



HARVARD

THE DEREK BOK CENTER FOR
TEACHING AND LEARNING

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

MODULE 8 UNIT 1

Teaching portfolio component: Teaching philosophy statement
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Learning outcomes:

LO3: Analyze and revise your teaching philosophy and teaching goals.

LO4: Assess the strength of your teaching philosophy as a reflection of both your discipline and personal teaching style.

Plagiarism declaration:

1. I know that plagiarism is wrong. Plagiarism is to use another's work and pretend that it is one's own.

2. This assignment is my own work.

3. I have not allowed, and will not allow, anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.

4. I acknowledge that copying someone else's assignment (or part of it) is wrong, and declare that my assignments are my own work.

Start writing here:

I was asked why a driving instructor would take a Harvard course to improve on teaching. My answer: Driving as a discipline has a broad coverage. I was a corporate trainer before I became a driving instructor. And in the field of driver education, there are those who formulate government policies, author curriculum and train other practitioners in the field. It's all about teaching.

If there is a Church of Teaching, the best teachers can almost be canonized as saints and those who preach their teachings are disciples. The Catholic church canonized some great teachers. As a former Jesuit school student, I was told the order's founder St. Ignatius of Loyola was a really good teacher. The rival de La Salle schools claimed their founder Saint Jean Baptiste de la Salle was the patron saint of all teachers. Saint Thomas Aquinas was touted as the patron of ALL universities and students.

I analogize my teaching philosophy borrowing from religion. It does not equate to support or disapproval of any religion. It also applies for atheists. Teaching philosophy is a faith. We must believe in what we teach.

I'm getting some spiritual guidance. Pope Benedict XVI decreed in 2007 a document¹, nicknamed "the Ten Commandments for Drivers", starting with "1. Thou Shalt Not Kill."

To cogitate on my philosophy and commit to using it in my teaching, here are my reflections. If it sounds too much like the apostle's creed, it might as well be. We are the apostles of the Church of Teaching.

On inclusion, I believe in anybody can be taught. Driver education has students with diverse backgrounds, from high school students to post-doctorate fellows, from new arrivals to the home-grown who knew-it-all, and from the orthodox to the atheistic. My goal as a teacher is to



inspire them, but I may have to use different inspiration. And at the end they will all get the same driver's license.

On being compassionate, I believe in understanding each student's unique challenges, be it intrinsic or extrinsic. I believe in building student-teacher relations.

On lesson planning, a structured plan does not have to be boring. There are always good stories to tell and the best stories usually come from my students. I believe in a backward design framework lesson plan as they bring learning outcomes to match.

On active learning, I believe in engaging students by getting them excited. I use hooks, stimulants, storytelling, group assignments, debates, student presentations, role playing and think-pair-share. I have also learned how to use peer reviews.

On assignments, I believe in using clear, relevant assignments that align with the learning. I believe in the use of fair and impartial grading guidelines. I believe in a comprehensive syllabus.

On feedback, I believe in formative feedback. Feedback is a two-way street, constructive feedback to students help them learn and feedback from students help me teach.

Teachers teach students, successful teachers teach learners and teaching gods teach apostles.

¹ Document of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. *Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of the Road* 2007-06-19