

# Teaching Philosophies: A Glimpse Into Your Classroom to “Hook” an Interview

9.25.2018

**LeighAnn Tomaswick**  
**Innovation Learning Design Specialist**

“teaching statements are as drab as they are predictable”  
Chronicle of Higher Education (2.19.2010)



# “Hooking” the Interview Agenda

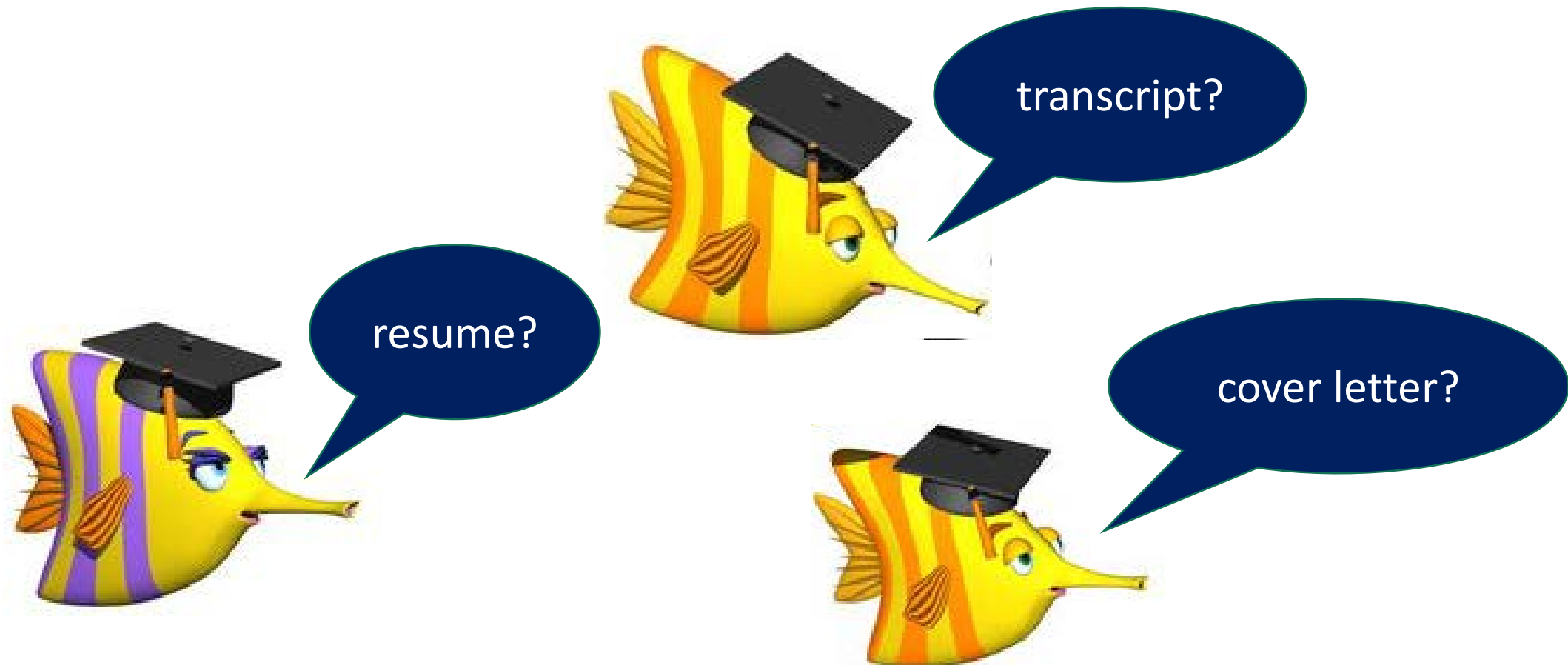


- Overview of the Teaching Philosophy (TP)
- Key Elements of a Teaching Philosophy
- Teaching Philosophy Brainstorming
- Hiring Committee Suggestions

# Let's Brainstorm...



How is a Teaching Philosophy Different Than A...



