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# Philosophy Rediscovered

## Exploring the Connections Between Teaching Philosophies, Educational Philosophies, and Philosophy

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Teaching philosophy statements reflect our personal values, connect us to those with shared values in the larger teaching community, and inform our classroom practices. In this article, we explore the often-overlooked foundations of teaching philosophies, specifically philosophy and historical educational philosophies. We review three elements of pure philosophy and five seminal educational philosophies to help readers ground their personal philosophies in both a theoretical and historical context. We illustrate how core elements of one's teaching philosophy can influence course design and the classroom environment. We suggest that teachers can develop greater authenticity in the classroom by deepening their understanding of their own philosophical ideas and beliefs.

**Keywords:** *teaching philosophy; educational philosophy; philosophy; personal development; authenticity; foundations*

The connection between philosophy, philosophy of education, and the work of a teacher has not always been recognized. One of the most hopeful signs, however, in the field of education today, is the growing conviction that every teacher needs a carefully formulated and intelligently criticized philosophy

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of education and that this philosophy of education must be rooted in philosophy itself.

*Van Petten Henderson, 1947, p. vii*

A statement of teaching philosophy is a narrative description of one's conception of teaching, including the rationale for one's teaching methods. It is seen as a place to voice holistic views of the teaching process, including one's thoughts about the definitions and interaction between learning and teaching, perceptions of the teacher's and student's role, and goals and values of education (Chism, 1997-1998; Goodyear & Allchin, 1998). Many teachers are encouraged to draft their first formal teaching philosophy statement for functional reasons, as part of their teaching portfolio. Teaching philosophy statements therefore play an important role in initial job searches as well as promotion and tenure (Edgerton, Hutchings, & Quinlan, 1991; Seldin, 1997).

Beyond such instrumental benefits, teaching philosophy statements are also a tool to promote teachers' ongoing personal development. 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 promotes self-awareness. Good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher and one's ability to make these present in the classroom (Palmer, 1997). Over time, our teaching styles may become overlearned and automatic, allowing us to practice them without conscious thought (Jarvis, 1992). Engaging in a formal reflection process about our philosophy allows us to remain mindful of our beliefs (Brookfield, 1995; Schön, 1983). As Ramsey and Fitzgibbons (2005) explain,

Who we are, what we believe, and what assumptions we hold about students, the material, and the world significantly affect what we do in the classroom, no matter the course content or teaching style. This recognition provides the major impetus continually to question and rethink who we are in the world and what we want our relationship with students and the subject matter to be. (p. 345)

The theoretical underpinning of philosophy is often overlooked when teachers draft their personal teaching philosophies. The most common approaches to writing a teaching philosophy offer descriptive lists of questions regarding one's beliefs about students, the role of the teacher, and the outcomes of higher education (for seminal examples, see those by Chism, 1997-1998, and Goodyear & Allchin, 1998). Yet as Pratt (2005) points out, "A philosophy of teaching statement should reveal the deeper structures and values that give meaning and justification to an approach to teaching" (p. 32).

Any teaching philosophy may meet functional goals, but a more meaningful developmental teaching philosophy should be rigorous and well-grounded—as noted above in our opening quote from Van Petten Henderson. The opening quote was taken from a book on educational philosophies published in 1947 (notably *not* recent), and we included it as an aspirational goal for management educators. Our personal experiences drafting our own teaching philosophies and discussions with colleagues suggest there is ongoing opportunity for deeper development of one’s teaching philosophy. Van Petten Henderson’s quote offers a roadmap for developing a more rigorous and grounded teaching philosophy which entails grounding one’s teaching philosophy in “philosophy itself,” meaning the larger theoretical frameworks in general philosophy and historical educational philosophies.

