



# WPI

# Developing a Teaching Statement

Chrysanthe Demetry, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering

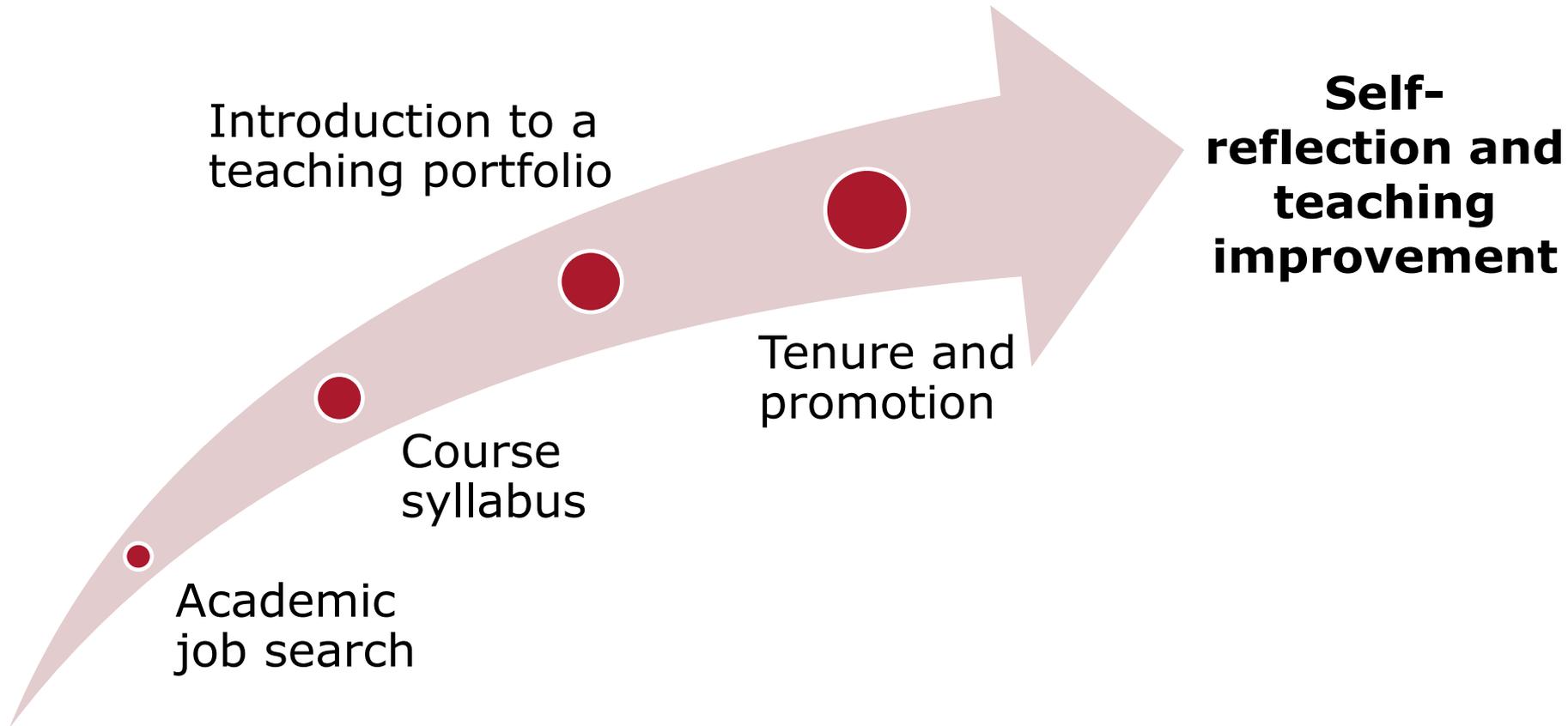
Director, Morgan Teaching & Learning Center

Email: [cdemetry@wpi.edu](mailto:cdemetry@wpi.edu)



