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Journal of Management Education 2009; 33; 115 originally published online
Nov 30, 2007;

DOI: 10.1177/1052562907310642

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Finding Our Roots

An Exercise For Creating a Personal Teaching Philosophy Statement

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Teaching philosophy statements clarify why we do what we do in the classroom, and the process of drafting a philosophy offers an opportunity for developmental reflection. Personal teaching philosophies can be grounded in the shared foundation of historical educational philosophies. The authors offer here for facilitators a reflective card-sort exercise that helps surface the philosophical roots of personal teaching philosophies and helps teachers create or renew a teaching philosophy statement. They explain the exercise activities and typical outcomes based on their experiences facilitating the exercise. The authors conclude with insights and considerations for facilitators.

Keywords: *personal teaching development; exercise; card sort; teaching philosophy statement; facilitation; faculty development*

This is like peeling an onion.

—*Exercise participant, August 2006*

Authors' Note: This exercise has been presented at the 2005 Organizational Behavior Teaching Conference in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and the 2006 Academy of Management Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia. The authors acknowledge comments from session participants and feedback from participants who later implemented the exercise, which helped us refine the facilitation guide. Special thanks to Amy Kenworthy-U'Ren for her suggestions to improve the exercise, and to editor Susan Herman for constructive feedback and support as we refined our manuscript. Please address correspondence to Joy E. Beatty, University of Michigan–Dearborn, 19000 Hubbard Drive, Fairlane Center South B-29, Dearborn, MI 48126; e-mail: jebeatty@umd.umich.edu.

Teaching philosophies are an important tool for self-development. Enunciated teaching philosophies, created after reflection, deeply inform teaching practice. In the literature (e.g., Brookfield, 1995; Ramsey & Fitzgibbons, 2005), the *process* of reflection required to create and periodically revise a statement is as important as, and sometimes more important than, the actual content of the end-product statement because it increases self-awareness. As Palmer (1997) notes, good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher and one's ability to make these present in the classroom. Teaching is an expression of who we are as individuals and can be seen as an "autobiographical project" (Cole & Knowles, 2000, p. 14). It is difficult to teach others effectively without first knowing oneself. As we gain more experience, our teaching styles may become habitual and taken for granted. When our teaching is not consciously reassessed from time to time, our strengths and weaknesses in teaching remain unexamined (Grasha, 1996).

This article offers a facilitator's guide for running a teaching philosophy exercise. The exercise helps teachers surface their own philosophical beliefs about teaching and understand some of the connections to traditional educational philosophies to craft or update a personal statement of teaching philosophy. Because our frame of reference is that of the facilitator, such as a new faculty orientation director or a doctoral student coordinator, the article offers step-by-step cues for group workshop use. Our philosophical framing of this exercise is akin to the applied moral education theory and intervention of "values clarification" popular in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Raths, Harriman, & Simon, 1978), which suggested that people are capable of "discovering their own values through the process of honest self-examination and open-minded search for truths about life" (Kinnier, 1995, p. 19). Values clarification suggests that values must be (a) chosen freely, (b) chosen from among alternatives, (c) chosen after careful consideration of the consequences of other alternatives, (d) prized or cherished, (e) affirmed publicly, and (f) acted on repeatedly (Raths et al., 1966, cited in Kinnier, 1995).

The exercise described in this article begins with a card sort that uses a set of 84 cards. The first side of the card contains keywords and concepts from traditional educational philosophies. The other side contains the names of educational philosophies and philosophers associated with the words and concepts on the first side. Selected examples of the card concepts and associated theorists are shown in Table 1; the complete set of cards is available from http://www.obts.org/JME_supplemental_materials/JME_TP_cards_907.doc.