Following this roadmap, our inquiry in this article focuses on the “philosophy” part of teaching philosophy statements. Philosophy is a highly abstract concept which can seem distant and perhaps irrelevant to our daily concerns of teaching, yet we believe a greater understanding of the philosophical foundations of teaching philosophies offers practical benefits. Specifically, understanding elements of philosophy and the kinds of questions pure philosophy addresses is helpful for thinking more deeply about one’s personal teaching beliefs. Understanding educational philosophies allows one to consider his or her teaching practice within the larger community of teachers, providing context and perspective. Because teachers enact their own ideas and beliefs about teaching in their daily practice, their differences in philosophical beliefs lead to differences in classroom practice. The process of explicitly naming these ideas and concepts makes visible philosophical choices that were formerly taken for granted.

Our goal in this article is to rediscover the philosophy in teaching philosophies, to illustrate the practical implications of teaching philosophies, and to explain why it is useful for teachers to reflect on their own teaching philosophies. We begin by discussing some concepts from basic philosophy, followed by a review of the major educational philosophies which highlights the connections with basic philosophy. We conclude with comments on the benefits of mindfully choosing and attending to one’s teaching philosophy. This theoretical background supports a card sort exercise (see Beatty, Leigh, & Lund Dean [this issue]) designed to facilitate reflection on the educational and philosophical roots of personal teaching philosophies.

## Reclaiming the “Philosophy” in Teaching Philosophies

Educators face philosophical questions about the nature of knowledge, education, schooling, and the methods by which schooling should occur: *What is*

*real? How do I know? What is worthy and what do I value?* Although these questions may not be directly addressed in the classroom, teachers' beliefs and views on these questions form critical scaffolding for the teaching and learning experiences they create in the classroom. The field of philosophy has well-developed concepts for discussing these kinds of questions which provide a critical framework for examining our teaching beliefs. In this section, we present three of them: metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology.

*What is real? Metaphysics* examines the nature of ultimate reality. It offers views on the causes of events in the universe (cosmology), the nature of human beings (anthropology), the nature of divinity (theology), and the meaning of existence (ontology). For example, questions such as "Does order exist in the universe, or do humans create it?" "Who am I?" and "What am I?" (McKenna, 1995) are metaphysical ones. Is the world absolute and permanent, abstract and spiritual, or subjective and changing?

A key learning goal in management education is to help students understand the perceptually based and constructed nature of "reality." Thus, our views of metaphysics (along with those of textbook writers and curriculum committee members) will necessarily shape the content and methods of our teaching. We may convey that reality is objectively real or subjective and socially constructed; both views represent a metaphysical stance. If we convey the view that reality is subjective, we are enacting a metaphysics that is consistent with the educational philosophies of pragmatism, existentialism, and critical theory; in contrast, this view is at odds with the metaphysics of realism and idealism, which portray reality in more objective terms. We will discuss connections with educational philosophies in more detail later in this article.

Our view of human nature, which is a metaphysical belief, shapes our view of education. Do we believe human nature has been constant throughout time and that proper knowledge is therefore timeless, or do we believe that human nature and basic problems change over time? Do we believe that people are inherently good and altruistic, or operating primarily from self-interest?

The dilemma of free choice versus causality is also a metaphysical question commonly addressed in discussions of agency versus structure (McKenna, 1995). This idea might show up in our course design, for example, in the amount of order and structure teachers provide for a class and their expectations that students conform to the structure. It could show up in the causal explanations and solutions we offer about the business and social issues we discuss in class, for example, if we believe problems are caused more by social structures or individual agency. It

could also affect our explanations of self-assessment instruments our students take, such as Rotter's (1966) Locus of Control scale.

*How do I know what I know?* The second philosophical concept is *epistemology*, which literally means a theory or explanation of knowledge. It focuses on the origin, structure, and validity of knowledge (McKenna, 1995) or how we know what we know. Information can come from others such as parents and teachers or from personal sources such as reason and sensory experience. A seminal work by Hessong and Weeks (1991) suggests there are five ways of knowing: (a) by revelation from God; (b) by authority from an expert; (c) by the individual's reasoning; (d) by the individual's sensory perception; and (e) by the individual's intuition. Note that epistemology is the most well-known term, and some writers use it to represent both meta-physical and epistemological ideas.

