Applying for an Academic Position: Teaching Statements and Teaching Portfolios

When you apply for academic jobs, many institutions will ask for a teaching portfolio or statement of your teaching philosophy. Even if you aren’t asked to submit either of these, discussions of pedagogy often crop up in academic interviews. As a result, it’s important to learn how to highlight the teaching you’ve already done, talk about your pedagogical preferences, and suggest potential courses you’d teach. This can be particularly important for interviews at small liberal arts colleges that place an emphasis on teaching undergraduates.

THE SHERIDAN CENTER

A fantastic resource for Graduate Students who want to perfect their teaching skills is the Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning at Brown! www.brown.edu/Administration/Sheridan_Center/

The Sheridan Center offers the following:

Teaching Certificate Programs

- The Sheridan Teaching Seminar: Certificate I Program: A year-long series of seminars and workshops on basic pedagogical issues and practices.
- The Classroom Tools Seminar: Certificate II Program: A year-long multi-session seminar exploring advanced pedagogical tools for reaching the broadest possible learning population.
- The Professional Development Seminar for Advanced Graduate Students: Certificate III Program: A year-long multi-session seminar focused on key elements of preparing a Teaching Portfolio and other critical aspects of professional development to help prepare participants for the academic job market.

Seminars, including the Brown-Wheaton Teaching Laboratory in the Liberal Arts, teaching in Summer Studies, and creating and grading meaningful writing assignments across the disciplines.

Individual Teaching Consultations including Individual Teaching Consultation and Presentation Consultation.

Pedagogical Resources including a Resource Library, electronic pedagogical workshops on syllabus construction and cognitive diversity, teaching handbooks, as well as links to other teaching resources

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Rachel Narewood Austin details elements of a teaching statement that can help, or hurt, your chances of landing an academic position at: http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_magazine/previous_issues/articles/2006_04_14/writing_the_teaching_statement
- In “4 Steps to a Memorable Teaching Philosophy,” James M. Lang highlights ways to write a statement of teaching philosophy that doesn’t sound like everybody else’s.
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- Here Gabriel Montell outlines how to go about starting the process of writing a statement of teaching philosophy – even if you do not think you have a teaching philosophy: http://chronicle.com/article/Howto-Write-a-Statement-of/45133/
- The University of California, Berkeley provide detailed advice on each aspect of the teaching portfolio: https://career.berkeley.edu/phds/PhDportfolio.stm
- The Teaching Center at Washington University in St. Louis provides useful questions to think about when writing a statement of teaching philosophy and links to other resources:
- http://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/writing-teaching-philosophy-statement