# What is a Teaching Philosophy?



- ▶ 1-2 page statement about your teaching & learning beliefs, values and goals
  - ▶ “Elevator” teaching philosophies: 1-2 sentences
- ▶ Demonstrates you’ve been reflective and purposeful about your teaching
- ▶ Helps reviewers visualize your classroom – stand out & **be the perfect catch**

*“If at all possible, your statement should enable the reader to imagine you in the classroom, teaching. You want to include sufficient information for picturing not only you in the process of teaching, but also your class in the process of learning.”*

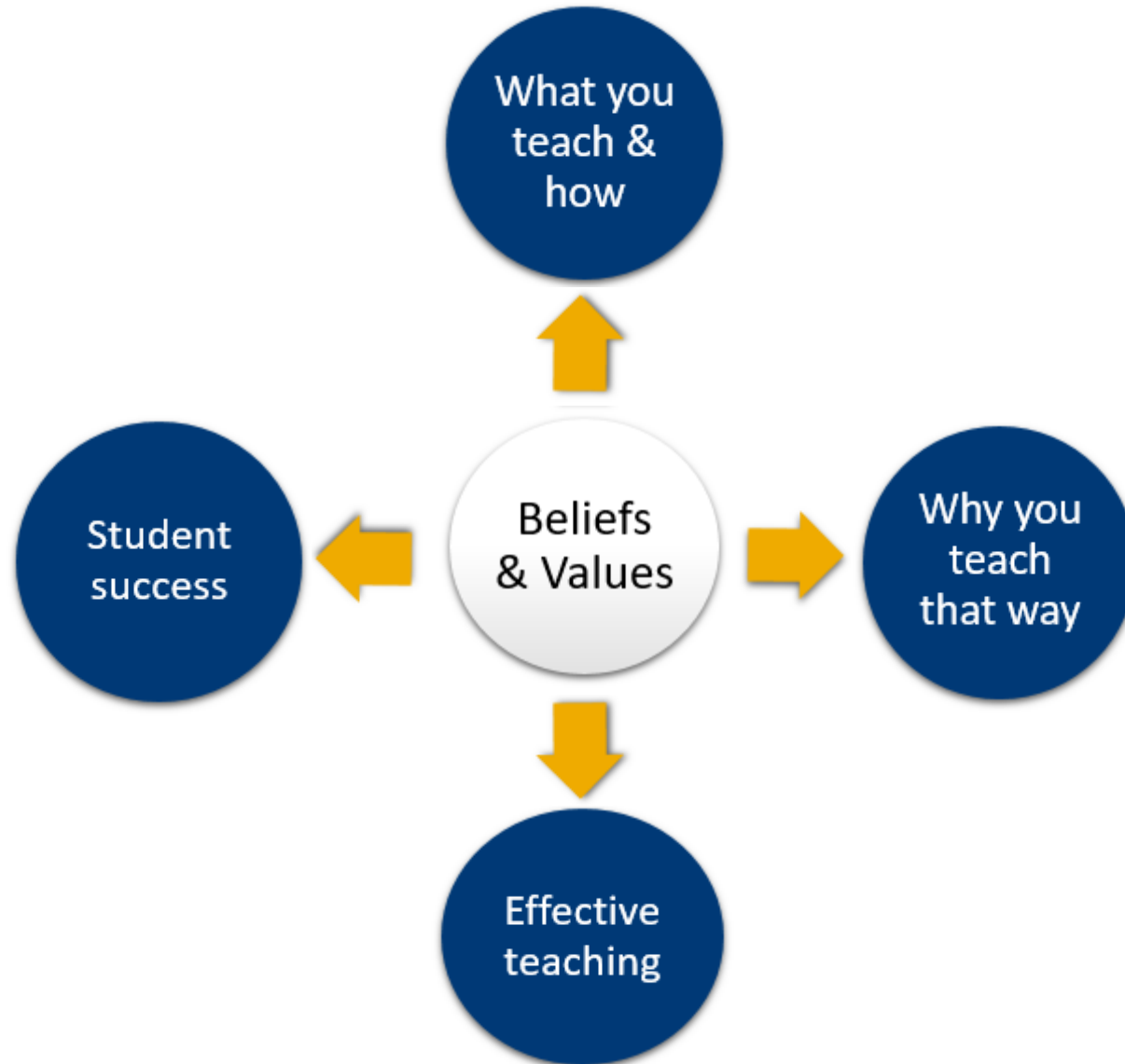
– Helen G. Grundman

# Uses for A Teaching Philosophy Include...



tenure  
fellowship  
promotion  
award  
teaching  
students refining  
job assistantship  
reflection  
share

# Teaching Philosophy Key Elements



# Identifying Who You Are As An Instructor...



- ▶ Reflect on experiences