These cards facilitate the values clarification process in the context of creating a "grounded" teaching philosophy. The card sort is part of a guided

Table 1
Examples of Card Concepts With Theories and Theorists

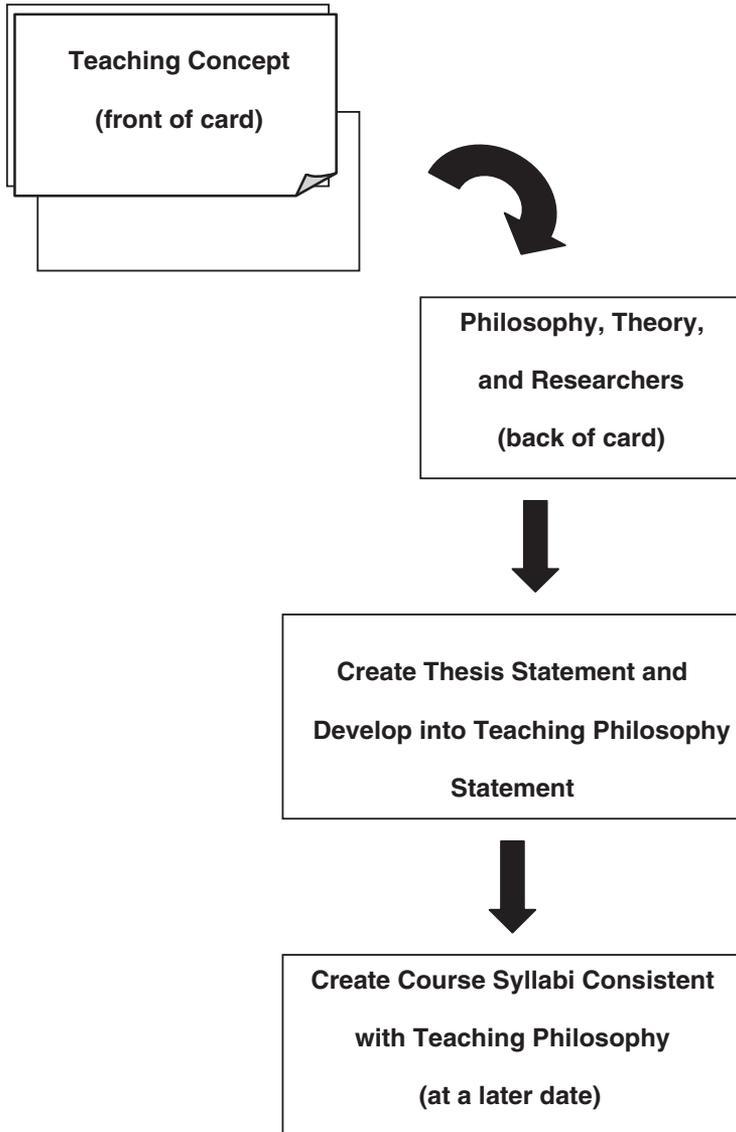
Concept (front of card)	Philosophy, Theory, & Researchers (back of card)
Cultural heritage	philosophies of idealism and realism
Interdisciplinary	pro: philosophy of pragmatism, progressivism; Bloom (1956) con: idealism, realism, perennialism, and essentialism (these prefer pure organization of subjects)
Learning by doing	Locke (empirical method); Pestalozzi (observing environment); Spencer; Dewey (problematic encounters)
Liberal, general education	pro: philosophies of idealism, realism, perennialism; Hutchins, Adler con: Spencer
Self-directed	philosophies of pragmatism, progressivism, and existentialism (personal choices)
Social critique	philosophies of social reconstructionism and critical theory
Tabula rasa	“blank slate”; Locke’s belief that at birth the human mind is a blank slate; attacking Plato’s belief that ideas are present latently in the mind at birth.
Teacher as facilitator	philosophies of pragmatism and progressivism

process that has three parts, focusing on the three related elements of this article: reflecting on teaching philosophy terms and concepts, connecting to the root educational philosophies, and crafting a written philosophy statement. Figure 1 shows the relationships among the exercise steps, described below.

A card-sort methodology offers several benefits. First, the physical nature of the cards helps cognitive processing by providing a menu of items to respond to; this is an easier task than the unaided recall required when people are asked to describe their philosophies *de novo*. Second, the creative format encourages free association and allows teachers to think outside linear and rational processes. In comparison to working with a written list, the card method allows people to group ideas more easily into common themes and to see patterns. Third, it also meets the needs of different learning styles, providing both a visual and kinetic element. Last, we have found that the cards allow for easier sharing in group settings when this exercise is facilitated for a group.

