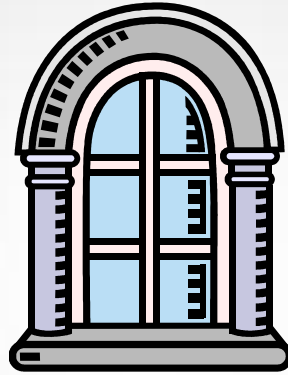


Self-Reflection



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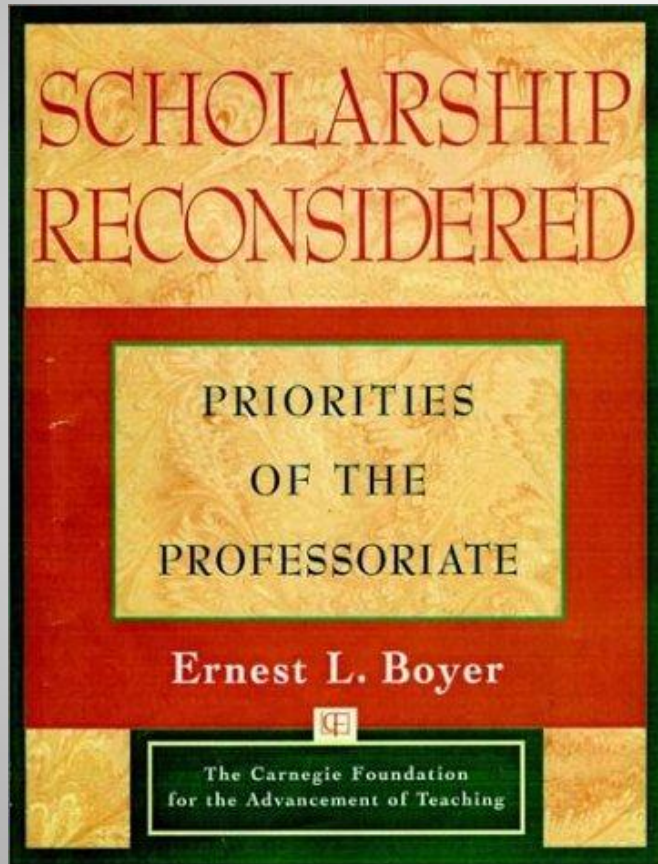
Self-reflection involves a productive process.

The process of reflection, selection, and connection should help to inform and enhance your teaching and academic work.

What is a reflective statement?

1. A way to fulfill reporting/contractual obligations
2. A structured way to reflect on one's work for self-evaluation and goal setting
3. An approach to enhanced teaching that gauges past successes and opportunities for future development or change.
4. **A scholarly document**

Teaching is scholarly work



"Excellence in the classroom is all too often undervalued."

(Boyer)

Standards for scholarly work include

"reflective critique."

(Glassick, Huber, Maeroff)

Reflecting on your activities as a teacher or academic librarian allows you to:

- Think about how those activities impact student learning.
- Articulate the values, principles and goals that underpin your activities.
- Explain why you have chosen certain instructional/professional approaches or assessment strategies.
- Connect your long- and short-term goals with your activities.
- Improve.
- ?

Five General Process Questions

- What did I do?
- Why did I do it (that way)?
- Was it successful?
- How do I know?
- What did I learn?

No need to be coy, Roy

- Academics are often coy about exposing their teaching selves.



Practical Writing Tips

- Don't let the term "reflective" mislead you; this statement can be practical as much as philosophical.
- Demonstrate that you think about and learn from what you do.
- The way we write about our teaching/academic work is often shaped by our discipline, so use a writing style that's familiar and comfortable.
- Use headings or themes as visible signs of organization; they will emphasize and help you keep track of key points.
- Don't try to include too much; e.g., it may be worthwhile to focus on certain priorities each year.

Getting Started

- Ask yourself guiding questions (see Appendix One).
- Complete the Teaching Perspectives Inventory
<http://teachingperspectives.com/>
- Read others' Statements of Teaching Philosophy for more ideas ([Here](#)).
- No matter what you eventually choose to include in your submission, take an honest look *for yourself* at the material that you've collected this year/period—what does it say about you?

Bolster your self-reflection with illustrative examples that

- Represent the work that you have done.
- Come from a variety of corroborating sources: yourself, colleagues, and students.
- Convey your philosophy or valued principles and your teaching/academic activities.
- Represent your priorities.
- Cover the range of your activities yet are specific in reference.

The Stuff of Reflection

- The CAUT publication on the teaching dossier suggests about four dozen possible types of evidence or “products of good teaching.”
- It recommends using evidence from a **variety** of sources: self, students, peers.
- There follow some examples of how looking at the materials you have collected can trigger reflection:

The Stuff of Reflection (contd.)