- ▶ Talk with others
- ▶ Go through online surveys / inventories
  - ▶ Teaching Style Inventory
  - ▶ Teaching Perspective Inventory
  - ▶ Teaching Goals Inventory
  - ▶ Implicit Bias Quizzes

# Fishing a Bit Deeper: Student Success



- ▶ How do you address student success? (individual / group)
  - ▶ What do you define as student success?
    - ▶ How does your discipline / field define student success?
    - ▶ What are your goals for your students?
  - ▶ How do you measure success?
  - ▶ How do you use evidence?

How can I  
articulate  
success?!





# Fishing a Bit Deeper: Effective Teaching



- ▶ How do you articulate effective teaching?
  - ▶ What does effective mean?
  - ▶ How do you measure effectiveness?
  - ▶ What would those measures look like when teaching is effective?
  - ▶ What strategies do you have for improvement?

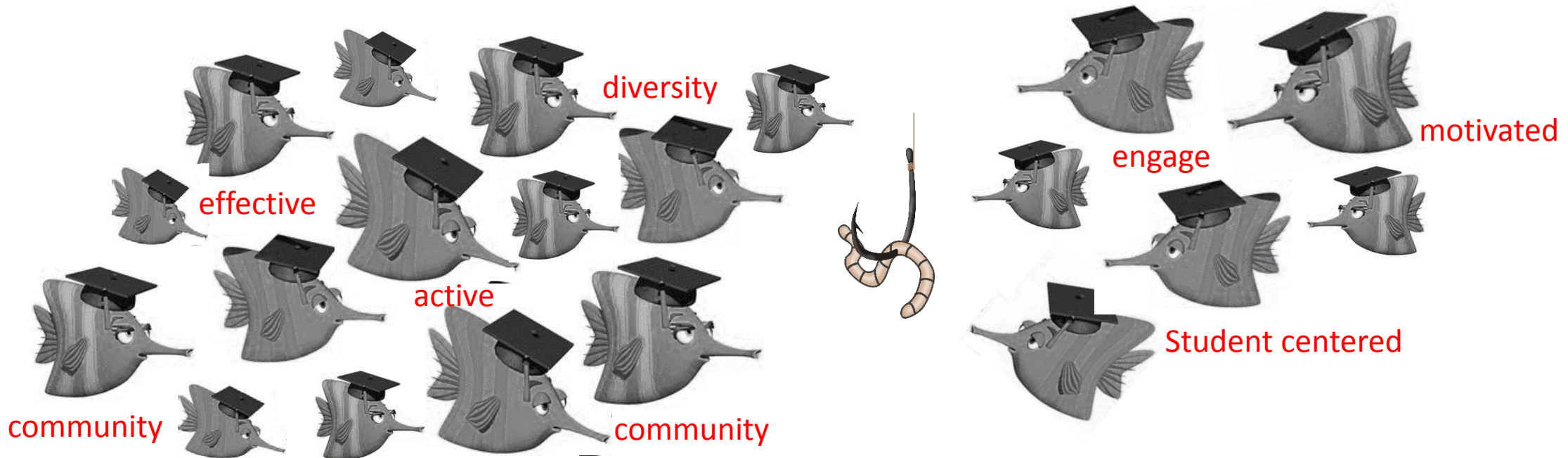


How can I show effective teaching?

