Through use of discipline appropriate language, the writer clearly illustrates both an extensive knowledge of a specific institutional climate and articulates how his or her teaching fits into that setting. These considerations are evident in all other components of the TPS. The statement reflects an appropriate balance of personal vs. institutional goals and style.</p> <p><b>Average:</b> Through use of some discipline appropriate language, the writer illustrates both his or her knowledge of general institutional climates and articulates how his or her teaching fits into these types of settings. These considerations are evident in some of the components of the TPS. The statement reflects some balance of personal vs. institutional goals and style.</p> <p><b>Poor:</b> With little use of discipline appropriate language, the writer illustrates poor knowledge of general or specific institutional climates and fails to articulate how his or her teaching fits into these types of settings. Consideration of the context of teaching is not evident in many components of the TPS. The statement does not address any balance of personal vs. institutional goals and style.</p>
Organization	<p><b>Superior:</b> The writer has framed the TPS within a highly illustrative metaphor or critical incident that demonstrates many links to the various components of the teaching philosophy statement. For each component of the model, the writer presents a congruent progression throughout beliefs, practice, and goal dimensions. In addition, the writer provides congruence between components of the model. Critical and reflective thinking as well as specific examples are in evidence in the writer's articulation of his or her beliefs, actions and goals.</p> <p><b>Average:</b> The writer has framed the TPS within a metaphor or critical incident that demonstrates some links to the various components of the teaching philosophy statement. For some components of the model, the writer presents a congruent progression throughout beliefs, practice, and goal dimensions. In addition, the writer provides congruence between some components of the model. Reflection as well as some examples are in evidence in the writer's articulation of his or her beliefs, actions and goals.</p> <p><b>Poor:</b> The writer has not framed the TPS within a metaphor or critical incident that demonstrates links to the various components. For many components of the model, the writer fails to present a congruent progression throughout beliefs, actions and goal dimensions. In addition, the writer fails to provide congruence between some components of the model. Reflection as well as examples are lacking in the writer's articulation of his or her beliefs, actions and goals.</p>

## Components of the teaching philosophy statement

1. *Definition of teaching and*
2. *Definition of learning*

Grounded in the relevant literature (Atkinson, 2000), the writer should engage in a discussion about the relationship between teaching and learning (Ebel, 1983) by defining teaching and learning, providing examples, and drawing on personal experience and views as well as those of colleagues, and/or mentors. The discussion may encompass what teaching and learning means to the writer (Scott et al., 1994), and where priority, if any, is placed.

### 3. *View of the learner*

Extending the discussion on teaching and learning, the writer should engage in a discussion of his/her personal beliefs about the learner (Scott et al., 1994) and the learner's characteristics (for a discussion of relevant characteristics see Bruning, 1994; McKeachie et al., 1986; Svinicki, 1991), and the place and role of the learner in the learning environment.

### 4. *Goals and expectations of the student–teacher relationship*

The definitions and discussion of teaching and learning should articulate the writer's view of the roles of learners in the classroom, should recognize the characteristics and realities of the students in the particular class or programme, and should provide evidence with specific examples and reflection. The discussion may encompass the factors that the writer identifies as critical elements and/or goals of the relationship (Chism, 1998; Scott et al., 1994). Examples may include collegiality, formality, trust and communication.

5. *Discussion of teaching methods and*
6. *Discussion of evaluation*

The writer should discuss various ways of teaching in the content area (Feldman & Paulsen, 1998; McKeachie, 1999; Scott et al., 1994), providing evidence of consideration of the diversity among students. The statement should provide evidence of interest in whether learners are learning and in a variety of ways of assessing student learning

(Gardner, 1983; Scott et al., 1994). The writer should be prepared to discuss her/his personal approaches in an articulate manner.

## Framing devices of the teaching philosophy statement

### 1. *Clear and realistic articulation of the personal context in which one teaches*

The writer should engage in a discussion of how she/he and her/his teaching fits into institutional-, faculty-, and programme-specific mission, goals and objectives (Brookfield, 1990). The statement should reflect terminology and language easily understood within the specific teaching context (Chism, 1998). The entirety of the discussions and themes developed in the teaching philosophy statement should exhibit awareness of the specific teaching context of the writer.

