Purpose: to synthesize both your experiences and your analysis of the foundation for your practices and theories of teaching writing. A Tutoring Philosophy Statement can be a supplemental artifact in your Teaching Portfolio in addition to a Teaching Philosophy Statement, or it can be a paragraph inserted into your Teaching Philosophy Statement that applies your teaching philosophy to one-to-one teaching, conferencing with students, and/or tutoring in digital spaces.

Genre Conventions
A tutoring philosophy is different from a reflection in several ways.

A reflection is--specific in time and place; focuses on past experience; asks the questions: What did I do during this time? How do I think and feel about what I did? What did I learn from my experience?

A philosophy is--generalized; focuses on the current and future; asks the question: What do I do? Why do I do this? What is the basis for my beliefs and actions?

A philosophy statement is like a portrait of you as a professional to introduce you to other professionals. It allows you to position yourself within the intellectual and theoretical work of English Studies and Composition Pedagogy. It combines your beliefs and values with your practice and experience. It reveals not only how you work with students, but what your influences and inspirations are (and these may be people or texts), and how all of that situates you within the academic community.

Both a reflection and a philosophy statement rely on personal narrative, but the philosophy statement will usually incorporate quotations from scholarship; or it will reference, cite, or discuss scholarship, or engage with ongoing conversations within the profession.

The audience for a philosophy statement is a potential (or current) employer. For example, at Georgia State (and many other universities) faculty and adjuncts are required to turn in a Teaching Portfolio every year as part of the annual review process. So these documents and genres will continue to serve you throughout your teaching life beyond being a graduate student. Also, once you have drafted your philosophy, you will only need to revise or change small parts of it, as you tweak and polish and evaluate how it fits you. Once you figure out exactly what you want to say, you often leave the philosophy as it is. The reflection on the other hand, gives you an opportunity to continually reflect on your practice and experience within a particular time period (usually a semester) and accumulate stories of your teaching.
Questions to Fire up your Creative Self:

- Why do you enjoy tutoring? What makes it fun? What keeps it fun?
- What do you believe to be the goal of tutoring? (e.g., Is it: confidence, critical thinking, familiarity with genre and grammar conventions? Providing a real audience? Providing genuine feedback and response? Do you want students to think of themselves as writers? Or better writers? Or something else?)
- What is your role as a tutor? (e.g., Is it: a guide, a coach, a writer, a reader, an instructor, an expert, an audience? Using an analogy or metaphor, how do you see yourself?)
- What do you think you and the student most gain from the tutorial? (How does tutoring benefit both of you?)
- Why have you selected (and rejected) a method of tutoring? What brought you to use that method in the first place? Why did you change your mind about it?
- If a tutoring practice doesn’t work, what do you do? (e.g., try harder, drop it, change it, ask someone to observe you and give you feedback, ask the student what they think, watch other people to see what they do, read the literature to see how those in the field handle it and talk about it, talk to other tutors, talk to other teachers?)
- What do you use to evaluate whether a tutoring practice works or not?
- How does your classroom and tutoring go together?
- What makes you feel a tutorial has been satisfying and/or successful?

SCHOLARS AND TEXTS THAT MAY INSPIRE YOU

TEACHING WRITING
Kail, Harvey. “A Writing Teacher Writes about Writing Teachers Writing (about Writing).” English Journal 75.2 (1986): 88-91. Print. [available on J-STOR]


***. “Responding to Student Writing.” College Composition and Communication 33.2 (1982): 148-56. Print. [on J-STOR]


HISTORY OF TEACHING METHODS/PEDAGOGIES IN ENGLISH STUDIES

CREATIVE WRITING AND COMPOSITION PEDAGOGY
(search Bishop on J-STOR and amazon.com to find more—she was a prolific writer and a poet and has many texts on teaching writing; she’s great!)