Epistemological questions influence our teaching methods in critical ways. For example, do we teach scientific methods or use Holy texts to find knowledge? Do we encourage or discourage the use of intuition? What are our beliefs about the validity of knowledge from external authorities versus knowledge from the individual? The choices we make about our assignments, tests, and course design are epistemological statements. For example, research articles are based on a rational-analytic, positivist epistemology; case analyses demonstrate a greater tolerance for ambiguity and multiple sources of data; and personal reflection work which encourages the use of "I" honors an individualized epistemology. Multiple choice tests suggest there is one right answer, often the one put forth by the textbook or the teacher. Writing assignments which require application to a student's personal life imply that knowledge is more contextual and subjective. The use of teams and class discussion suggests that other people are a valid source of knowledge.

One place teachers demonstrate their epistemological beliefs is in the standards of evidence they require on research assignments. Some teachers specifically require students to reference only academic articles, whereas others allow trade publications, Web searches, or the use of community-generated documents such as *Wikipedia*. Critics argue that *Wikipedia* does not count as "expert" knowledge; because content can be edited by anyone with Internet access, it lacks the formal peer review process in which recognized academic "experts" serve as gatekeepers to publication, protecting the dissemination of fallacies. They further argue that the process of open access devalues the notion of expertise itself (Read, 2006). This is an epistemological debate on the validity of sources of knowledge.

*What are worthy as the right criteria for judgment?* The third philosophical concept is *axiology*, which addresses the nature of value, covering both ethics and aesthetics. The term is derived from the Greek word for “worthy,” and this branch focuses on how we evaluate choices. The major ethical frameworks covered in axiology are probably familiar to most management educators because they are often included in textbook sections on ethics. They are utilitarian ethics, justice ethics, virtue ethics, and care ethics. The first three frames assume rationality, universal criteria, and autonomy of the individual. In contrast, the ethic of care is contextual, nonuniversal, and relational.

Our values can appear in the content materials of the course, such as the selection of cases and reading materials. Our views on morality, values, and right action, including whether and how these concepts should be taught, will shape our approach to teaching. In the classroom, we may be uncomfortable with explicitly addressing values issues, believing our role is to present only “the facts” and allow students to create their own moral code. We may alternatively believe in offering more information and assistance in creating ethical students. Indeed, business schools are under increasing scrutiny to explicitly address the ethical training of our students.

The literature on academic service learning provides an example of an axiological debate in management education. Some scholars such as Godfrey (1999) believe service learning is a moral project addressing social justice which helps “the private sector maintain the moral authority to set the social agenda” (p. 376), and it should be explicitly presented as such to students. Others such as Kenworthy-U’Ren (1999) advocate an “exposure-and-understanding” approach that explicitly avoids the social justice framing and allows students to reach their own value positions on service, social justice, and the role of business in society. Their debate is not about whether values should be discussed explicitly; after all, both are presenting strongly held values-based positions. Rather, we suggest they are presenting contrasting value systems which reflect their personal teaching philosophies. Because their debate has been published, other management educators can reflect on and gain insight into their own values position on service learning. This example illustrates a major community benefit of making elements of one’s teaching philosophy public and open for discussion.

Values also appear in aesthetics, which studies sensory experience and feelings aroused by these experiences. Steve Taylor (personal communication, July 18, 2006) discusses the relation to aesthetics in teaching when he writes:

It is always an aesthetic choice for a teacher as to what they really value—is good critical thinking beautiful? Is being the sage on the stage and having the

students applaud at the end of your lecture beautiful? Or is it the sublime experience of having a student realize something important about themselves that does it for you? These are fundamentally values that are aesthetic differences.

Teachers who value aesthetics encourage learning through a variety of sensual experiences, using techniques that evoke different visual, auditory, and affective experiences rather than traditional teaching methods. For example, they may incorporate art and drawing, music, and performances of skits and plays to evoke learning through sensual experiences.

