Components of the Philosophy Statement

I.   ***Why do you (want to) teach?***

Why are you drawn to the rewards and challenges of teaching? What is it that you can accomplish in teaching that you find particularly valuable and worthwhile?

Example: I believe each and every child has the potential to bring something unique and special to the world. I will help children to develop their potential by believing in them as capable individuals. I will assist children in discovering who they are, so they can express their own opinions and nurture their own ideas. I have a vision of a world where people learn to respect, accept, and embrace the differences between us, as the core of what makes life so fascinating.

II.   ***What do you (want to) teach?***

What are the specific subjects and courses you are prepared to teach? What are your *objectives for student learning*? Why are these objectives important? Do your objectives differ depending on the type of course or the background of students you are teaching? If so, how? What should students gain from taking your courses?

Example: Every classroom presents a unique community of learners that varies not only in abilities, but also in learning styles. My role as a teacher is to give children the tools with which to cultivate their own gardens of knowledge. To accomplish this goal, I will teach to the needs of each child so that all learners can feel capable and successful. I will present curriculum that involves the interests of the children and makes learning relevant to life. I will incorporate themes, integrated units, projects, group work, individual work, and hands-on learning in order to make children active learners. Finally, I will tie learning into the world community to help children become caring and active members of society.

III.   ***How do you (want to) teach?***

What teaching methods and strategies do you use to meet your objectives? Do you prefer lecturing, leading discussions, or group work? Do you use a combination of these methods? *Why and in what circumstances?* What kinds of assignments and

assessments do you use? *Why?* How do you take into account different learning styles and the challenges of teaching students of varying aptitudes and levels of interest in the topic? How do you approach teaching non-traditional students? Do you use instructional technology? *If so, why and how?*

Example: My classroom will be a caring, safe, and equitable environment where each child can blossom and grow. I will allow children to become responsible members of our classroom community by using strategies such as class meetings, positive discipline, and democratic principles. In showing children how to become responsible for themselves as well as their own learning, I am giving them the tools to become successful in life, to believe in themselves, and to love themselves.

IV.   *How do/will you measure your effectiveness?*

How do you know whether you are meeting your objectives? How can you tell if your students are learning? How do you use student evaluations to develop new strategies for engaging student participation or to meet other objectives? Has your teaching been observed by a faculty member or other evaluator? If so, how did you use the feedback provided to improve your teaching skills? Have you had a class or teaching presentation videotaped? If so, what did you learn from this experience?

Example: While high student achievement and academic success are ways that may show my effectiveness, ultimately, I want my students to be able to think for themselves and believe in themselves. I believe my success will be determined by how my students engage with their classmates and demonstrate their learning not only through tests or quizzes, but in the type of people they become. If I have taught my students to become lifelong learners and have respect for themselves and each other, then I have done my job successfully.

SOURCES:

http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/ed416/sample.html
http://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/writing-teaching-philosophy-statement