

This I Believe: Teaching and Learning Statement

Purpose

Writing your own statement of belief about teaching and learning is an opportunity to **articulate how your experiences, values, and assumptions shape the way you think about teaching.**

At this stage, your goal is not to define a final philosophy, but to **name your current thinking** as you begin the program. This is a starting point. You will return to this statement later in the course to **revisit, revise, and extend your ideas** as your understanding of teaching develops.

This assignment positions you as someone beginning to take up the work of teaching—not by adopting ideas, but by **examining and shaping your own perspective.**

What You Will Do

- Write a 500–800 word belief statement about teaching and learning
 - Draw on your own experiences to support your ideas
 - Identify and explain one or more core beliefs
 - Submit your essay to Canvas
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Writing Your Statement

Use the following guidance as you develop your essay:

Start with an introduction

Frame the belief or beliefs you will explore.

Name your beliefs clearly

If you cannot express a belief in a sentence or two, refine your thinking until you can.

Focus your ideas

You may explore one central belief or a set of related beliefs that connect to one another.

Write in the first person

This is a personal statement. Use language that reflects how you think and speak.

Ground your beliefs in experience

Include one or more specific moments that shaped, tested, or changed your thinking. These might include:

- experiences in school
- interactions with teachers or mentors
- moments of challenge or success
- experiences that influenced how you think about learning

Write toward what you believe

Focus on what you do believe, not what you do not believe.

Revise for clarity and authenticity

Read your essay aloud and revise it so that it reflects your voice and thinking clearly.

End with a conclusion

Bring your ideas together and consider what they suggest about your future as a teacher.

A Note on This Assignment

This is not a “gotcha” assignment. It is a way to capture your thinking at this moment in time.

You will return to this statement later in the course to **revisit and revise your beliefs**. As you engage in practice, discussion, and analysis throughout the course, you may find that your thinking becomes more complex, more specific, or shifts in important ways.

Expectations

- 500–800 words (approximately 3–4 minutes when read aloud)
- Clear articulation of one or more beliefs
- Use of specific examples from personal experience
- Writing that is personal, clear, and free of unnecessary jargon

Evaluation & Rubric

Evaluation is based on how clearly you articulate your beliefs, ground them in experience, and begin to examine your thinking about teaching.

- A. The statement clearly articulates one or more beliefs about teaching and learning and supports those beliefs with **specific, well-developed examples**. Writing is personal, focused, and authentic. The essay demonstrates clear attention to how experiences have shaped the author's thinking and begins to position the author as a developing professional.
- B. The statement articulates relevant beliefs and includes supporting examples. Writing is personal and generally clear. Connections between beliefs and experiences are present, though some ideas could be more fully developed or specific.
- C. The statement identifies beliefs but with **limited elaboration or specificity**. Examples are present but underdeveloped or loosely connected to the stated beliefs. Writing is personal but may lack clarity or focus.
- D. The statement shows **limited clarity of belief** and/or relies on generalizations. Support is imbalanced or unclear. Writing may be:
 - a. general rather than specific
 - b. academic rather than personal
 - c. reliant on jargon or cliché
- E. The assignment does not meet the criteria outlined above or is incomplete.