

EDPR 250 EC
Guidelines for the Written Assignments – The Philosophy Statement
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As teachers, we have a series of beliefs, values, and assumptions about what constitutes good teaching and what makes us the best teachers for our children. Other teachers, parents, and administrators have become more concerned about those ideas and are asking teachers more often about it. "It is what it is" is no longer an acceptable answer. We have a responsibility to articulate our views in a clear way, based on facts and our learning experiences. That's when having a statement about your philosophy of teaching becomes fundamental.

In addition to being a requirement for your portfolio and, consequently, your certification in the state of Illinois, writing a philosophy statement is a very useful exercise about our evolution and growth as teachers. It is the best way to introduce who we are as professionals to a community. That also explains why that would be the first thing we'd read in your portfolio. Your statement is your way to say, "this is who I am as a teacher and this is why I think I'm the best teacher you can hire." Outlandish? Not really. We want to make sure we can find the best teachers for our children.

One consideration about your statement is that it will change. This is the very first *version* of your statement. It is very important, then, to get off to a good start. We will be working on this statement throughout the semester. This assignment, as part of the course, is integrated with the other assignments. It is my experience that the response papers and the structured observation papers highlight elements of your philosophy of teaching based on your experiences at the placement. Use the other papers to support your work on this assignment. I will be providing feedback, particularly in the response papers, of areas of the text where I think you can draw from the response papers. In addition, there will time in the discussion sessions to talk about the process of writing your philosophies of teaching.

Following are some considerations for your statement:

- Philosophy statements are between one and two pages in length. For this course, you're not expected to go beyond one page.
- Write in first person, using present tense. Remember what I've stressed before: You are teachers already, so avoid excessive use of future statements.
- "Keep your grammar simple and your ideas complex." You're writing this statement for a general audience; avoid excessive jargon or technical terms.
- You have a voice in writing. It's important that it surfaces on the statement. Every statement should reflect who you are and you should strongly believe in everything you're writing.

Here are some suggested topics to get you started on your statement. These are just suggestions and they are to be read as such:

- What do you believe it's fundamental to promote developmentally appropriate practices?
- What do you believe is your function as a teacher when working with children?
- What will your classroom be like? Think about in terms of what students can do there, not what it will look like.

- How do you intend to maximize your students' personalities, learning styles, and backgrounds as part of your teaching?
- How do you think you can help parents in their efforts to raise their children?
- How will the activities you plan for your students contribute to their cognitive development, their emotional growth, and their acquisition of values to live in today's society?

One thing I will stress is that you're expected to start thinking about your teaching and putting it in writing. Nobody is expecting a full-fledged statement at this point. Even graduate students and faculty need time to write a statement. What we'll do this semester is set the foundations of that statement. That's why there'll be plenty of feedback and support. I won't leave you alone in this process and I intend to help you all semester long. Don't panic about writing this. We'll work on this together.

References:

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