### 2. *Critical incident or metaphor*

Where appropriate and supported by the writer's discipline, the writer can use a critical incident or a metaphor as a building block for organizing the themes of the teaching philosophy statement, or as a summary of the themes developed through the teaching philosophy statement (Chism, 1998).<sup>1</sup> The critical incident or metaphor should be short and should be a starting point or summary point, rather than the focus of the teaching philosophy statement content.

In Figure 2, the 'awareness of context' and the 'critical incident or metaphor', permeate the main components of the teaching philosophy statement. In addition, the model is configured to encourage writers to evaluate their statements for internal consistency. The model directs a writer's attention to the critical construction and analysis of teaching philosophy statements. Within each component, the congruence across beliefs, practice and goals should be evident, as indicated by the arrows shown across columns in Figure 2.

Furthermore, beliefs, practices and goals should also demonstrate congruence across components, as demonstrated by the arrows within each column. For example, within the 'belief' column for each of the six proposed components of a statement, one might expect a definition of teaching that reflects a social constructivist belief system. This system would probably be supported by a view of learners

as active participants in their own learning, by teaching strategies such as active or cooperative learning and by assessment that uses criterion-based methods. When used in this way, the model provides a 'meta-structure' for generating comprehensive and internally consistent teaching philosophy statements.

The workshop consultations based on the model in Figure 2 provided a number of specific recommendations for articulating teaching philosophy statements. In discussing the various critical components in relation to the belief dimension of the teaching philosophy statement, the writer should be able to articulate the conceptual basis upon which a personal orientation is based, and articulate a focus if one exists (examples may include subject-centred, learner-centred, teacher-centred or some combination). The writer also should be able to articulate what the students may expect from the teacher in a specific learning situation. In relation to the practice dimension of the teaching philosophy statement (Brookfield, 1990; Goodyear & Allchin, 1998; Kreber, 2001), the writer should use the first-person voice to provide clear evidence of past and current practice, and the evolution of practice and of professional growth and development. In the form of short anecdotes, the writer may discuss influences, new strategies, and challenges that have been overcome (Shore et al., 1991). In relation to the goals dimension of the teaching philosophy statement, the writer might provide evidence of interest in confronting current and future challenges, present clearly identified areas for future growth and development, or indicate a general focus or theme along which development is planned to occur (Chism, 1998). Examples may include expanding one's repertoire of teaching methods, integrating technology into teaching, expanding one's repertoire of assessment and evaluation tools, or working toward an alternate teaching-learning orientation. These specific suggestions help to elaborate how the model can be effectively utilized.

This literature clearly illustrates the complexity of the task of constructing a teaching philosophy statement. Each teaching philosophy statement will reflect not only personal beliefs about teaching and learning, but also disciplinary cultures, institutional structures and cultures, and stakeholder expectations as well. The teaching philosophy statement needs to reflect an understanding of the multiple parameters and expectations of the teaching context – both in its

opportunities and in its challenges – if it is to provide a sustainable framework for understanding and developing teaching excellence.

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## Conclusion

To address a lack of clear, consistent and comprehensive guidelines for developing teaching philosophy statements, this paper presents a model characterized by scholarship and practical utility. This model is intended to be specific enough to provide concrete guidance, yet generic enough to be valuable to writers in most disciplines and institutional contexts. Once a measure of consistency is achieved in the development of teaching philosophy statements, it will be interesting to see whether further natural evolution results in dramatically different forms of teaching philosophy statements in different disciplines, where 'teaching goals are visibly and legitimately different' (Cross, 1990, p. 16). Furthermore, it is appropriate to continue to monitor the trend of using the teaching philosophy statement in hiring processes, and the increasing use of teaching philosophy statements as indicators of teaching achievement, competence and potential. With continuing development, additional guidelines can be offered and existing guidelines modified, in order to ensure that writers achieve both learning and career advancement advantages from their teaching philosophy statements and that evaluators take a systematic and fair approach to assessing them.

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## Note

1. Chism (1998) cites two excellent resources on the exploration of metaphors to explain teaching and learning (Grasha, 1996; Scheffler, 1960).

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