WRITING CENTER THEORY

ONLINE TUTORING
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If your preferred approach is…</th>
<th>You might fit with this SCHOLARLY AREA OR CONVERSATION</th>
<th>KEY WORDS (representative authors)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Talking, focus on the writer/student; making students aware of writing for audience; emphasizing writing as a creative act—a verb, all texts are works in progress; focus on writing as an art and a habit; what professional writers do | ---Student-centered pedagogy  
---Conversational Model  
---Process pedagogy  
---Studio pedagogy (used in the fine arts to teach music and visual arts)  
---Feminist Pedagogy | Student Centered;  
Teacher/Student Relationship;  
culture of writing; writing process; writing life; situational learning; learning communities  
Lad Tobin; Wendy Bishop; Mike Rose; Nancy Sommers; Nancy Welch, Lave and Wenger; Jane Tompkins; William Macauley |
| Analysis, getting student to talk about ideas, exploring subject, asking questions of the text, comparing student ideas to ideas in an outside source | ---Critical Thinking Through Writing  
---Social-epistemic Rhetoric | Critical Thinking; cognitive; epistemic;  
Phillip Gardner; Nancy Sommers; Andrea Lunsford |
| Focus on society and culture as source of writing and ideas; questioning authority and knowledge sources; putting student's voice into a larger ongoing debate or conversation about a topic; value knowledge as socially constructed | ---Critical Pedagogy  
---Feminist Pedagogy  
---Cultural Studies  
---Popular Culture Studies | Critical pedagogy; feminism;  
Feminist Pedagogy; Cultural Studies; multiculturalism; social-epistemic rhetoric;  
Marilyn Cooper; Michael Leff; James Berlin |
| Focus on the student as source of writing and ideas; emphasis on individual and often personal experience; value knowledge as coming from within | ---Expressivist | Expressivism; personal writing;  
Lad Tobin; Peter Elbow; Wendy Bishop |
| Focus on the text; language, conventions, grammar, usage, style; value language use as socially and politically situated; value product, usually more than the process to get it, the effect of error on readers | ---Transactional  
---Linguistic  
---Current-Traditional  
---Contrastive Rhetoric  
---Assessment (outcomes) | Applied linguistics; grammar; grammars; usage; student error; self-editing; TESOL; ESL;  
Patrick Hartwell; Ioni Leki; Nancy Grimm; Andrea Lunsford; Michael Leff |
| Online environments, virtual spaces, tutoring with technology | ---Online Tutoring  
---Distance Learning  
---Electronic Pedagogies  
---Composition and Computers  
---the e-journal Kairos  
---New Media Studies  
---Digital Rhetoric | Online tutoring; synchronous;  
asynchronous; composition and computers; teaching with technology; multimodal discourse; emerging technologies; new media studies;  
Eric Hobson; Cooper, Bai, Riker; Carlson |
A SAMPLE TUTORING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

[NOTE: I’ve highlighted in colors a variety of paragraphs that could be pulled out to place in a Teaching Philosophy Statement; I used different colors to illustrate that the different passages emphasize or reveal different aspects about tutoring, you would choose one of these, or perhaps combine them, depending on what effect and message you want to convey in the Teaching Philosophy Statement; I did not pick this piece as an ideal model, but as one that can serve as a starting place; it does not incorporate scholarly works or quotations]

From a blog posting by http://chicagoartgirl23.xanga.com/261561671/item/
A graduate student in Chicago (at Columbia College Chicago, a college that emphasizes the fine arts, communication arts, media and film studies)

Being Maureen
An Approach to Writing Consultation
© The Author, 2005

I rarely know the full scope of my ideas without verbalizing them. It is not until I hear my musings out loud that I feel a true ownership of them. I need a sounding board in order to possess my thoughts fully. My ideal sounding board is a trusted ally who is committed to helping me pull the thread that will unravel the fabric of my concept to reveal the inner-workings of it. A good sounding board cultivates an environment and relationship based on trust and respect where I am able to defend my ideas without feeling defensive; when meeting with this intellectual equal I feel both challenged and nurtured.

I met my ideal sounding board in middle school; she was my best friend Maureen. Both Maureen and I were avid readers, artists, dreamers, and journal writers. We loved to read our journals aloud to one another. Originally we shared our writing—ranging in topic from the injustice of brussel sprouts and parents to the absurdity of belly buttons and udders—to simply bond with each other. Soon though, our readings became a way for us to receive feedback and to explore our ideas further. Our fun game was the catalyst that let us evolve into the sophisticated writers and thinkers that we now are as adults. Maureen was my first writing consultant and she was my first student. I so enjoyed the experience that I have always made sure to seek out creative peers to help me develop my ideas like she did.

Seeking out creative peers has not always been easy. After high school, I moved away from my hometown to attend Eastern Michigan University. Like many college freshmen, I felt very detached from any community there. I was unable to find a creative safe-haven that welcomed me fully and nurtured my ideas. Without having a creative community to indulge me with their opinions on my writing and artistic process, not only did I grapple with understanding the breadth of my own thoughts, but I had no motivation to create writing or art to express them. For the first time in my life, I did not write anything. Without a trusted ally to act as my sounding board, I was crippled as an artist and my emotional well being suffered. I became restless with fragmented concepts; I became hesitant to make a decision. I was depressed.

