Purpose of the Statement

What you may think this is about:

- your conception of teaching and learning
- a description of how you teach
- justification for why you teach that way
- reflection about your teaching
- your goals as an instructor and your corresponding actions in the classroom
- an opportunity to tie together the other sections of your portfolio

No.

Unless you have extensive teaching experience (which you may), you probably don’t have a philosophy. Don’t pretend to. It is rather off-putting. Additionally, while R1 institutions want good teachers, they don’t expect you to have extensive teaching experience and research. If you have…

(Disclaimer: If you are applying to a teaching institution, then you definitely need to address these items.)
• To find out what you would teach in the department should you be hired.

• This is becoming a serious concern as departments are hiring people who don’t necessarily have degrees in that field.

• If you fall in this category, answer this question, directly and succinctly.

• If you don’t fall in this category, answer this question anyway – because everyone else is!
How to make it memorable

• Put your name on it – your name should appear on every page of your application

• Refer to the department specifically; ideally, refer to specific courses in the department – show you have done your research

• In addition to saying where you would fit in with the current courses, mention one additional course you would want to develop and how it fits in with the curriculum; you must define this course – what it would cover, why students would be interested in it, etc.
Teaching isn’t just about coursework

Teaching is also about mentoring undergraduates, specifically through undergraduate research

If you have any experience working with undergrads (or mentoring graduate students, if you are a post-doc), this is the place to bring it up – and mention if you plan to work with undergrads in your lab (=NSF funding)
Format

• Keep it under 1 page
  • no one is going to read more than 1 page

• Put it at the end of the packet

• Delineate it from the research statement with a heading

• Make sure your name is on it