The three conceptual areas from philosophy presented here are challenging because they are highly abstract. Thinking about these and determining one's own stance on these questions can be difficult and is likely an ongoing developmental journey that occurs over the course of one's career. Additional resources to spur this development are available in the education literature, which contains the established philosophies of education. How have others answered these questions over time? The traditional philosophies offer frameworks demonstrating different "answers" to the abstract metaphysical, epistemological, and axiological questions. We discuss these educational philosophies in the next section.

## Shared Educational Philosophies

The literature on teaching philosophies suggests that they are eminently *personal*, a reflection of the individual teacher's identity. However, the literature overlooks the importance of shared foundations: The building blocks for these personal statements are drawn from the lexicon of basic educational philosophies, which are shared among the community of teachers. Teaching philosophies are rarely discussed in our daily practice, so this "sharing" occurs implicitly. When we do discuss them, there is a tendency to resort to a convenient shorthand or set of buzzwords, as if everyone knows what "a student centered community of learners" means and shares the same definition. Yet meanings can vary widely among individual teachers.

The culture of teaching practice has become, paradoxically, both more diverse and more shared. Awareness of diverse teaching and learning methods is increasing as schools focus on the scholarship of teaching and learning (Boyer, 1990), and an increasing number of pedagogy publications are available to disseminate teaching knowledge. Challenges to a traditional lecture model or "sage on a stage" paradigm are widespread (e.g., The Organizational Behavior Teaching Conference) and have fundamentally altered the culture

surrounding innovative and effective teaching. But as approaches to teaching have become more diverse, it seems the language underpinning and sustaining them has struggled to maintain its shared communal meaning. Furthermore, normative beliefs about teaching methods vary across disciplines (Donald, 1995; Murray & Renaud, 1995). Terms from the lexicon may be invoked without an understanding of their relationship to traditional educational philosophies and the connections with and among other terms in that lexicon. Thus, the details that come from deeper familiarity with the philosophy may be forgotten over time.

To illustrate how terms become disconnected from their historical context, consider the idea of “Teaching the Whole Person” which was the theme of the Organizational Behavior Teaching Conference in 2005. In the present era, the term “*whole person*” begs the question: “whole” as opposed to what? Looking at the history of this concept reveals an interesting controversy in educational philosophy regarding the goals of education. The whole person concept is derived from the whole child movement and the rise of progressivism, which occurred after 1918. In that year, the National Education Association issued an influential bulletin titled *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* outlining the goals of education. It focused on “complete living” and life adjustment and offered a wide interpretation of children’s needs in education, including rational thinking and the understanding of science, health, family life, ethics, the rights and duties of democratic citizenry, and wise consumer behavior and use of leisure. It advocated social, psychological, vocational, moral, and civic goals for education, in addition to traditional cognitive ones (Ornstein & Levine, 1997, p. 424).

This philosophical position does not sound all that controversial in today’s world, but at the time it was a statement against the prevailing ideology. Whole child was developed as a response and reaction to the “mental discipline” approach, which dominated American education from the late 1800s. The mental discipline approach argues that the mind is strengthened through mental activities. Traditional subjects such as Latin, Greek, math, and physics were valued for their cultivation of the intellect. The more difficult the subject was to learn, the more valuable it was as exercise for the mind. This approach created a curriculum hierarchy focused on academics and college preparation, but the social and psychological concerns of the learner were largely ignored (Ornstein & Levine, 1997). This example illustrates how a phrase such as “Teaching the Whole Person” has a specific historical meaning. Understanding its context allows us to be better informed about its contemporary usage.

In a similar way to this “whole person” example, establishing connections between one’s personal teaching philosophy and traditional educational

**Table 1**  
**Elements of Philosophies of Education**

Philosophy	Metaphysics	Epistemology	Axiology
Idealism	Reality is spiritual or mental and unchanging	Knowing is the rethinking of latent ideas	Values are absolute and eternal
Realism	Reality is objective, fixed, and is composed of matter and form	Knowing consists of sensation and abstraction	Values are absolute and eternal based on natural law
Pragmatism	Reality is the interaction of an individual with environment or experience; always changing	Knowing results from experience and use of scientific method	Values are situational or relative
Existentialism	Reality is subjective	Knowing is to make personal choices	Values should be freely chosen
Critical theory	Reality is politically, socially, and economically constructed	Knowing comes from critical analysis of conflicts in society	Values are constructed in terms of power

