

# Philosophy of Education Statement

If you are seeking new job opportunities in the teaching profession, having a clear, concise, and effective Philosophy of Education statement, often referred to as a Teaching Philosophy, is critical. You may need one to obtain your first teaching position, a new position, tenure, or a promotion. Face it, at some point in your professional career you will need to articulate your personal Philosophy of Education, so start now and update your statement each year. This reflective exercise will allow you to see your growth within the profession, and will result in renewed dedication to the field of education.

More and more teaching candidates are using this reflective piece to set themselves apart from the competition. So why has the use of a Philosophy of Education statement increased?

- The use of a portfolio in the job search process has become more common, and the statement is the introduction to the portfolio.
- The job market is extremely competitive, and candidates need something to set them apart from the competition.
- Writing your statement provides an opportunity for personal growth and satisfaction, and can revitalize your dedication to the profession.
- More teacher awards are being given out, and they often require a Philosophy of Education statement.

A Philosophy of Education statement is generally one to one and a half pages, double-spaced, and illustrates an educator's beliefs about education, learning, and working with students. The statement covers numerous different issues, and therefore must be very concise, because you don't want to ramble on for more than two pages. The writing of the statement can vary, but most use a straightforward, narrative essay approach. More creative educators may use a poem format. Others may pose questions and then their responses.

The statement may articulate the teacher's personal feelings about a variety of issues, such as:

- Why you decided to enter the teaching profession.
- How you define teaching.
- What style of teaching you use and why you feel it is effective.
- How you wish to be remembered by your students.
- Why you believe teaching is a valuable career.
- What you do to help your students learn and develop as individuals.
- Someone who affected your life and your work as a teacher, such as a mentor, a theorist, a researcher, or an author.
- How you feel that learning occurs.
- What obstacles students face and how you can help them to overcome these difficulties.
- How your personal characteristics and approach to teaching impact on the learning and development of your students.

The writing of the statement must be reflective, personal, and exceptionally clear. You will be judged on grammar, spelling, and sentence structure, as well as on your thoughts about teaching. It is critical to have a well-organized, thoughtful, and error-free document, which gives a vivid picture of you as an educator. Using examples or metaphors may help when you are crafting your statement. Write the paper with the reader in mind: in other words, use terminology that the

reader will understand, and discuss issues that the reader will want to know about. Think carefully about what the reader will want to discover about you, such as a sample lesson or class activity that demonstrates your teaching style. Then develop the answers to those questions. Understand that if you have a few different audiences, you may need to tailor your statement to the audience; each statement should focus on the specific institute or position. Realize also that your statement will change over time to correspond to your developing beliefs, values, views, and approach to teaching.

The creation of the statement helps educators grow professionally; it helps define classroom goals, increases emotional investment in teaching, and helps to enhance awareness. It is a highly thought-provoking exercise, and you must be able to clearly articulate your goals and vision, as well as your road map to successfully reaching them.

Many educators cringe at the thought of writing their Philosophy of Education. They procrastinate, or worry about their capacity to express themselves, or wonder if they really need to produce a Philosophy of Education statement.