Drafting Your Teaching Philosophy

Brian Coppola has written that your statement of teaching philosophy answers one basic question: "what is teaching and learning to you?" (2002). However, this seemingly simple question is often answered by addressing several components. This exercise will begin the process of drafting your teaching philosophy by focusing on various aspects of your teaching philosophy (e.g. theory, goals, methods, design, evaluation, reflection).

1) Begin your draft by answering the following question in one or two sentences: what is teaching and learning to you? You may want to come back and redraft this sentence as you consider the questions below.

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2) Now expand on your answer by considering the questions associated with essential aspects of a statement of teaching philosophy (as defined by Coppola):

- **Theoretical framework:** Describe a metaphor or anecdote that is relevant to your subject/discipline and that captures the spirit of successful learning experiences (e.g. teams /coaches, empty vessels, open books, time machines)?

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Prepared by Ben Miller for the Faculty of Arts Teaching and Learning Committee,
The University of Sydney, March 2010
• **Goals:** What do you hope to achieve by teaching your specific course material? What are your desired outcomes (for you and your students) for your specific subject? What do you hope to achieve by teaching within your discipline (or interdisciplinary)? What relationship do you hope to highlight between your subject and the wider society/culture in which you and your students live?

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• **Design/Implementation:** What is the ideal teaching/learning environment for your subject (identify types of material studied, course delivery method, teaching resources, etc)? What is your role in the learning environment? What is your student's role?

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• **Assessment:** What is your general approach to student assessment? What is your role in student assessment tasks? What is the student's role in assessment tasks? What do you gain through assessment tasks that you set? What does the student gain through assessment tasks that you set?

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• **Documentation and Reflection:** What have you learned about teaching/learning from an educational experience? Did you document the experience or plan future changes? How did you change your methods/goals after class/course feedback?

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Essential aspects of a teaching philosophy and associated questions have been adapted from the following source: