

Writing for the teaching career

1. Course materials

1.1. Syllabi

You've just been hired to teach your first course. How do you go about designing your course? How do you decide what components to put into your syllabus? What kind of goals or objectives will define the course? What objectives do you have for each section of the course? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the following:

- Following the textbook and textbook chapters
- Copying and modifying someone else's syllabus (and selection of course materials)
- Creating your own from scratch (and maybe selecting your own course materials)

Typical syllabus components include:

- Course description and objectives
- Expectations, assumptions, prerequisites
- Format, procedures
- Requirements
- Evaluation and grading
- Course materials and resources
- Schedule (albeit tentative)
- Policies – e.g., attendance, participation, behavior, exams, make-ups, academic integrity and plagiarism

1.2. Lesson plans

Consider what general format you will use, and the pros and cons of each:

- Traditional lecture, or traditional lecture plus PPT
- Lecture / discussion
- Interactive lessons

Then consider these factors:

- Specific objectives
- Students' background knowledge
- Introductions
- Types and length of activities; time management
- Flow, transitions, sequencing

- Evaluation
- Wrap-up activities

2. Application materials

2.1. Cover letters

A cover letter should effectively explain:

- Why you would like to work for the company or institution
- Your background
- Your strengths and potential contribution to the company or institution
- Other important information that is not listed in the CV/résumé

For non-academic jobs, consider transferable skills.

2.2. CVs and résumés

CV = curriculum vitae (Latin: “course of one’s life”); also called a vita; typical components vary, but often include:

- Contact info
- Education
- Work experience
- Publications
- Conference presentations
- Courses taught
- Honors, awards
- Projects
- Other skills or experience
- References
- Others

2.3. Statement of purpose (SOP)

An SOP should effectively address the following:

- Your intellectual and academic background, and why you are interested in that area of study
- Reasons for applying to that specific university
- Reasons for applying to that specific department
- Why they would want to accept you
- Specific research interests
- Future academic and career goals

2.4. Teaching philosophy statement (TPS, or simply, teaching statement)

Some jobs or job applications may require a TPS, especially in more teaching-focused areas. A TPS might address some of these issues.

- The teaching methods, approach, technique(s), or philosophy that you prefer, what it means to you, and how you would implement it.
- What your actual classroom teaching would look like, and why

- Students' particular difficulties in the subject area, and how you would address them
- How you might motivate students
- For any of the above: Provide specific examples of what you do or would do in the classroom.
- Try to be real and specific – avoid sounding like many typical TPSs that are fluffy and vague, and sound like commercials or self-promotions. Note that many TPS examples (like many of the examples online or in the manual below) can sound vague or overly promotional. Your TPS should sound authentic and sincere.

You can use several means of introspecting on your teaching philosophy to write about it; see the TPS manual on the website.

- **PAEI:** Take the Philosophy of Adult Education Inventory (see the TPS manual on the website), and write about that. Avoid the educational jargon in the inventory, but discuss your orientation in normal language with specific examples.
- **Paradigms:** Reflect on the nature of the field that you would teach, including the theory and important goals of researchers in the field. These constitute the worldview or paradigm of the field – how people think, what they do, and why they do what they do. Also think about the main conceptual difficulties that (beginning or undergraduate) students would have in the field. Consider how you could communicate these deep or difficult concepts, and/or the field's worldview, to beginners.
- **Efficacy:** Consider how you would go about reflecting on your teaching and improving yourself.

2.5. Research statement

These are used for applying for professorships and postdoctoral positions. They summarize your past and present research interests and accomplishments, and spell out specific kinds of research that you would like to do at the institution where you are applying. These should address the rationale, benefits, implications, and (expected) outcomes.

3. Others

See handouts for grant proposals and dissertation proposals on the website under the section for portfolio materials.

4. Portfolio requirements

Certificate seekers are required to turn in the following portfolio materials within one week after the micro-teaching session.

1. a curriculum vitae (CV)
2. [a] a statement of purpose (SOP) to apply to a graduate school program; or
[b] a teaching philosophy statement (TPS) to apply for a teaching job
3. a sample course syllabus (for a likely or hypothetical future course).

These can be emailed to me at: kentlee@korea.ac.kr. The materials must be done satisfactorily in order to receive the certificate.