The language we use to describe the exercise in detail as a whole is consistent with our experiences of facilitating it in a large group (approximately 30 participants) setting. Due to the different types of participants we have encountered when running it (see Potential Applications section below), we offer direct language with instructions for facilitators rather than participants. The exercise may also be used by a sole person wishing to reflect on

Figure 1
Exercise Flow Chart



and draft a teaching philosophy statement following a similar process to the one outlined here for facilitators, by increasing the focus on personal reflection and omitting the group discussions.

The exercise is flexible depending on how much time one has to participate in these activities. In our experiences from running the exercise, we generally get through parts 1 through 3 with the participants in a single session (about 2½ to 3 hours). As noted with Figure 1 and discussed later in the article, structuring a course syllabus to be consistent with one's overall philosophical beliefs is generally done on the participants' own time. We'll discuss potential applications as well as representative discussion points that emerged from our experiences with running the exercise. We offer these not only to round out our reporting but also to provide additional themes around which facilitators might choose to organize such a session, depending on unique needs.

Part 1: Reflecting on Teaching Philosophy Terms and Concepts

Step 1: Guided Imagery

We begin with a guided imagery exercise to help participants become mentally present to their own classrooms. For new teachers who do not have direct classroom experience, we modify the questions slightly. Guided imagery allows for multiple-level preparation for the card-sort exercise: Participants privately revisit their classrooms on both good and bad days, "experience" some of the affective outcomes of facilitating both kinds of learning environments, and perform a type of gap analysis that will serve them in the next steps of the exercise as they consider what they believe philosophically about teaching. Participants are asked to close their eyes, get physically relaxed, and consider the following questions:

1. Picture in your mind's eye a time when you felt your teaching truly touched your students—a time when you felt inspired. Bring back how that felt to you; picture yourself with your students. If you do not have direct classroom experience, try to visualize what might a great teaching session look and feel like. [We allow several silent moments for participants to picture the scene.]
2. Next, consider the opposite experience. Picture in your mind's eye a time when you felt ineffective in the classroom—when you felt flat or even obstructive to students' learning. Bring back how that felt to you; how the

room felt; picture yourself with your students. If you do not have direct classroom experience, try to visualize how your worst day in the classroom would be! [We again allow several moments.]

3. Now, let's go back to the effective classroom. Think about the key differences as you envisioned them. What was most different between being on top of your game and being unable to get your learning lessons across? [We allow several more moments.]

Step 2: Card-Sort Exercise

Either in small groups or alone, each participant is given a deck of teaching philosophy concept cards to review. The goal of this section of the exercise is to have participants select the concepts that resonate with their personal teaching beliefs and explore themes among them. Because this is an individual exercise, time requirements will vary. We recommend allowing at least a half hour to review and reflect on the cards. We ask participants specifically to do the following:

1. Sit in a workspace with room to spread the cards around you, either on a table or on the floor.
2. Review the front side of the cards with conceptual terms and consider the question, "Which of these items most represent my ideas about teaching and learning?"
3. For the initial sorting, select all the cards that resonate with your beliefs about teaching. Do this quickly, and trust your initial emotional reaction to the concept. Set the cards that you did not select aside. They will not be used for the remainder of the exercise.
4. Working with the pile of cards you selected, sort them again.
 - a. Identify any common themes among the cards that will allow you to group cards into clusters. For example, you may see that "civic education," "democratic," and "interdisciplinary" are connected around the theme of "open systems" or "stakeholder engagement." Or "learning by doing," "problem solving," and "teams & group projects" may suggest the theme of "experiential learning" to you.
 - b. Give each cluster a name, either by circling the word on the card that represents the cluster or by making a new card with a theme word [there are blank cards in each deck]. The goal of the clustering process is to identify a manageable set of core themes (between three and five themes). If you have too many themes, consider larger themes that incorporate several subthemes or consider setting some lower priority ideas aside. If you cannot parse at this point, you'll have opportunities to reconsider throughout the exercise.

Part 2: Connecting to Educational Philosophies

After completing part 1 and arriving at a set of concepts and themes, teachers can turn the cards over to note the philosophical traditions that are the most influential in their thinking. The goal of this section of the exercise is to offer participants philosophical grounding for similarities and patterns they observe. Note that when we have linked a philosophy or researcher with a specific concept, it does not mean that this philosophy or researcher is the only one that addressed that topic. It simply allows the participant a place to start for further research or investigation. For additional information on educational philosophies, we recommend Blake, Smeyers, Smith, and Standish (2003) and McKenna (1995).