Credit: Ornstein, Alan C. and Daniel U. Levine, *Foundations of Education*, Sixth Edition. Copyright 1997 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Used with permission.

philosophies builds an understanding of the ancestry and lineage of one's beliefs which we believe contributes to personal development. To explore the larger context of educational philosophies, we offer a brief overview of five major educational philosophies using the elements of philosophy presented earlier in this article (see Table 1). In chronological order, the philosophies are idealism, realism, pragmatism, existentialism, and critical theory. As used here, philosophies refer to "complete bodies of thought that present a world-view of which education is a part" (Ornstein & Levine, 1997, p. 383). They provide the foundation or "roots" for different educational theories.

These descriptions are brief, offering broad classifications that emphasize distinctions between these philosophies and deemphasize the interconnectedness inherent in these ideas. Although we have covered the major schools, there are others we have not covered such as phenomenological, hermeneutic, interpretive, and postmodern philosophies. We encourage readers to pursue a more extensive review of those educational philosophies that interest them. We recommend texts dedicated to teaching philosophies such as Blake, Smeyers, Smith, and Standish (2003) or McKenna (1995).

*Idealism.* This philosophy is considered to be one of the oldest and can be traced back to Plato. Idealist philosophers include Descartes, Georg Hegel, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and, more recently, the 20th century work of J. Donaldson Butler and Herman H. Horne. The main concerns for idealists are primarily metaphysical, focusing on “eternal concepts” like truth and honor.

Idealists emphasize the “reality of the mind”—that the mental and spiritual are real—and see the universe as an expression of a universal mind. For their epistemology, idealists believe that ideas are latent in the mind, permanent and orderly; ideas are absolute and both prior to and independent of experience. Therefore, idealists draw on intuition, revelation, and rationalism to develop knowledge. Idealists believe that when individuals examine their own mind, they discover a copy of the universal mind. The goal of an education informed by idealism is to help students discover this underlying knowledge, thus providing a broad and unified perspective of the universe. Idealist axiology suggests enduring values that are unchanging and universal. Ethical conduct should mirror these enduring and permanent values. Instructors who have this perspective often expose students to the classics that have endured over time, such as Plato’s *Allegory of the Cave*.

*Realism.* Aristotle, Plato’s pupil, founded this school of philosophy which is considered to be a reaction to idealism. Specifically, realism acknowledges the existence of the sensory world (e.g., Plato’s cave and the fire) in its own right separate from our conception of it (e.g., Plato’s privileging of the shadow). Other realist philosophers include Thomas Aquinas, Francis Bacon, John Locke, and Alfred North Whitehead. Realists’ metaphysics stress objective knowledge and values that exist independent of the mind of the knower. Realists believe that every object is composed of matter which can be sensed. Their epistemology offers that knowing is based on sensory data, which the mind then abstracts and classifies, for instance in the creation of typologies. An important distinction between idealism and realism in their approach toward “truth” is that realists believe people can observe these laws from their study of reality, as opposed to their minds. The axiology of realism is the development of values based on natural laws, which are eternal and universal. Like idealism, realism emphasizes eternal knowledge as guiding the education process. Teachers with realist philosophies will focus on subject-matter disciplines often in the natural and social sciences.

*Pragmatism.* This philosophy is considered the United State’s contribution to philosophical thought. Pragmatism, also referred to as experimentalism and

instrumentalism, grew from a frustration with older philosophical systems that focused on absolutes. In contrast, the thinking of pragmatists like Charles Peirce, William James, George Herbert Mead, and John Dewey was informed by empirical science, the rapid social and cultural changes and their associated problems in the late 19th century, and nature. In the metaphysics of pragmatism, reality is constructed through transactional experiences where humans interact with the environment, which is constantly changing. For its epistemology, one knows things by examining his or her experience interacting with the environment. Therefore pragmatists believe knowledge is subject to review because of the ever-changing nature of the world. The axiology of pragmatism is that values are relative and situational, and as the culture changes so do its values. Teachers with pragmatist philosophies will focus on building constructed, participative knowledge with students. They will rely on dialogue and critical examination and will be more comfortable with ambiguity.