# Will You Stand Out?



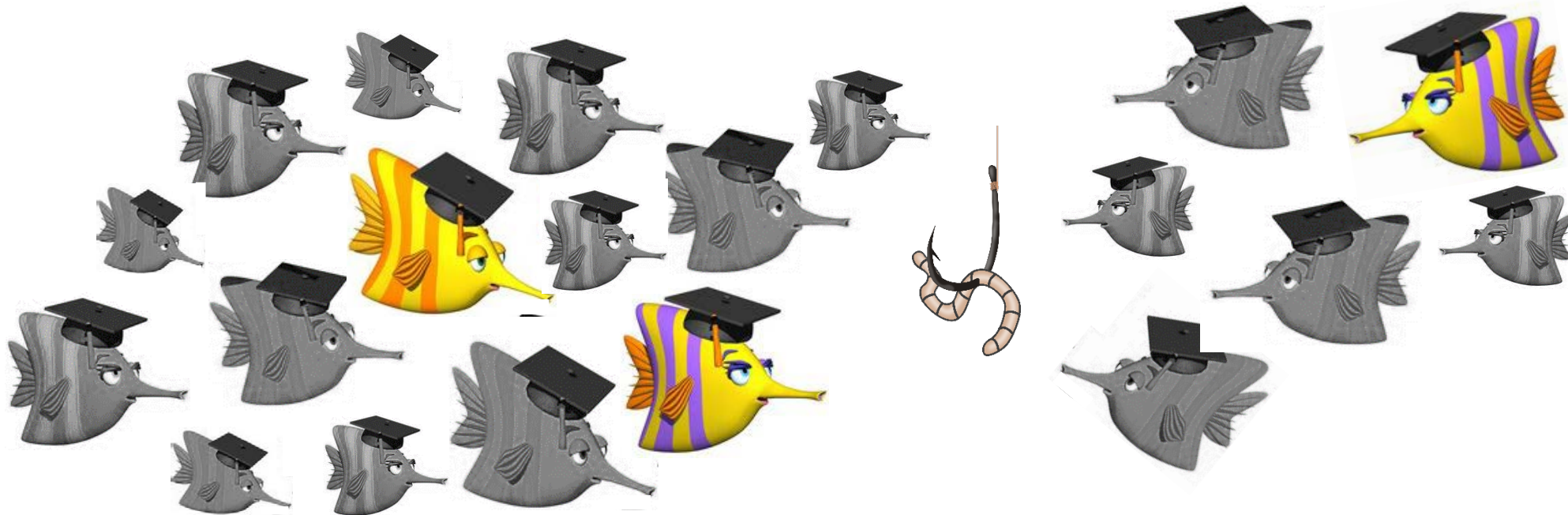
What are some words you would likely see or put in a teaching philosophy?



# Standing Out: Be Specific & Explain



- Provide evidence your teaching was effective
- What does “student-centered” or “active learning” look like in your classroom?



# Brainstorm the Basics



What are your beliefs & values about teaching & learning?

- What do you teach
- Who do you teach
- How do you teach
- Why do you teach that way

Do you think a metaphor is useful?

# Brainstorming Prompts for Attraction



- Remember that time you felt great or terrible...
  - As a student ... As an instructor
  - Why, what happened? What about that experience was great?
  
- How does this relate to your ideal classroom (as an instructor)
  - How do you teach what you teach?
  - Why do you teach that way (why is this important to you to teach that way)?
  - What do you think is the most important factor in your classroom / relationship with students?

How do your answers align with  
your beliefs, values & goals?