Using this new information, we ask participants to get ready to incorporate the educational philosophy themes into the philosophy statement. Such incorporation is valuable because it helps teachers give language to practice in meaningfully shared ways. By connecting to a tradition, we recapture a shared understanding to replace the “verbal shorthand” that tends to occur over time as philosophy terms are adopted into practice without a larger understanding of their context.¹ We recommend allowing about 20 to 30 minutes for this portion of the exercise. We ask participants to do the following:

1. Now that you have a few piles of conceptual themes, turn the cards over to see where these concepts originate philosophically. These are not exclusive roots, meaning that there can be more than one origination, but these will help you consider main traditions of your teaching craft. They will also give you a place to start if you want to learn more about the educational philosophies. If you see “Wild Card,” that means that the pedagogical concept on the other side really cannot be traced to any one “official” historical root, so you’ll stick with the front of the card when crafting your teaching philosophy.
2. Next, consider any patterns or commonalities among the traditions you have selected. See if a couple of schools of thought, or philosophers, represent core thinking for your teaching style. Consider any common language or descriptive terms you may find among your traditions as well, so you may next write several thesis sentences or a thesis paragraph that will form the basis of your teaching philosophy statement. The thesis paragraph is a core framework around which your teaching philosophy statement may be written. Writing down these thesis thoughts is the next part of this session.

Part 3: Crafting the Teaching Philosophy

Depending on the time available, you may have participants create as much of their philosophy statement as possible. We have allocated 30 minutes for this portion of the workshop. We have had a range of participants from those who craft only a couple of beginning sentences to those who come away from the session with a thesis paragraph and a well-structured outline for the remainder of the statement. The important goal for this step of the exercise is that participants come away with something conceptually important and written down. Based on informal feedback, participants indicate that they are much more likely to revisit and finish the statement if they have some committed thoughts on paper. For step 1, we allow about 15 minutes. Then, at minute 15, we encourage participants with step 2 and allow another 5 minutes or so. At 20 minutes, we start with step 3 below. Specifically, we ask participants to do the following:

1. In this part of the workshop, we'll be asking you to commit to paper at least a thesis statement or two that will drive your complete teaching philosophy statement.
2. After reflecting on the themes and philosophical traditions you have chosen, take a first pass at creating a thesis sentence or two, or even a whole paragraph. Use the concepts and language you are now familiar with to create these first formal statements of your teaching philosophy. [The appendix includes examples of thesis statements derived from this process and sample sentences derived from chosen cards that could be used as examples.]
3. As you continue to write and refine, create as complete a statement of philosophy as you feel comfortable doing by expanding on the thesis ideas you have written down. You might explain why these concepts are important to you and how you achieve them in your classroom.
4. For the next 10 minutes [again, this is flexible depending on how facilitators want to structure the time available], create a group of 4 to 5 people around you and share with them what you have written and why you think your statement is reflective of your teaching philosophy. Sharing helps ground your thinking and lets others participate as sounding boards in refining your descriptions while generating ideas for their own.

Wrap Up

After this small group interaction and creation of the “deliverable” in the first draft of the teaching philosophy statement, we offer a short (5 minutes)

Table 2
Illustrative Feedback From Facilitation at Two Conference Settings

Representative Participant Comments

- “It’s easier to see other people’s implicit assumptions, more so than my own.”
- “This activity is reinforcing. I’m able to put terms to ideas and put it together.”
- “The cards have words to express philosophy and to anchor characteristics. We can reexamine assumptions and process to see if it’s working by reading the philosophy. It’s an iterative exploration of overall philosophy.”
- “This helps me name the unnamed.”
- “Once I have done my piles [of cards], now I can see some contradictions.”
- “In 10 minutes, I got more focused using this exercise than I had in years of struggling with this process.”
- “Here’s the problem: I have too many cards out here. No wonder I lose my focus.”
-

time to debrief participants’ overall experiences. In Table 2, we share some representative participant comments gathered at two conference settings in written and verbal forms. It appears that this exercise helps teachers clarify, whittle down, and enunciate implicit or hidden philosophical beliefs, which form our major goals for the activity.