Transferring to Columbia in my sophomore year promised something different. Columbia students have an enormous advantage over their peers at other academic institutions. Although all new students leave behind the people they trust to share their creative selves with back home, Columbia College students have the Columbia College Writing Center to provide comparable creative support—or at least that’s what I strive to do here. It is my sincere pleasure to be that creative ally to writers at Columbia College Chicago.
I am a writing consultant because I understand a person’s need for a sounding board. Also, however lofty a goal it may seem, I believe that ultimately society will suffer if individuals are unable to express themselves eloquently and fully. More importantly, the individuals who are unable to articulate their thoughts may have their happiness and health clouded by frustration and angst. I can not watch people struggle when I know I might be able to help them by doing something as natural as acting as their sounding board.

It is simple enough to state that my philosophy as a writing consultant is to act as a sounding board for student writers, but the methods I use to employ that philosophy are very specific, multi-faceted, and they leave me happily exhausted at the end of the day.

At the beginning of an hour-long session with a student writer, I always ask the writer how his or her writing life is coming along and how their “real life” is currently affecting it. When engaging in this initial dialogue with my writers, I really listen to them. My body leans towards them, I am making eye contact, I am careful not to interrupt, and my face is open. From the very beginning, I like to create an environment where the writer feels listened to and respected.

When the writer is ready to read his or her work aloud, I am sure to make a copy of the piece, so that I can be sure I am never marking my notes (note taking is a part of my intellectual process) on the author’s paper. I encourage the writer to make their own marks if they are note takers. I also ask the writer if there is anything in particular he or she is focusing on with this draft. This enables me to pay special attention to it.

After the reading is over and it is time to discuss the work, first and foremost, I inquire what the author thought about the piece after reading it aloud. Oftentimes authors hear something new in the work day to day, even if they are on the third of fourth draft. I try to format thought provoking questions and observations about the specific items that the author noticed during this particular read, in order to make sure we are discussing the items that the writer is interested in working on.

Next, I facilitate a conversation about the items for which the writer requested special attention prior to the reading. Most of the time, these areas are those that the student writer is eager to hear someone else’s feedback on. When providing my feedback, I am always careful to use specific examples to support my points. I try to phrase my statements during this portion of the session in a very gentle, task oriented way such as, “You mentioned prior to the reading that you wanted to look out for run on sentences. There seems to be one on the third page, second paragraph. Would you like to go over ways to break those two thoughts up, or do you feel pretty confident about how to handle that particular instance?” The students are often able to amend the issue immediately, but if they aren’t able to and we refer to A Writer’s Reference together, at least they don’t come away from the session feeling as if their tutor assumed that they were anything less than intellectual equals.

It is important to me that the student writers that I consult with feel ownership of their work and that they direct its progress. With these goals in mind, I am very conscientious—both in life and in tutoring sessions—never to use the word should. This word is dangerous and it strips the writer of their ownership. If I do need to communicate that something is incorrect, I try not to say, “You should put in a comma here.” I really make an effort to say, “I might consider putting a comma here if I were writing this sentence. It really gives the items in your list distinction when you separate them with a comma, which is why grammar gurus consider it a rule. Am I making sense?” When I use phrases like this, writers are more receptive to learning this rule and their status as my intellectual equal is not threatened. If they seem to feel silly or worse, apologetic for their misunderstanding of cosmetic items like spelling and grammar, I always remind them that we are equals and that they know plenty of things that I am clueless about. It is
important to the effectiveness of my sessions that the writer never lose touch with that.

Tying up the session, I am always eager to offer words of genuine encouragement. Reading is one of my passions, and I find this very useful when offering words of support. I often find myself saying things like, “You know, I read an article in The New Yorker the other week that incorporated the author’s cultural heritage with his eating habits like you do in this essay. If you ever consider submitting your writing for publication, you could revisit this piece—you’ve obviously got a very publishable approach to discussing your cultural heritage.” The student writers that I have the privilege of seeing really do have phenomenal ideas, and oftentimes my acknowledgment of that gives the writer a reason to really put in the elbow grease it takes to make a great concept into a publishable product.

I strive to build a relationship with student writers that demonstrates my dedication to helping them express exactly what they feel. I am adamant that the student writer acts as the authority on his or her work—I just serve the author as a friendly representative of their larger audience, telling them what I hear in their work, questions I have about it, and connections I make to it. I assure my writers that I am committed to help them express their message—I will never tell them what they should want to say. I want my students to feel safe, un-judged, and celebrated. In short, I try to be a “Maureen” to every writer I have the pleasure of consulting.