



Reviewing Supporting Materials: Teaching

Workshop Outcome

- Participants will understand the purpose of reviewing teaching materials, gain confidence in their ability to glean useful information from a variety of sources, and develop skills to craft a reflective and goal-oriented teaching statement.

Resources for the Facilitator (may also be assigned to participants)

Resources on student evaluation of instruction:

- [Outliers in the academy: Exploring the relationship between student evaluations and faculty diversity](#), Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, Kennesaw State University
- [Re-evaluating teaching evaluations](#), Susan D'Agostino and Jay Kosegarten, Association of American Colleges and Universities (2015)

Resources for writing a reflective teaching statement

- [Brookfield's four lenses: Becoming a critically reflective teacher](#)
- [The reflective teaching statement](#), University of California at Irvine Division of Teaching Excellence and Innovation
- [Teaching statements](#), Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching
- [Writing a teaching philosophy statement](#), Iowa State University Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching
- [Radical hope: A teaching manifesto](#), Kevin Gannon (2016)
- [Teaching portfolio](#), Duquesne University Center for Teaching Excellence

Product

Elements of a reflective teaching statement (draft)

Before The Session

Ask participants to gather evidence of their professional work in teaching, such as syllabi, learning goals, assignments, course feedback, CV that is updated with professional development activities, and evidence of attendance at professional development conferences and workshops. They will need a laptop for this session.

Ask participants to compile their course evaluation data (from [Duquesne University CTE](#)):

Here are suggestions for compiling course evaluation data so that it is easier to use.

- Compile all of the quantitative evaluations into a table, such as in the below example.

Course feedback question	Introduction to Psych Fall 2001	Introduction to Psych Spring 2002	Abnormal Psych Fall 2002	Abnormal Psych Spring 2003
The instructor explained the course objectives clearly	3.45	3.76	4.12	4.55

The instructor was well prepared for class sessions	4.00	4.12	3.78	4.45
Question #3, etc.	Etc.			

- Present official university summaries of quantitative evaluations in chronological order.
- Prepare and present one or two qualitative (comment sheets) from students and include after the university summary sheet. If you have taught many classes (more than 10), you might want to present only the most recent evaluations.
- Compile sample comments from informal mid-term evaluations and final evaluations for each class (no more than one page per class).
- Compile student comments from formal end-of-semester evaluations into one document, listing selected comments under certain themes (e.g., class preparation, use of technology)

Share a list of reflective questions with participants before the session to prompt reflection and help generate conversation/writing. The following list is not exhaustive, but may be helpful as a starting point.

- 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?
- How do you value differences in your students?
- 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?

Pre-Session Assessment Questions

Have you written a reflective statement before?
[yes/no]

Do you understand the purpose of the reflective teaching statement?
[Not at all; Slightly; Moderately; Very; Extremely]

Do you feel prepared to write a reflective teaching statement?
[Not at all; Slightly; Moderately; Very; Extremely]

Workshop Outline

0:00 (20 m.)

Welcome and Teaching Manifesto

You might have written a statement of your teaching philosophy before, perhaps when you were applying for teaching jobs. We all hold values and beliefs about good teaching that form the core of our identities as teachers and shape our work with students. I would like you to reflect on your core values, beliefs, and identity as a teacher in the form of a teaching manifesto: a short (200-250 words), passionate, direct version of a statement of teaching philosophy. Feel free to format as bullet points or a paragraph, but limit yourself to 200-250 words.

[Show them a couple of examples, perhaps from [Tomorrow's Professor](#), [The Tattooed Professor](#), and [Teach with Class](#). Give about 15 minutes to work on this.]

0:20 (20 m.)

Group discussion: Making sense of student feedback / How not to get paralyzed by student feedback

Let's think about your teaching feedback from students in light of what you value and believe about teaching. Positive feedback from students should affirm what you value and believe about good teaching. Are there comments from students that are specific and that illustrate your values and beliefs?

[Encourage participants to share some examples from their own course feedback.]

No one receives stellar evaluations from students all the time. It's difficult, but don't get bogged down by occasional negative comments. If you are particularly affected by negative comments, consider writing a private response that you don't share with anyone.

How do you improve your teaching from student feedback? Look for *patterns* in both positive and negative feedback.

Focus on *actionable* feedback in those patterns:

- Will you continue/strengthen what led to the positive feedback that is aligned with your values and beliefs about good teaching?
- Is there something you can do to address what led to negative feedback? For example, if students comment that they wished they didn't have to do group work, consider whether group work serves a learning goal for your course. If it does, consider how to re-structure the group work in future (including how you frame that group work). If students comment that your lectures are boring, consider what you can do to make them more interesting or engaging. If students comment that your class meets right after lunch and they're sleepy, ignore that. Sometimes, the action that you might take is one that makes the purpose of your pedagogical choices clear to students. For example, you might tell students why you assign group work: it reflects what they'll do in the workplace, it develops good leadership and collaboration skills, it teaches them how to work with less-than-wonderful others.

The actions you take in response to negative feedback – if you take action – should also affirm what you value and believe about good teaching.

[Encourage participants to share some examples of actions they are considering based on their own course feedback.]

0:40 (45 m.)

Activity: Reflecting on student evaluations writing exercise

As you consider how to write the teaching portion of your letter of self-evaluation, consider these suggestions (from [Vanderbilt's CFT](#)):

- Make your Teaching Statement **brief** and **well-written**.
- Use **narrative, first-person** approach. This allows the Teaching Statement to be both personal and reflective.

- Be sincere and unique. Avoid clichés, especially ones about how much passion you have for teaching.
- Make it **specific** rather than abstract. Ground your ideas in 1-2 **concrete examples**, whether experienced or anticipated. This will help the reader to better visualize you in the classroom.
- Be **humble**. Mention students in an enthusiastic, not condescending way, and illustrate your willingness to learn from your students and colleagues.

(from [Duquesne University CTE](#)): Take some time to read over your compiled student evaluations and answer the following questions. Use this as a starting point to prepare a brief (1-3 paragraph) reflection on your student evaluations that can be part of your letter of self-evaluation.

1. What seem to be your strengths as a teacher? What do students consistently say that they really appreciate about your teaching?
2. What seem to be your weaknesses? Are there certain negative comments that students make over and over again?
3. Have you taken steps to address those negative evaluations? What did you do? Did it work? How do you know?
4. If you haven't taken steps yet to improve those evaluations, what are some things you might work on? What resources are available to help you? What are some steps you can take?
5. Describe your development as a teacher from the first time you taught until now. How have you changed? What has stayed the same? What type of teacher would you like to be in the future? What are you doing to become that teacher?

1:25 (5 m.)

Conclusion

Assign any "homework" for the next module.

Assign Post-Session Assessment Questions.

Post-Session Assessment Questions

Do you understand the purpose of the reflective teaching statement?

[Not at all; Slightly; Moderately; Very; Extremely]

Do you feel prepared to write a reflective teaching statement?

[Not at all; Slightly; Moderately; Very; Extremely]

How valuable was this session in helping you think carefully about your teaching?

[Not at all; Slightly; Moderately; Very; Extremely]

Optional: offer an additional 90-minute group writing session to help participants continue working on the reflective teaching statement.