Statement of Teaching Philosophy Assignment (pd assignment #1)

general overview
A teaching philosophy is a brief statement that presents your theoretical approach to teaching, discusses some basic premises and principles from which you work, describes your role in the classroom, and considers how you manage your classroom and evaluate your students. Depending on their purpose and audience, teaching philosophies often range from very theoretical discussions of ideology to more practical descriptions of how teachers manage their classroom and students, but more often they do a little bit of both. Thus, rather than thinking about “theory” and “practice” as separate entities, it might help you to think of “theorizing” as reflecting on, naming, and generalizing about your daily teaching practice.

rhetorical situation
While Teaching Philosophy Statements can be created for any number of occasions, for this assignment I am asking you to create a Statement that will become a part of your electronic teaching portfolio at the end of the semester. If you are a newer teacher, you are probably just beginning to develop a teaching philosophy. You might not know extensive pedagogical theory, and maybe you haven’t had a chance to try a wide variety of strategies and techniques. But you are in the process of figuring out what works for you, and this will give you a starting place to reflect on your current practices and consider where you would like to improve. By the end of the semester, you may wish to revise this based on readings we have done, events that occurred in your classroom, or conversations you have had with other teachers.

Your audience includes future hiring committees, your current or future major professor, other teachers, and – depending on your venue – prospective students. If you pursue a career as an instructor or professor, you will be asked about your teaching philosophy in interviews and before tenure review occasions. If you don’t pursue an academic career, Teaching Philosophy Statements are still very handy components of most job portfolios for the way they attest to your character, creativity, and work ethic.

organization and structure
There’s no magic bullet. While the best Teaching Philosophy Statements provide brief examples of how you implement your philosophy, rather than including every single aspect of your teaching philosophy, you’ll want to focus on its core elements – the ones that are most important to you or most indicative of how you perform as a teacher. Select two or three characteristics that describe who you are as a teacher now, and choose a guiding arc or theme that will best highlight them. Lee Haugen suggests a general organization guided by four key questions (“Writing a Teaching Philosophy Statement” 1998):

- To what end? (your objectives as a teacher)
- By what means? (the methods by which you achieve or work towards those objectives)
- To what degree? (how you measure your effectiveness vis a vis the objectives and methods)
- Why? (your grand/iosc statement of how you want to make a difference)

However, you’ll see from the examples we analyze in mentor group that you have several options for organizing them. Your organization should follow from what it is you want to say.
length
Most Teaching Philosophy Statements run between one and two pages. I’m asking for 1 page, single-spaced, with 11 or 12-point legible font, and 1” margins on all sides. If you would like to write more, please feel free to do so, but please do not exceed 2 single-spaced pages.

brainstorming
I recommend brainstorming to get you started, particularly if you are trying to determine what information to prioritize. The following questions might help:

- How did you become interested in teaching? Who were/are your major pedagogical influences?
- What’s important to you in your teaching?
- What do you want to get out of teaching writing/out of teaching English 106?
- What do you want your students to get out of a writing class/out of English 106?
- What does it mean to you to “teach writing”? What central point of dissonance reminds you of what it’s about and how do you in your teaching address that point of dissonance?
- Is there an especially relevant moment (an activity, discussion, or assignment) from your class that you could unpack as a way of explaining how you think a particular concept should be taught? What made that activity, discussion, or assignment go well?
- How would your students/mentors describe you as a teacher?
- How do you establish rapport in your classes?
- How do you go about motivating students?
- How do you evaluate/grade/respond to students?

additional resources (if you need them)
- Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching
  “Writing a Teaching Philosophy Statement” (1998) by Lee Haugen
  [http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/philosophy.html](http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/philosophy.html)
- Office of Faculty and TA Development, The Ohio State University.
  “Writing a Philosophy of Teaching Statement”
  [http://ftad.osu.edu/portfolio/philosophy/Philosophy.html](http://ftad.osu.edu/portfolio/philosophy/Philosophy.html)
- “Developing a Philosophy of Teaching Statement” (1998) by Nancy Van Note Chism