Potential Applications

We have been pleased to see the wide range of applications for this exercise based on participants who have attended our sessions. They include the following:

Individual use. Several participants indicated that they were going up for promotion and tenure and wanted their teaching philosophy statement to be part of their package. Some said they wanted to revisit old statements or reflect on where a new pedagogy fit within their implicit teaching philosophy that they would now enunciate.

Business school faculty brownbag. Several participants thought it would be a useful and energizing session for their college of business colleagues. We offer a caveat about this later in the potential pitfalls section of this article.

PhD student activity: administrative & student perspectives. One participant’s job was PhD student coordinator, and she was responsible for orienting and socializing new doctoral students for her entire institution. The exercise could complement their research training and provide them an important document to include in a job search package. Other participants

were new doctoral students who had experienced some frustration in the overemphasis of research training and the virtual nonexistence of teaching training—yet, they were headed for the classrooms!

All-faculty activity. One participant was an associate dean for teaching and learning for her university. She indicated that there were few all-faculty norms about teaching and learning but that the faculty had expressed interest in such. She has since used the exercise in all-faculty retreats.

Second career teachers. There were several participants who had had successful careers in a variety of industries, who were returning to academe for a second career as professors. Thus, they were facing a crucial redefinition of self in their new roles as researchers and teachers.

Learning development consultants. One participant attended our session because he consulted to organizations about fostering learning and knowledge management and wanted to be able to articulate his learning philosophy to potential clients.

Junior faculty clarification. About the same number of junior faculty as doctoral students have attended our sessions. Having two or three years in the classroom under their belts, they are in a perfect position to take stock of who they are as professors. One commented that she needed this activity as an “intervention” to rediscover the idealism she had had for teaching when she first started in academe, which had faded due to publishing pressures.

Thus, this activity lends itself to almost any environment in which being clear about one’s teaching values and goals is important.

Prominent Discussion Points

We offer prominent discussion points to alert readers to interesting issues that arose during our facilitations. These points offer some options that facilitators may consider if certain issues are relevant in their groups.

We had significant whole-group discussion about the requisite role of trust embedded in this activity. Some participants who expressed interest in bringing the activity back to their constituent group were concerned that their group had low levels of trust and that this would impede open sharing of teaching philosophies. Values and philosophies are personal issues that may be risky to encounter in a group setting if they do not match a dominant or espoused paradigm.

We also encountered a participant who expressed concern about a mismatch between operational policies in his university and his own philosophy. Our session approach is predicated on honoring individual differences, and the resulting teaching philosophy statement may place participants at odds with policies in place that they do not have the power to change. The example

given here was that this particular university enforced a grade distribution system wherein each course's grades fell along a predetermined distribution. The instructor had to fit students' grades along this distribution. The participant, a new PhD student, was extremely uncomfortable with enacting a grade distribution. He perceived that it would be a serious and threatening misalignment between the classroom climate he wanted to create and the climate that a forced grade distribution might foster. After whole-group discussion, we suggested he speak with his advisor, whom he trusted, about this perception as well as get information about why such a policy was enforced.

Another question was raised on whether one might change one's teaching philosophy for courses taught online. Participants were concerned that they may be forced to modify key philosophical beliefs, such as believing that small group interaction or informal faculty-student interactions are crucial to learning. The discussion ultimately coalesced around the idea of compromise and what that means in practice. Should instructors choose only those teaching environments that fit with their personal teaching philosophy? Would we become too comfortable doing that? How much choice do many instructors really have? These questions and others contributed to a rich conversation.

Closely related, there were several discussions about assessment and teaching evaluation issues. For example, the PhD student who has to adhere to a grade distribution certainly is worried about teaching evaluation implications. Given AACSB's new Standard 15 assurance of learning requirements, we spent time talking about potential "square peg in a round hole" problems between important teaching activities that resist clean measurement and assessment. Examples included the deliberate use of ambiguity in teaching activities to develop students' abilities to cope, and measuring and assessing critical thinking development. Although the scope of our session did not include time to sort through these kinds of issues operationally, the discussion fostered sharing among participants and many exchanged contact information to continue the conversation.

The range of issues and questions that have arisen during our facilitation of the exercise have illustrated to us that the exercise is a good tool for spurring deeper thinking about both institutional matters concerning teaching philosophies and the contexts in which they operate.