# Uses of a Teaching Philosophy

---



# Learning Objectives

---

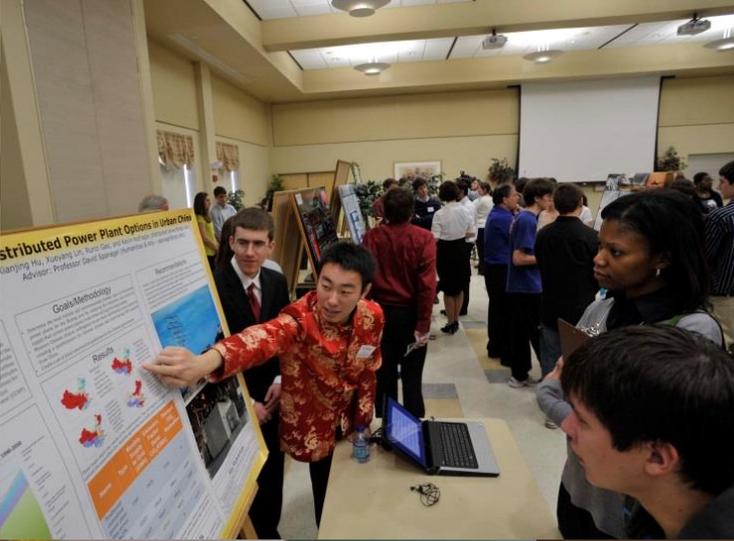
*After this workshop, you should be able to:*

- Describe key elements of a well-written teaching statement
- Identify strengths and areas for development in your own teaching statement
- Draw upon additional resources to refine your statement

# Exercise 1: Individual Warmup

---

What are one or two examples of how students learn best in your discipline?



# Exercise 2: Think-Pair-Share

---

What are some key components or characteristics of an effective teaching philosophy or teaching statement?

# General Guidelines for Teaching Statements (Chism, 1998)

---

- Keep it brief: 1-2 pages unless instructed otherwise
- Use a narrative, first person approach
- Make it reflective and personal, *but* keep the focus on students and student learning
- Discuss goals for your students, methods to achieve those goals, and approaches to assessment
- Explain your specific disciplinary context
- Offer evidence of practice and concrete examples

# Interests of a Search Committee

---

- Is this person *enthusiastic* about teaching?
- Is the candidate *knowledgeable and thoughtful* about teaching?
- Does this person show *promise for teaching effectiveness* in our program?
- How good a *fit* is this candidate for our curriculum and the needs and expectations of our students?
- (What is the quality of the candidate's *writing*?)

# A Rubric for Evaluating Teaching Statements\*

---

1. Goals for student learning
  2. Enactment of goals: teaching methods
  3. Assessment of student learning
- alignment of 1-3***
4. Creating an inclusive learning environment
  5. Structure, rhetoric, and language

***specificity, disciplinary context,  
illustrative examples***

\* Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT),  
University of Michigan

<b>Possible Components</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Needs work</b>	<b>Weak</b>
<p><b>Goals for student learning:</b> What knowledge, skills, and attitudes are important for student success in your discipline? What are you preparing students for? What are key challenges in the teaching-learning process?</p>	<p>Goals are clearly articulated and specific and go beyond the knowledge level, including skills, attitudes, career goals, etc. Goals are sensitive to the context of the instructor's discipline. They are concise but not exhaustive.</p>	<p>Goals are articulated although they may be too broad or not specific to the discipline. Goals focus on basic knowledge, ignoring skills acquisition and affective change.</p>	<p>Articulation of goals is unfocused, incomplete, or missing.</p>
<p><b>Enactment of goals (teaching methods):</b> What teaching methods do you use? How do these methods contribute to your goals for students? Why are these methods appropriate for use in your discipline?</p>	<p>Enactment of goals is specific and thoughtful. Includes details and rationale about teaching methods. The methods are clearly connected to specific goals and are appropriate for those goals. Specific examples of the method in use within the disciplinary context are given.</p>	<p>Description of teaching methods not clearly connected to goals or if connected, not well developed (seems like a list of what is done in the classroom). Methods are described but generically, no example of the instructor's use of the methods within the discipline is communicated.</p>	<p>Enactment of goals is not articulated. If there is an attempt at articulating teaching methods, it is basic and unreflective.</p>
<p><b>Assessment of goals (measuring student learning):</b> How do you know your goals for students are being met? What sorts of assessment tools do you use (e.g., tests, papers, portfolios, journals), and why? How do assessments contribute to student learning? How do assessments communicate disciplinary priorities?</p>	<p>Specific examples of assessment tools are clearly described. Assessment tools are aligned with teaching goals and teaching methods. Assessments reinforce the priorities and context of the discipline both in content and type.</p>	<p>Assessments are described, but not in connection to goals and teaching methods. Description is too general, with no reference to the motivation behind the assessments. There is no clear connection between the assessments and the priorities of the discipline.</p>	<p>Assessment of goals is not articulated or mentioned only in passing.</p>
<p><b>Creating an inclusive learning environment, addressing one or more of the following questions:</b> •How do your own and your students' identities (e.g., race, gender, class), background, experience, and levels of privilege affect the classroom? •How do you account for diverse learning styles? •How do you integrate diverse perspectives into your teaching?</p>	<p>Portrays a coherent philosophy of inclusive education that is integrated throughout the philosophy. Makes space for diverse ways of knowing, and/or learning styles. Discussion of roles is sensitive to historically underrepresented students. Demonstrates awareness of issues of equity within the discipline.</p>	<p>Inclusive teaching is addressed but in a cursory manner or in a way that isolates it from the rest of the philosophy. Author briefly connects identity issues to aspects of his/her teaching.</p>	<p>Issues of inclusion are not addressed or addressed in an awkward manner. There is no connection to teaching practices.</p>
<p><b>Structure, rhetoric and language:</b> How is the reader engaged? Is the language used appropriate to the discipline? How is the statement thematically structure?</p>	<p>The statement has a guiding structure and/or theme that engages the reader and organizes the goals, methods, and assessments articulated in the statement. Jargon is avoided and teaching terms (e.g., critical thinking) are given specific definitions that apply to the instructor's disciplinary context. Specific, rich examples are used to bolster statements of goals, methods, and assessments. Grammar and spelling are correct.</p>	<p>The statement has a structure and/or theme that is not connected to the ideas actually discussed in the statement, or, organizing structure is weak and does not resonate within the disciplinary context. Examples are used but seem generic. May contain some jargon.</p>	<p>No overall structure present. Statement is a collection of disconnected statements about teaching. Jargon is used liberally and not supported by specific definitions or examples. Needs much revision.</p>

