Example #1:
I believe that teaching is a field of inquiry and that teachers at every level should be dedicated to the scholarship of the field. I also believe that the work of teachers should be community property, and this belief has led to the creation of these web pages. Technology is one means of allowing teachers to expand the concept of community to a more global idea. We can begin to talk with and learn from others in an international community. Through discourse about the field we can improve the quality of teaching and, therefore, learning.

I believe that an effective teacher must have a great understanding of the subject matter being taught as well as of the underlying pedagogical theory. I believe that it is a teacher’s responsibility to stay current in a field, engaging in research and participating in classes, conferences, workshops, and/or mentoring, that can improve subject matter knowledge. A teacher must be able to make good selections about what to teach and how to structure and organize the material. At the same time it is important to stay abreast of current theory and research in the field of teaching and pedagogy. A teacher must know what to teach as well as what is the best way to teach it.

I believe that in order to be effective, teachers must know their students. We must be aware of what students know when they come into the classroom as well as how to tap into that knowledge and build on it. I view teaching as a process of encouraging students to make connections between their experiences and the subject matter. In any course, teachers should attempt to guide students through subject matter and facilitate new discoveries. Students should take away new insights, explanations, and skills.

Generally, I believe the role of a teacher is to be a facilitator; teachers should enable students to become responsible for their own learning. I do recognize that students learn in different ways and am committed to including all students in the learning process. Teachers should be able to vary teaching styles and should expect students to participate in a mixture of lecture, discussion, and group activities. Technology is important in the classroom since it is a vehicle for instruction and can be an invaluable tool for addressing different learning styles. It allows students to become more involved in the processes of learning rather than focusing on the product that they produce, although I have found that focusing on the process invariably leads to a better product. I believe that students should gain experience with rapidly evolving technology, but I also believe that technology must be used as a means of accomplishing more, to allow for better and improved learning and teaching, and should not be used as an end unto itself.

A teacher is responsible for building a relationship with students. Teachers must respect students; we must believe that all students are capable, that students have something to contribute, and that students may bring new insights to a subject or raise questions about a subject that have not yet been considered. Classroom learning should be viewed as a reciprocal process. Teachers must be committed to student success for we are responsible for making our subject matter accessible to those who do not yet know it. We must provide formative as well as summative feedback. We must try to ensure wide participation. As teachers, we should be accessible to all students, making sure that we talk to individual students during class and that we are available to students after class during office hours.

I believe that greater diversity leads to increases in the breadth and depth of learning. Teachers must be committed to recognizing and to addressing diversity in the classroom.
We should try to include readings to create an inclusive course of study, and we should try to create units to deal with issues of diversity. I believe that writing is one of the most important skills that a student can develop. Being an effective writer can allow a student to develop his or her ideas to their fullest potential and can allow him or her to communicate those ideas to others. Writing skills developed in the beginning of a student’s college career can enable the student to be successful for the rest of his or her college career and can also help him or her later in a professional career. Writing intensive courses in which students become involved with content, whether current issues, literature, science, history, or other, are one of the best means of encouraging students to engage in critical thinking.

I believe that effective teaching skills can be developed. Teacher training and instructional development, therefore, must be viewed as primary responsibilities. Teachers must have knowledge of what skills make a teacher effective and must work to craft those skills. Those skills must be honed, and they must be personalized. Being an effective teacher is a difficult task, but a teacher who accepts teaching as a challenge and as a responsibility will also find that it can provide rewards that are well worth the effort.