Facilitator Considerations

Overall, being flexible with audiences seems to be a key success factor. We offer several specific considerations that we encountered running this

exercise. First, we had a participant who commented privately to one of us, "The cards I choose really depend on the level and course I am teaching. I have to change my philosophy to match appropriate expectations for each course, like freshman introduction to business versus MBA strategy." This gave us an opportunity to clarify with session participants our own embedded assumptions about the term *philosophy*. We believe firmly that teaching philosophies are overarching values systems that inform any teaching endeavor. Teaching philosophies do not change with each course but guide choices about appropriate pedagogy. We would say that the participant is erroneously talking about pedagogy or approach rather than philosophy. Once we brought this up for discussion, there were others in the group who concurred with the participant's view. Thus, it is likely a good idea for facilitators to define up front what they believe philosophy means in crafting the teaching philosophy statement.

Second, facilitators should consider audience experience and needs to structure workshop time best. We found that section time allotments were prioritized differently depending on our audiences. In one setting, our audience was full of very experienced teachers. For that group, we spent little time building the conceptual foundation for teaching philosophy statements, as they were well-acquainted with this idea. They wanted the majority of the time to sort through the cards and reflect and to share as a whole group. Most of the participants knew each other. We did not explicitly consider trust levels because it was a group with whom we too were very familiar.

In a different setting, our audience had a much broader spectrum of goals and experience levels. We spent much more time introducing the idea of teaching philosophy statements, their origins, and their potential uses. Because of the size of the audience, the small group sharing worked especially well. This audience was more interested in a tangible take-away (the formal teaching philosophy thesis statement) than was the first audience and seemed to be much faster at sorting and organizing the cards. Thus, we went with their flow and spent much less time on the card-sort activity itself.

In another example, a colleague who has facilitated this exercise for a faculty group modified the sorting process to reduce the number of cards with which her faculty worked. During the initial card-sorting process, she asked participants to select only 10 cards and form a pyramid with them, prioritizing from most important concept or school of thought on top to less crucial concepts forming the pyramid's base. She believed that her audience, mostly new faculty, would benefit from a more structured process. She noted that her faculty group enjoyed the exercise and offered the following feedback on her facilitation process:

They liked the autonomy and individuality of it. They also liked looking at others' pyramids and hearing others' statements. I also think they liked being encouraged to express some of their individual interests as they relate to the classroom "ecosystems" they strive to create. It isn't often people are asked to articulate what it is about their goals and aspirations for the learning process as it relates to their students, structures, and spaces. I tried to highlight how important articulating that information is to students and for themselves as a reflective tool.

Last, we would recommend that facilitators undertake this exercise themselves and be willing to share with participants both their process experiences as well as their teaching philosophy statement. Participants asked us about how we created our personal teaching philosophies, and we brought our statements to share. Balancing the ambiguity of the process with potentially "short-circuiting" participants' own creativity by showing them our statements was a judgment call. If participants were really stuck during the thesis-crafting phase and needed some examples, we offered them (see appendix).

Conclusions and Next Steps

By granting each philosophical concept physical space, participants may realize new things about their philosophies. For example, one participant was surprised by the number of themes he identified, which gave him an explanation for why he feels overwhelmed in his teaching; he realized he was trying to do too many things. Sorting cards—picking and choosing what strikes us as "real" or "true"—concretizes an abstract but vitally important task. Having the cards as a resource allows a structure for future reflection and exploration, so the teaching philosophy statement remains fresh and consistent as a teacher develops professionally.

Because many teachers have not been exposed to the concepts of philosophy and teaching philosophies, a benefit of this approach is that it exposes both beginners and revisers to general philosophy concepts and some of the classic pedagogical ideas. We acknowledge that both of these areas of theory are complex and that the cards provide only a limited amount of exposure. The initial exposure offered in this exercise serves as a primer, opening the door to future, deeper learning about these ideas.

