

Teaching Tips

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Department of Family & Social Medicine Faculty Development E-Newsletter

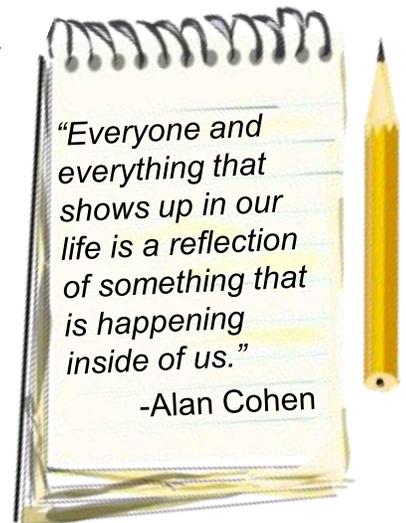


Writing a Statement of Teaching Philosophy

Whether you work with one student a year or teach students daily, teaching is an important part of being a clinician. Taking some time to think and write about your personal approach to teaching is a good way to both reflect on your experiences and prepare for future teaching opportunities.

A teaching philosophy is a narrative statement that includes your conception of learning and teaching, goals for students, and plans for implementing your philosophy. A well-defined teaching philosophy can help teachers remain focused on their goals and take time to appreciate the personal and professional rewards of teaching.

Formulating a teaching philosophy is a reflective process that involves describing and analyzing your teaching methods and considering areas for improvement. Teaching philosophies are generally brief (1-2 pages) and written in the first person. Using metaphors to describe the teaching and learning process can be useful in getting started (even if the metaphor doesn't make it into the philosophy). Incorporating specific examples of positive teaching experiences makes the resulting teaching philosophy a useful guide to follow in your daily work. Communicating your teaching philosophy with students can also help you align your goals with the goals of your learners.



Points to cover	Questions to ask yourself	Examples to include
Your beliefs about learning	How do I think students learn best?	<i>I believe students learn best when clear goals are established at the start of a session.</i>
Your concept of teaching	Am I a coach, facilitator, role-model, or mentor?	<i>I aspire to teach my students by role-modeling behaviors I would like them to learn.</i>
Your goals for students	What knowledge or skills do I want students to obtain as a result of my teaching?	<i>My goal is help students critically appraise medical information so they can use evidence in clinical decision making.</i>
Your strategies for achieving these goals	What methods do I utilize to help students reach these goals?	<i>I frequently ask students to identify and locate sources of information and evaluate their quality.</i>
Your interactions with students	What are my attitudes toward advising and mentoring students?	<i>I take time at the start of a session to ask students how they are doing and make myself available as an informal mentor.</i>
Your teaching experiences	What are some appropriate and relevant examples of your teaching?	<i>I sometimes ask my students to practice what they will say to the patient in a role-play to help them understand issues of cultural sensitivity.</i>
Your methods of assessment	How do I assess my students' level of understanding?	<i>I ask students to self assess their performance before I give them feedback.</i>
Your plans for professional growth	How will I continue growing as a teacher?	<i>I will continue to work with students whenever possible, and to ask for feedback from my learners.</i>

References / Resources:

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Teaching Tips is a monthly e-newsletter for Faculty, Residents, and Community Preceptors sponsored by the DFSM Faculty Development Fellowship at Montefiore Medical Center. *Teaching Tips* will include practical teaching techniques for busy physicians who want to enhance teaching and learning at their clinical practices. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for future topics please contact Ellen Tattelman at etattelm@montefiore.org, Zoon Naqvi at zoon.naqvi@einstein.yu.edu or Molly FitzGerald at mofitzge@montefiore.org.