# Putting Together Your Teaching Philosophy



## Start now & reflect often

- ▶ Have a running document of your ideas (dated)
- ▶ Catalog your teaching experiences & strategies
  - ▶ Written reflections are helpful
- ▶ Summarize experiences periodically
- ▶ Talk with peers, senior instructors & ME
- ▶ Not one right way to do it BUT though there are many wrong ways!
  - ▶ Organization is logical & flows well
  - ▶ Reread, reflect, revise & review rubrics throughout





Possible Components	Excellent	Needs work	Weak
<p><b>Goals for student learning:</b> What knowledge, skills, and attitudes are important for student success in your discipline? What are you preparing students for? What are key challenges in the teaching-learning process?</p>	<p>Goals are clearly articulated and specific and go beyond the knowledge level, including skills, attitudes, career goals, etc. Goals are sensitive to the context of the instructor's discipline. They are concise but not exhaustive.</p>	<p>Goals are articulated although they may be too broad or not specific to the discipline. Goals focus on basic knowledge, ignoring skills acquisition and affective change.</p>	<p>Articulation of goals is unfocused, incomplete, or missing.</p>
<p><b>Enactment of goals (teaching methods):</b> What teaching methods do you use? How do these methods contribute to your goals for students? Why are these methods appropriate for use in your discipline?</p>	<p>Enactment of goals is specific and thoughtful. Includes details and rationale about teaching methods. The methods are clearly connected to specific goals and are appropriate for those goals. Specific examples of the method in use within the disciplinary context are given.</p>	<p>Description of teaching methods not clearly connected to goals or if connected, not well developed (seems like a list of what is done in the classroom). Methods are described but generically, no example of the instructor's use of the methods within the discipline is communicated.</p>	<p>Enactment of goals is not articulated. If there is an attempt at articulating teaching methods, it is basic and unreflective.</p>
<p><b>Assessment of goals (measuring student learning):</b> How do you know your goals for students are being met? What sorts of assessment tools do you use (e.g., tests, papers, portfolios, journals), and why? How do assessments contribute to student learning? How do assessments communicate disciplinary priorities?</p>	<p>Specific examples of assessment tools are clearly described. Assessment tools are aligned with teaching goals and teaching methods. Assessments reinforce the priorities and context of the discipline both in content and type.</p>	<p>Assessments are described, but not in connection to goals and teaching methods. Description is too general, with no reference to the motivation behind the assessments. There is no clear connection between the assessments and the priorities of the discipline.</p>	<p>Assessment of goals is not articulated or mentioned only in passing.</p>
<p><b>Creating an inclusive learning environment, addressing one or more of the following questions:</b> •How do your own and your students' identities (e.g., race, gender, class), background, experience, and levels of privilege affect the classroom? •How do you account for diverse learning styles? •How do you integrate diverse perspectives into your teaching?</p>	<p>Portrays a coherent philosophy of inclusive education that is integrated throughout the philosophy. Makes space for diverse ways of knowing, and/or learning styles. Discussion of roles is sensitive to historically underrepresented students. Demonstrates awareness of issues of equity within the discipline.</p>	<p>Inclusive teaching is addressed but in a cursory manner or in a way that isolates it from the rest of the philosophy. Author briefly connects identity issues to aspects of his/her teaching.</p>	<p>Issues of inclusion are not addressed or addressed in an awkward manner. There is no connection to teaching practices.</p>
<p><b>Structure, rhetoric and language:</b> How is the reader engaged? Is the language used appropriate to the discipline? How is the statement thematically structure?</p>	<p>The statement has a guiding structure and/or theme that engages the reader and organizes the goals, methods, and assessments articulated in the statement. Jargon is avoided and teaching terms (e.g., critical thinking) are given specific definitions that apply to the instructor's disciplinary context. Specific, rich examples are used to bolster statements of goals, methods, and assessments. Grammar and spelling are correct.</p>	<p>The statement has a structure and/or theme that is not connected to the ideas actually discussed in the statement, or, organizing structure is weak and does not resonate within the disciplinary context. Examples are used but seem generic. May contain some jargon.</p>	<p>No overall structure present. Statement is a collection of disconnected statements about teaching. Jargon is used liberally and not supported by specific definitions or examples. Needs much revision.</p>