In our companion theory article (Beatty, Leigh, & Lund Dean, in press), we've cautioned against the use of loosely defined educational buzzwords to describe one's teaching philosophy, and we acknowledge that the format

of the cards we use in this teaching philosophy exercise—with single words or phrases—risks contributing to the same problem. Specifically, the risk is that individual cards are oversimplified and lack context. It is our hope that readers completing this exercise will be engaged in a larger discussion of the historical shared foundations of educational philosophies, as well as contemporary discussions with colleagues at their local institutions. Our goal is for teachers to use the cards as a new source of educational information to write their teaching philosophy statement *after* deep reflection leads them to craft a statement that has personal integrity.

Last, Figure 1 suggests that after a teaching philosophy statement has been completed, teachers should assess the alignment between their philosophical beliefs about teaching and the teaching practices demonstrated in their course syllabi. The beliefs one espouses in a teaching philosophy statement should support the enacting of these beliefs in the day-to-day classroom; the course syllabus is the place where the “rubber meets the road,” where teachers can demonstrate this alignment between beliefs and actions. The exercise we have offered here does not address this last step of checking alignment between espoused and enacted beliefs. However, this step can be performed as a separate reflection exercise in its own right, once a teaching philosophy statement is in place. We suggest that “syllabus vetting” to ascertain congruence between espoused and enacted is the important next step for authenticity in the classroom. We advocate for teachers to match the techniques, norms, and activities suggested by whatever educational philosophies inform their personal teaching philosophy to course requirements, policies, and activities offered to students.

Appendix

Sample Teaching Philosophy Excerpts

Example 1

The main elements of my teaching philosophy are the following:

1. Learning is a social process that requires engagement and a sense of community. The community ideally is characterized by safety and is composed of students with some level of intrinsically motivated curiosity.
[CARDS: Engagement, Relational, Community, Collaborative learning, Learning as a social process, Safety, Intrinsic motivation, Curiosity]
2. At the same time, learning is a personal process. People learn through direct experience, through applying the materials to their own lives. To

encourage application, I use large group discussion and reflection in which students are asked to connect with the materials and share their experiences with their classmates. To facilitate this connection, I use permanent learning teams for the whole semester.

[CARDS: *Focus on process, Learning by doing, Practical application, Discussion and dialogue, Reflection, Teams and group projects*]

Historical Roots: a lot of pragmatism and subcategories (progressivism, constructionism), Dewey, and some existentialism.

Example 2

Being able to quantify discrete results is not what I think higher education's value is. I think the college experience is where students learn how to be a whole person, where they may forge their lifelong orientation toward learning and curiosity, and where they learn in what their passions may lie. Teaching technical and subject-specific skills are one part of this—often the easier part. I think of all of the skills I acquired other than subject knowledge from my excellent teachers and try to integrate those into every class period I facilitate.

It is my mission that students do engage in and accept the value I bring to the potential learning experience. At root, my teaching goal is to offer students ways to learn if they choose to do so. I explicitly create assignments that respond to varied student learning styles by spreading course points over different kinds of assignments. Students may then encounter multiple ways to succeed. I offer an interactive, dialogue-based classroom, accessibility to discuss any issue, and theoretical and practical tools to guide students through the material. It is through students' commitment to accepting the learning challenge that we may have a connection in my course.

[CARDS: *Understanding wholes, Students' interests and needs, Self-expression, Learning by doing, Teacher as Facilitator, Structure, Service-Learning*]

Historical Roots: pragmatism, constructionism, existentialism, progressivism, and Dewey.

Example 3: Sample Thesis Sentences

If a participant chose cards with the words *competition* and *dignity* on them, a sample thesis statement might be, "The work world is competitive, fast-moving, and sometimes harsh. While I believe in the inherent dignity of every person, I believe it is my responsibility to prepare my students for workplace realities. Thus, my assignments focus on competitive outcomes within a supportive, reinforcing classroom environment."

(continued)

Appendix (continued)

Another example is with *relativity of values, multi-culturalism, and self-assessment*, wherein a sample thesis might be, "My epistemology is that knowledge requires awareness of one's own values and awareness of others' values to truly engage with an increasingly diverse world. Knowledge is best created in community, through respectful dialogue with those who may not necessarily agree with you. As such, course assignments include many self-assessments that will form the basis of these conversations, as well as structured opportunities for group interaction around potentially controversial topics."

Note

1. For an in-depth discussion of shared meanings and verbal shorthand, please see Beatty, Leigh, and Lund Dean (in press).

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