*Existentialism.* The initial development of this philosophy is associated with Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche and in the 20th century in the works of Karl Jaspers, Jean-Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger, and Albert Camus. Existentialism is marked by three features. First, there is the resistance of its philosophers to classification as a distinct philosophical tradition. Second, these philosophers held a disdain for societal structures that robbed individuals of their humanity, such as modern industrialization in the early 20th century. Third, existential philosophers share a disregard for the remoteness of traditional philosophy. Existentialists encourage deep personal reflection on experiences of deep passion or times of heightened feeling because they believe reality is understood through these moments. Another key tenet is that individuals possess the freedom to make choices, and it is through the nature of these choices that people define themselves. The goal of education is to awaken people to this freedom to choose.

In the metaphysics of existentialism, reality is existence grounded in the personal and subjective experience. For its epistemology, knowledge comes through the process of making choices; it is personal and nonscientific, created through the act of living one's life. Similarly, in its axiology, values are those chosen by the individual; because there are no preexisting or universal values for existentialists, every choice is an act of value creation. Aesthetics play a greater role; as people explore others' acts of making choices, they create their own standard of what is beautiful to them. Teachers with existentialist philosophies will reject "traditional" assignments such as research articles and multiple choice exams as irrelevant. They may use experiential learning techniques such as role-playing or service-learning that encourage action and affect.

*Critical social theory.* Like existentialism, critical theory resists traditional classification. Critical theory's ideas can be traced to the works of Marx as well as Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Antonio Gramsci, Jürgen Habermas, and the modern-day proponent Paulo Freire. The major concerns of critical theorists are critique of society, its structures, and their reproduction. Of particular interest is their belief that powerful groups control societal structures and systematically impose their values on those who lack power. Its metaphysics are that reality is socially constructed through class struggle. Its epistemology rests on the study of conflict, dominance, and power in society. It explores power through deconstructing major works from the old order, and encouraging an epistemology based on one's autobiographical experiences. Critical theorists advocate reform, and their axiology is grounded in "a strong ethical concern for the individual and a rejection of all possible excuses for hunger, domination, humiliation, injustices, and a longing for a better world" (Blake & Masschelein, 2003, p. 38). Teachers with critical social theory philosophies will lead students through deconstruction exercises that focus students' attention on examining social relationships, including power, class, and motives. They might also include reflection assignments that encourage students to develop a heightened awareness of themselves in socially grounded roles and the demands placed on them therein.

Although the philosophies discussed above occurred chronologically, it should be noted that the newer philosophies have not replaced the old ones; they have simply expanded the field. For example, we can find present-day "Great Books" seminars or curricula in which teachers emphasize universal truths presented in the great works of civilization, an idea consistent with the older philosophies of idealism and realism.

## **Implications for Teacher Development and Management Education**

We believe that the "philosophy" part of teaching philosophies demands more attention. Our review of the pure philosophy terms of metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology establishes the philosophical roots of teaching philosophies and offers a conceptual framework to think about philosophical ideas as they apply to teaching. Our review of the classic educational philosophies illustrates how these elements have been combined at different times to result in very different beliefs about and approaches to teaching. These educational philosophies and concepts also provide the shared but often implicit teaching lexicon.

Developing teaching philosophies grounded in philosophy and educational philosophies offers a number of benefits to our teaching practice, our personal development, and the community of management education. At the most practical level, being mindful of our values in our teaching practice can guide our decision making in course design and in coping with inevitable teaching dilemmas. Choices about assignments and projects, testing, and classroom dynamics should ideally be consistent with elements of one's teaching philosophy. Philosophical views, examined or not, will come into play as teachers cope with cases of academic dishonesty, imploding student teams, critical classroom incidents, and negative feedback on their teaching.