# Hiring Committee Suggestions



## Don't...

- 
- 
- ▶ Choose your wording carefully
    - ▶ “My ~~passion~~ is teaching... or I have a ~~passion~~ for teaching”
    - ▶ Thrilled, delighted, excited...
  - ▶ Be vague
  - ▶ Use jargon without explanation
  - ▶ Be someone you are not
  - ▶ Write one for all potential jobs
  - ▶ Write it last minute – *hook will not take*

## Do instead...

- 
- ▶ *Catch their eye* - Be memorable in a *good way*
    - ▶ Centered around a belief, value, quote, experience or pivotal moment
  - ▶ Support statements with evidence
  - ▶ Be clear, concise & consistent
  - ▶ “Write it yourself” - googling & reviewing examples can stifle writing
  - ▶ Know your audience
  - ▶ Revise
    - ▶ Critical feedback from others inside and outside discipline
    - ▶ Use a rubric



# Go Hook That Interview!



- Any questions?
- Resources
  - Meizlish & Kaplan (2008) “Valuing and evaluating teaching in academic hiring: A multidisciplinary cross institutional study” Journal of Higher Education – job posting requests & search committees analysis(humanities, social sciences & natural sciences)
  - Teaching philosophy rubrics:
    - [http://www.crlt.umich.edu/sites/default/files/resource\\_files/TeachingPhilosophyRubric.pdf](http://www.crlt.umich.edu/sites/default/files/resource_files/TeachingPhilosophyRubric.pdf) (one in presentation)
    - [https://teach.its.uiowa.edu/sites/teach.its.uiowa.edu/files/docs/docs/Teaching\\_Philosophy\\_Rubric\\_ed.pdf](https://teach.its.uiowa.edu/sites/teach.its.uiowa.edu/files/docs/docs/Teaching_Philosophy_Rubric_ed.pdf)
    - [http://medsci.indiana.edu/m620/sotl\\_08/teaching\\_phil\\_rubric.pdf](http://medsci.indiana.edu/m620/sotl_08/teaching_phil_rubric.pdf) (quite extensive)
    - [http://www.lmu.edu/Assets/Centers+&#212b+Institutes/Center+for+Teaching+Excellence/Rubric\\_Teaching+Philosophy+Statement+Rubric.pdf](http://www.lmu.edu/Assets/Centers+&#212b+Institutes/Center+for+Teaching+Excellence/Rubric_Teaching+Philosophy+Statement+Rubric.pdf) (pre / post type assessment)
  - Teaching Style Inventory: <http://longleaf.net/teachingstyle.html>
  - Teaching Perspective Inventory: <http://www.teachingperspectives.com/tpi/>
  - Teaching Goals Inventory: [http://fm.iowa.uiowa.edu/fmi/xsl/tgi/data\\_entry.xsl?-db=tgi\\_data&-lay=Layout01&-view](http://fm.iowa.uiowa.edu/fmi/xsl/tgi/data_entry.xsl?-db=tgi_data&-lay=Layout01&-view)
  - Implicit Bias Quizzes: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
  - Teaching metaphors: <http://www.learner.org/workshops/nextmove/metaphor/#moremet>



- Peer observations & feedback
- Consultations
- Teaching Tools in a Flash
- Working Lunches / workshops
  - October 2<sup>nd</sup> – Service Learning: Deep learning for students, meaningful outcomes for the community
  - November 14<sup>th</sup> – Science of Learning: The wellness connection
  - January 28<sup>th</sup> – Backward Design: Building a Course from Z to A
- Blackboard “Course” to view past event materials – Sign up!

# My Contact Information



LeighAnn Tomaswick  
[ltomaswi@kent.edu](mailto:ltomaswi@kent.edu)  
(330) 672-0400  
221 Cartwright Hall

Or

[ctl@kent.edu](mailto:ctl@kent.edu)