- **Courses taught:**
Though its name and number may be unchanged, a course you teach this year may be quite different from last year's version
- **Materials such as syllabi, handouts, tip sheets:**
These may reflect substantial development or innovation. . . .
- **Feedback from colleagues:**
Have you heard from Dalhousie that your students are really well prepared when they enter the Master's program? Do professors tell you that students benefitted from an information literacy or research skills session?

The Stuff of Reflection (more)

- Do you gather mid-term feedback on your teaching? Why and what do you do with it?
- Do you read pedagogical articles or attend workshops? How have they resulted in changes to practice?
- What have you learned from—or developed further based on—student evaluations of teaching (anonymous questionnaire)?
- Do you add supplemental questions to the standard form? What are they? Why chosen?

Student Evaluations of Teaching

- Put student teaching evaluation into perspective.
- Analyze it; contextualize it; highlight trends; look for significant details—e.g., your availability to students; the class size; the most frequent written comments. . . .
- Distinguish between the things you can change and those outside your control.
- **There is no requirement to include anonymous student evaluations; however, if you choose to do so,** always provide context and analysis to help readers interpret them (see slides 18-22 for some suggestions).

The Collective Agreement (14.03.a) does not specify the length or format of the self- reflection.

The following options are given as illustrations and are not meant to be prescriptive or limiting. Choose an approach that works for your discipline and teaching/library responsibilities.

Reflective Statement Some Options

- Write a reflective statement akin to a teaching philosophy statement: a narrative containing illustrative examples to support the main points you make—no additional materials appended.
- Prepare a reflective statement that cites and refers directly to appended illustrative material.
- Instead of writing one long-ish narrative statement, write a short reflective preamble that contextualizes any supporting documents/ materials and explains why you have chosen to include them.
- Any combination of the above that works for you.

Benefits of Reflection

- Awareness of need to keep track of accomplishments/activities
- Clarity about one's role (within department)
- Improved basis for
 - formulating goals,
 - reconsidering activities,
 - rethinking teaching strategies and priorities,
 - planning for the future

Adapted from Linda Annis, Ball State University, Indiana

Presenting Student Evaluation Data: Numerical

Option One (No space limitation)

Present **all** the numerical data for **all**
your courses

Option Two

A) Present the data from the “overall” questions (#10 and #11 on the standard course evaluation form):

Overall, this course compares well to others at this institution . . .

Overall, this person performs effectively as a university teacher

B) Supplement the overall question with others that fit your purpose; e.g. the results for enthusiasm, rapport, organization.

Option Two A) Starting in the 2006-2007 academic year, mean ratings are provided for the overall question:

Overall, this person performs effectively as a university teacher . . .

Year	Course Title	Enrol	Mean /5
2008-2009	SCOT 1745 Intro to Scottish Literature	130	4.54
	SCOT 4571 The Jacobite Rebellions	45	4.15
2007-2008	SCOT 3518 Robert Burns	28	4.65
	SCOT 2340 Medieval Witches of Aberdeen	60	4.23
2006-2007	SCOT 1745 Intro to Scottish Literature	110	4.13

Option Two B) SCOT 1745: Intro to Scottish Literature

(Fall 2006) 30 students; 25 responses

- *Overall, this person performs effectively as a university teacher . . .* 4.44/5
- *Instructor was enthusiastic about teaching this course* 4.26/5
- *Instructor's materials were well prepared and carefully explained.* 4.57/5
- *Students were encouraged to express their own ideas.* 4.38/5

Written responses (no space limits)

The form has two written questions:

Which characteristics of this instructor/course have been most valuable to your overall learning experience?

Which characteristics of this instructor/ course are most important to improve?

The complete, unedited responses to both of these questions are presented for two classes.

They show (analyze the information and its highlights for your readers, pointing out trends, patterns, issues that you plan to address, things that are beyond your control)

Written comments: Limited-Space Options

- Select typical comments from all courses, e.g, “Great assignments” (x12); “Fantastic prof!” (x25).
- Present all the comments from purposefully chosen courses, e.g., a course you have spent a lot of time on to show improvement over the years; a large intro course and a smaller senior course.
- Select comments that connect to your priorities or “theme” or that show a trend.
- Ask a third-party to read and summarize [the trends in] the students’ comments.

Finally, always explain to the reader what you have chosen to do and why.

Some Useful Resources

- Faculty Focus. (2009). *Philosophy of teaching statements*. Magna Publications. www.FacultyFocus.com
- Herteis, E. *Teaching Portfolio Website*. U of Saskatchewan. <http://www.usask.ca/gmcte/drupal/?q=node/183>.
- Herteis, E. *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Website*. U of Saskatchewan. <http://www.usask.ca/gmcte/drupal/?q=node/74>.
- Pratt, D. and Collins, J. (2001). *Teaching Perspectives Inventory*. http://teachingperspectives.com/html/tpi_frames.htm
- University of Victoria. *Teaching Dossier Kit*. http://lrc.uvic.ca/servicesprograms/teaching_dossier_kit.php

Please note that, although this is a very helpful website, it is quite specific to UVic.