**Rubric for Statements of Teaching Philosophy** developed by Matt Kaplan, Chris O'Neal, Debbie Meizlish, Rosario Carillo, and Diana Kardia

# Peer Review Exercise (15 min)

---

## About 5 min:

- Exchange teaching statements with a partner
- Read the statement with the rubric categories in mind

## About 10 min (5 min for each partner):

- Identify strengths: points that came through clearly and persuasively
- Pose questions and areas for development

# Closing Exercise: Next Steps

---

Record your thoughts on what to do next to further develop your teaching statement.

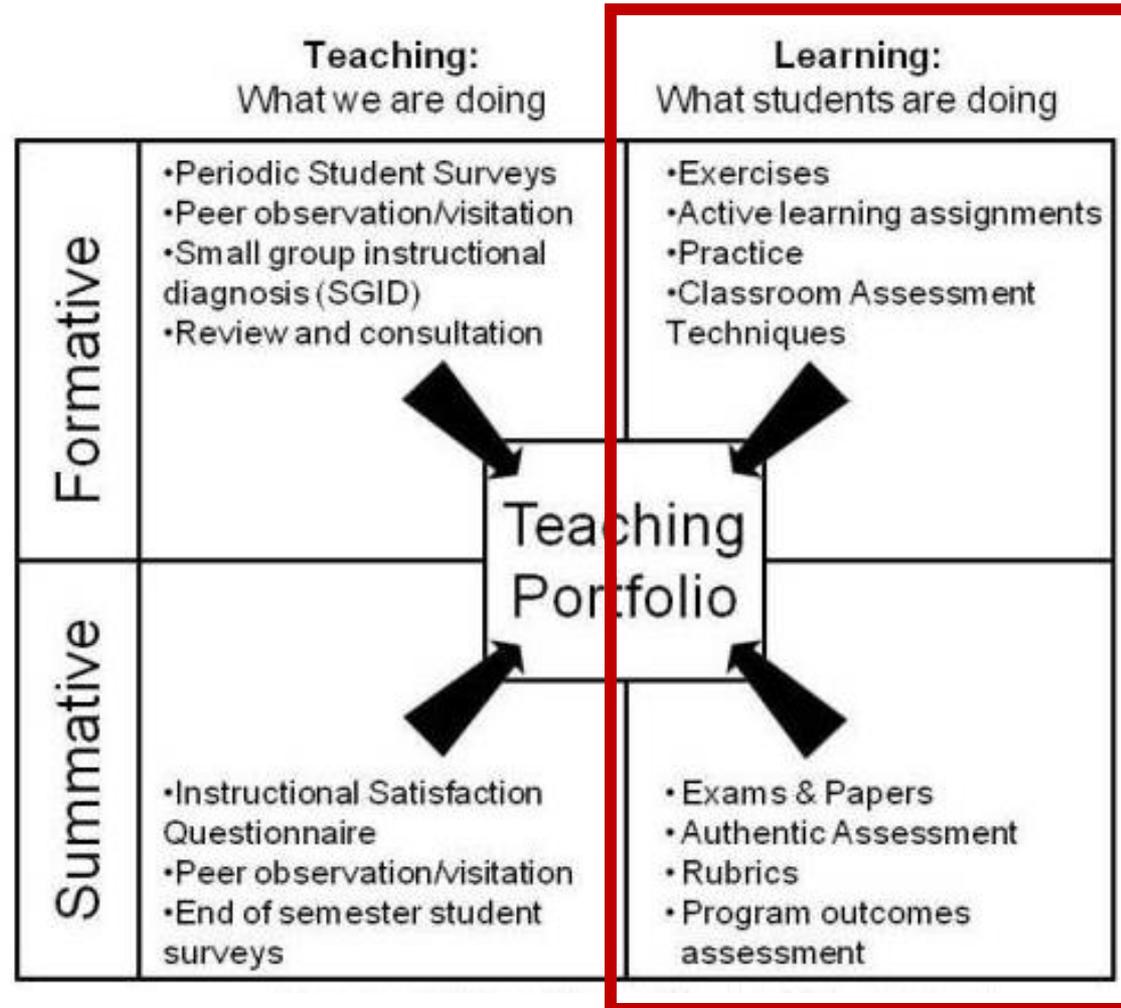
# Modes of Assessment for Teaching and Learning\*

