M.A. TESOL Teaching Philosophy Statement (TPS) Guidelines

Overview

A teaching philosophy statement (TPS) is a brief reflective essay which documents your beliefs and understandings about how students learn an L2, how classroom instruction can best assist that learning, and provides examples of the kinds of teaching strategies (or action steps) through which your beliefs about learning are put into practice. The TPS may also include your teaching goals, your goals for students, and areas in which you would like to further improve your teaching abilities.

The TPS provides an introduction to you as a TESOL professional and to your M.A. TESOL Portfolio. The TPS can serve as the conceptual framework for your ESL/EFL teaching and your entire portfolio. This TPS will also be useful when you apply for teaching jobs or future graduate studies and need to explain your teaching beliefs.

Writing a successful TPS will require serious and thoughtful reflection. To discuss your values and beliefs, you should limit your focus to a few key ideas, and you should be careful not to over-simplify the ideas you select. Also, bear in mind that the rest of your portfolio should support and exemplify the ideas highlighted in your TPS.

General guidelines

- No more than 2 single-spaced pages (less than 1,000 words, font size 12 point)

- Be clear and concise. Show you ability to put your key salient points across in a few words.

- Show your familiarity with TESOL concepts, theory, and research. Avoid “jargon-overload”; in other words, explain what you mean to make this understandable for an educated reader who may not be familiar with TESOL terminology

- Take a positive approach to meeting teaching challenges (i.e., don’t dwell on limitations in our professions).

- Give your statement a structure with an introduction, main body and conclusion.
  
  o The opening paragraph is important, as it is here you grab the reader’s attention or lose it. This paragraph introduces your goals and beliefs and can be a framework for the rest of the statement.
  
  o The middle section gives examples of teaching strategies that reflect your interests and experience, as well as your knowledge of the field.
  
  o The closing section might reinforce your message, and it should address your hopes and goals as a TESOL professional.

- Read your statement very carefully. Have your drafts read by portfolios advisors, your peers, and other TESOL colleagues.
M.A. TESOL Teaching Philosophy Statement (TPS) Guidelines (continued)

One way to format a TPS

The following reflects one common way of structuring a TPS. You are not required to use this format, just to follow the General Guidelines on page 1.

… structured “from an introductory statement of your values and beliefs regarding teaching and learning; to a discussion of discipline-specific teaching strategies which demonstrate how these beliefs are put into practice; to future teaching goals which highlight a clear commitment to continuous improvement; and, finally to a conclusion which highlights two or three main points which summarize the TPS and clearly demonstrate your commitment and dedication to teaching and learning.”
-- M.A Jorge Luis Espinoza Campos, XXIV Panama Tesol Annual Congress 2010

Recommended readings (to be posted to ilearn)


Other TPS resources

Writing a Teaching Philosophy Statement
Lee Haugen, Center for Teaching Excellence, Iowa State University, March 1998 http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/philosophy.html

TiPPS for Teaching Philosophy Statements (Univ. of Hawai'i at Manoa) http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/tipps/

Writing a Teaching Philosophy Statement (University Center for the Advancement of Teaching, The Ohio State University) http://ucat.osu.edu/teaching_portfolio/philosophy/philosophy2.html

Sample Teaching Philosophy Statements – University of Pennsylvania http://www_ctl.sas.upenn.edu/tools/philos.html

Other Links:

http://instructional1.calstatela.edu/lkamhis/tesl565_sp02/oka_taka/teachphil.htm

http://www2.hawaii.edu/~sford/philosophy/index.html