Example #2:

Notebooks do not an education make. — S.S. Pratt

Through my seventeen years of teaching, with students at various levels, several themes emerge. I aim to help students experience the world more richly, beyond the world of textbooks and inert facts, guiding and supporting them towards becoming:

* **reflective practitioners**
  - who think independently and learn how to learn for themselves
  - who creatively consider how things might be otherwise (through habits of posing questions, examining assumptions, exploring alternative perspectives)
  - who assess evidence critically

* **collaborative thinkers**
  - who exhibit good listening and analytical/sympathetic reading skills
  - who share their ideas and support others in developing their own ideas

* **effective communicators**
  - who can write and speak effectively and convey information visually
  - who can organize their thoughts and reasoning and contextualize their messages

* **persons who appreciate diverse subject matter**
  - who appreciate (in the sense of understand) significant concepts
  - who appreciate (in the sense of value) their new knowledge and its context(s)
theatrical "spectacle" of dramatic openings and closings; relevance to students, including of the semester; how classroom architecture and seating shapes student interaction; the theatrical "spectacle" of dramatic openings and closings; relevance to students, including

In preparing classes, I draw on a large repertoire of perspectives, considering: the rhythms of the semester; how classroom architecture and seating shapes student interaction; the theatrical "spectacle" of dramatic openings and closings; relevance to students, including

My courses in history and philosophy of science, biology, ethics, and technology and society are all occasions to develop these themes with different foci and varying levels of sophistication. I teach students. I teach teachers. I teach myself.

According to non-majors (mostly in large classes), my primary strengths as a teacher are: interesting classes or lectures, enthusiasm, level of knowledge, and organization. Other notable features include: use of visuals and discussions and an open, productive student-teacher relationship. A healthy percentage comment on the intellectual challenge and my emphasis on concepts or higher levels of understanding ("he forced me to think"). Students in smaller classes also value my careful written feedback and guidance on writing/reading/thinking skills.

From my own perspective as a veteran teacher, I would underscore further distinctive strengths: careful curriculum design to guide development of thinking skills; active, project-based learning (where possible); team-structured work; formative evaluation on written work; questions to motivate intellectual work; and respect for students as whole persons (one student in a class of 70 exclaimed, "he remembered our names!").

My academic work in history and philosophy of science is an important resource. First, I apply the norm of "sensitive," contextual interpretation in historical research to view learning from student perspectives, including both cognitive and motivational elements. Second, study of episodes of conceptual change in history suggest generally how discovery and learning occur—and resonate with current pedagogical models. Finally, for specific concepts I turn to history to understand naive perspectives and key intellectual transitions, borrowing or adapting the history in planning lessons. Sometimes, explicit historical case studies or scenarios are effective vehicles in the classroom. The "formula" for my practice might thus be summarized:

1. I regard all students as discoverers of new facts, rather than as receptacles for memorizing previously developed knowledge. The text is not the authority; rather, it is the reasoning from evidence and new investigations. Thus, I model reasoning in lectures, small-group activities and whole-class discussions.

2. I focus on building on what students already know and on revising what they misconceive (including diagnosing their preconceptions and prior knowledge.)

3. I focus on relevant concrete examples that perturb or disrupt prior student conceptions and that motivate the process of learning or discovery. I devote considerable time to posing questions or framing problems. I construct an affectively supportive environment that promotes student involvement in learning.

4. As noted above, I borrow from or adapt intellectual history as a guide.

5. I organize classes to capitalize on differences in individual student strengths and backgrounds (e.g., teams, moderated discussions). At the same time I frame evaluation individually to promote students in developing their own knowledge.

6. Where possible, I offer forums for students to demonstrate what they have learned, rather than measure them against a narrow, teacher-determined standard. I aim towards "authentic assessment," asking students to convey their knowledge in applied or "real-life" contexts.

In preparing classes, I draw on a large repertoire of perspectives, considering: the rhythms of the semester; how classroom architecture and seating shapes student interaction; the theatrical "spectacle" of dramatic openings and closings; relevance to students, including

- who appreciate (in both senses) high standards of quality
local and timely examples; plain language (introducing new terms socratically); different learning styles and varied class activities; how students' attitudes and emotions affect learning; how students' lives outside the classroom affect their learning; how learning, conversely, can affect students' lives outside the classroom; and the role of student choice in "owning" their education. Then I gather energy for an engaging, interactive classroom presence. An old Chinese proverb says, "a teacher for a day is like a parent for a lifetime." My students are my academic "children," and when they grow intellectually I value my part in contributing to that growth.