## Formative:

Low stakes,  
gather and  
provide feedback,  
track progress

## Summative:

High stakes,  
evaluate learning  
against a standard



\*Adapted from University of North Florida  
and Cornell University

# Creating an Inclusive Environment for a Diverse Student Body\*

---



[www.cirtl.net/  
diversityresources](http://www.cirtl.net/diversityresources)

## **Learner-Content Interactions**

- How participants experience content
- How content can be adapted and varied

## **Learner-Instructor Interactions**

- Respectful teaching behaviors
- Accessibility for all

## **Learner-Learner Interactions**

- Setting the tone for respectful inclusion in collaborative work
- Respect and value for all ideas

\* From Cornell University  
Teaching Statement Workshop

## Resources on Writing Teaching Statements for the Academic Job Search

Compiled by Prof. Chrys Demetry, Director, Morgan Teaching and Learning Center, WPI

### Tools for Reflection

These free, research-based instruments may help you reflect on your teaching beliefs, intentions, and actions and be aware of alternative views of good teaching:

Teaching Perspectives Inventory: [www.teachingperspectives.com/tpi/](http://www.teachingperspectives.com/tpi/)

Teaching Goals Inventory (Thomas A. Angelo and K. Patricia Cross)

The URL is long and complex. Google it and you'll find it on the University of Iowa website.

### Two Great Guides

"Writing a Winning Teaching Statement," Columbia University Graduate School of Arts & Sciences Teaching Center. The URL is long and complex. Google the title and you'll find it.

C. O'Neal, D. Meizlish, & M. Kaplan (2007). "Writing a Statement of Teaching Philosophy for the Academic Job Search," CRLT Occasional Papers No. 23. Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, University of Michigan. [http://www.crlt.umich.edu/sites/default/files/resource\\_files/CRLT\\_no23.pdf](http://www.crlt.umich.edu/sites/default/files/resource_files/CRLT_no23.pdf)

### Examples of Teaching Statements from a Variety of Disciplines

University of Michigan, Teaching Philosophies from U-M grad students and post-docs:

<http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tstpum>

University of Pennsylvania, Sample Research and Teaching Statements:

<http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/writtenmaterials/teachingresearchsamples.php>

### Additional References

Nancy Chism (1998), Developing a philosophy of teaching statement. *Essays on Teaching Excellence* 9(3). Athens, GA: Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education.

University of North Florida, Office of Faculty Enhancement, Typology of Modes for Assessment of Teaching and Learning: [https://www.unf.edu/ofe/teaching\\_learning/Assessment.aspx](https://www.unf.edu/ofe/teaching_learning/Assessment.aspx)

Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL Network), Diversity Resources: <http://www.cirtl.net/diversityresources>