# Writing a Teaching Statement or Philosophy

**The purpose of a teaching statement is to provide the search committee a sense of how you would teach your courses and manage your classrooms.**

* Identify Your Pedagogical Approach (Theory): Social constructionist, expressivist, active-learning, genre-based, social cognitivist, pragmatism, process, postprocess, critical/cultural... Whatever you choose, explain what it is, and be ready to define, explain, and elaborate in interviews. While explaining your theory, drop a few names.
* Briefly Describe Courses You are Prepared to Teach: Use your prior teaching experiences and your research areas to highlight 3-5 standard undergraduate courses you are prepared to teach right now. For R1 universities, you might mention a couple graduate seminars. Note: Make sure you mention two or three “service” courses, such as first-year writing and survey courses, which tend to be taught at the 100- and 200- levels.
* Describe the Assignments You Use: Highlight a few of the projects you ask students to complete and the kinds of exams you use. Keep in mind that you aren’t just applying to teach composition, so describe papers and exams you might ask students to complete in other kinds of courses.
* Explain Your Classroom Management Strategies: Describe how you manage classroom discussions, how you get students collaborating on a task, how you keep students active in the classroom, and how you present new information (e.g., lecture, activities, question-and-answer, videos).
* Take Your Readers Into Your Classroom: Describe a typical day in your classroom. If a member of the search committee were to visit your class, what would they see?

## Don’ts:

* Don’t tell them you run a “student-centered classroom.” That’s become a tired cliche, and even light probing from the search committee reveals that it’s usually not true. Troublemakers on the committee will ask questions that reveal that you are indeed managing the classroom (and therefore at its center), not your students.
* Don’t go negative about other teaching practices. For example, you may think traditional lecturing is a waste of time, but their “sage on the stage” professor is on the search committee and she thinks lecturing is wonderful and essential. You may think grading is unethical, but you will run into a professor who thinks grades are essential to motivating students.
* Don’t throw shade at other scholarly approaches or theories of teaching. You will discover that champions of scholarly and pedagogical approaches you thought were dead, such as New Criticism, Freudian Criticism, and Current-Traditional Rhetoric, are alive and well in many colleges and universities. You’re better off staying positive about your approach than going negative on other approaches.

## Questions you can ask to prompt your writing:

In your material, focus on tutoring practices; values/ethics/mantras; experiences and stories with students/in the classroom or with clients:

* What do you value as an instructor/tutor?
* What skills have you acquired or developed?
* Have you conducted any teaching/WC-based research? Have you taken on any leadership roles, or community/project initiatives?
* What material from your self-, peer, and client/student assessment speak to you the most, and what does it say about your positionality as a teacher/tutor?
* How are you practicing inclusivity? How are you accommodating to students? (Here, think about student population as well + your teaching/tutoring practices)