As teachers embark on the kind of study and reflection of their teaching philosophy that we propose in this article, they may find areas where their classroom practice is inconsistent with their espoused philosophy. When this occurs, teachers can explore this inconsistency to determine whether it is their philosophy or their classroom practice that should be revised. Addressing such inconsistencies allows the teaching philosophy statement to serve as foundation for ongoing development.

Revisiting one's teaching philosophy statement regularly then becomes a tool to create and maintain a clear and authentic identity as a teacher. Authenticity in teaching requires self-awareness, awareness of others, relationships with learners, awareness of context, and a critically reflective approach to practice (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004). The development of a teaching philosophy grounded in traditional philosophy and educational philosophy contributes to value clarification, personal awareness, and contextual understanding. It provides the ability to "critically question that which is right for us from the [teaching] literature, develop our own personal style, and thereby communicate with students in a genuine way" (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004, p. 6). Being personally centered as a teacher helps us remain present to the emergent learning in each classroom, creating "being moments" in which students and teachers are mutually responsible for learning outcomes (Ramsey & Fitzgibbons, 2005).

Although we have used the term *teaching* philosophy in keeping with common semantics of the field, we acknowledge that this terminology overlooks a key constituency in the teaching endeavor, the learners. The philosophy teachers enact in the classroom is integrally connected to the students' beliefs and behaviors. This is especially true for teachers who adopt a socially constructed view of metaphysics (such as pragmatists, existentialists, and critical theorists). Because their worldview says that reality is created in social interactions, these teachers are likely to see themselves as

co-learners with their students. Even for teachers holding more objective metaphysical views, the beliefs and attitudes of their students are likely to influence a teacher's teaching philosophy. For example, students who see themselves as customers and the teaching encounter as a service transaction are likely to bring different attitudes about learning than students who see themselves as junior partners (Ferris, 2002). Thus a more accurate description of the teaching philosophy concept would be the term "teaching/learning philosophy." Future studies should explore how students' deeply held beliefs about the teaching/learning encounter interact with teachers' views of the same encounter.

At a community level, more thoughtful teaching philosophies can contribute to our larger mission in higher education in general and business education in particular. First, being aware of the heritage of one's ideas reinforces the connection to the shared values of the teaching community that crosses all disciplinary boundaries. Second, as business education has come under increasing criticism for promoting an amoral stance (Donaldson, 2002; Ghoshal, 2005; Giacalone, 2004), having a well-grounded teaching philosophy is consistent with the project to make values more visible in our teaching. The content of the specific values we teach may vary widely, as illustrated in our earlier example about the debate in academic service learning between Godfrey and Kenworthy-U'Ren.

Our argument is one for the importance of the reflection *process*, and of making one's teaching philosophy public. In sharing and discussing our philosophy statements publicly, they become focal documents that link the individual to the professional community and the goals of the institution. They create a basis not only for accountability (Hutchings, 1996) but also for the development and support of institutional values. When each faculty member makes his or her teaching philosophy statement available for public discussion, it becomes possible to examine common ground and differences in philosophy across faculty in a department, college, or across institutions. These discussions must be held with safety, respect, and an attitude of open inquiry as opposed to a critical attitude that seeks to convert others to a "preferred" or "more enlightened" philosophy. Because one's teaching philosophy is such a core element of one's identity as a teacher, direct criticism of one's teaching philosophy is akin to a direct assault on the self and will shut down any kind of learning dialogue. Still with careful framing, a shared discussion of personal teaching philosophies can help build community within our departments and universities.

## Conclusion

For teaching to be considered a scholarly activity, professors should develop a conception of pedagogy that more closely matches the rigor of scholarship in the disciplines themselves (Grasha, 1996). Such rigor includes a more explicit analysis of one's beliefs about teaching. A well-articulated teaching philosophy statement can surface assumptions and values which are easily taken for granted, offering the opportunity to examine critically the bases for those assumptions and values as well as the consideration of alternatives. A consideration of concepts from philosophy makes possible a deeper understanding of our philosophical roots.

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