### Activity: Study and evaluate a sample teaching philosophy statement (2)

#### Background of this example

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<th>Teaching philosophy statement</th>
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<td>1. When I graduated with a PhD in Marketing in 2011, I was offered a job as a teaching assistant in a well-established Asian business school. What seems like a routine activity of marking, giving tutorials and countless instructional resource preparations, turned out to be a blessing in disguise. I was able to use this opportunity to hone my skills in teaching and on top of this, I had the privilege to work with a highly reputable professor in economics, Professor Jon Hattiesburg. Jon taught me to be observant of students while they are learning and to be reflective about my teaching practice. I strongly believed that to be good at what you do as a teacher, you need to know your impact on your students’ learning. In other words, to be effective in my teaching, I need to know how my instructions have impacted on my students’ learning and progress.</td>
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<td>2. A metaphor that describes what my teaching belief is that of a rotating giant Ferris wheel. When the carriage is moving higher and higher up as the wheel rotates, I can see more and more of the landscape that spreads out below me. To me, this is very much like the notion of reflection about my practice - the more I think about my impact, the more I’m able to see where I need improvement and the more I can see where students need support or help on. The rotating Ferris wheel also brings to mind that this process of reflection needs to be supported by feedback to close the loop or gap as in the way I teach and learn. Through my engagement with students, I come to realise that feedback cannot take place in a vacuum, it is an integral part of teaching and learning. What is important here, I believe, is that when I teach, I need to actively gather feedback on my instructions. This caveat resonates with my belief that feedback is useful for my own improvement but at the same time, feedback also helps my students to learn better. While I am building my Ferris wheel of self-reflection and feedback, I would like my students to have their own Ferris wheels – to learn to reflect on their own learning and use to feedback effectively.</td>
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A key way in which I engage my students with reflection and feedback is through the design of meaningful learning activities. As pointed out by Hattie (2012, p.26), “... [teachers] need to be excellent seekers and users of feedback information about their teaching”. I have sought to integrate feedback and reflection into the learning activities for my students. This may take the form of marketing case studies, whereby students have to discuss, negotiate and develop an advertising plan and then, they provide reciprocal feedback to one another. Students are also encouraged to reflect on the feedback and to use the feedback to make improvements on their plans. I find this peer learning strategy most effective in getting my students to delve deeper into the process of designing advertising media plans and it fosters authentic collaborative skills which is seen as increasingly valuable for the fast-paced and global marketing industry. I elaborate on a peer review approach in the next section through a teaching episode from one of my courses. Before going on to another of my teaching strategies, I just want to reiterate that I gather feedback to inform my teaching by examining my students' written feedback to one another, the progress made in the multiple draft plans and their personal responses to my teaching approaches.

Another approach that I have implemented is formative assessment when students’ learn about print media advertisement campaigns. This assessment approach came about when I attended the LTSE (Learning, Teaching & Student Experience) annual conference organized by the Chartered Association of Business Schools (UK) in 2015 and listened to a keynote address by Professor Margaret Price. Formative assessment or assessment for learning is characterized as any assessment designed or used specifically to boost student learning (Black & Wiliam, 2004). This is in contrast to summative assessment, which is assessment for purposes of accountability or to rank or certify students. I find the use of formative assessment purposeful, as a big part of formative assessment is about using the evidence from the assessment to provide timely feedback for learning and to adapt my teaching to meet learning needs. This approach allows me to engage with my students in giving and using feedback as well as reflection. I describe in greater details a formative assessment cycle that I have implemented in a business writing course in the teaching episodes.

In relation to formative assessment is the notion that students must play an active role in the learning process. This is in line with my belief that feedback is useful only when students take an active
role to analyse, interpret and use the feedback meaningfully. One approach that I take is to create multiple opportunities for my students to engage with feedback, such as, allowing for multiple drafts of the advertising plan and having peer as well as teacher feedback interaction sessions. Another approach is the use of video clips to get students to provide feedback, taking on the role of assessors (in this case, marketing directors or business managers). Through these learning activities, students not only learn how to provide feedback, they also learn about the important criteria and principles about good designs and marketing strategies. I felt that one key to foster greater student participation is a classroom climate that is open to learning, whereby there is trust between teacher and student and between student and student (Hattie, 2012). I always encourage my students to try to ‘sell’ their plans to their peers, to convince their peers of the value in their marketing ideas and that, failure or rejection is seen as another opportunity for learning and for improving their plans and ideas. At times, I would also share my experiences of not being able to convince customers of the advertising designs and how I managed to overcome these negative feedback and continue to revise my plans and come up with new ideas.

To conclude this section, I have drawn on my experiences, both as a teaching assistant and as a lecturer, to articulate my beliefs about teaching and learning. These are based on key principles which include: (a) as a good teacher, I need to know how my instructions have impacted on my students’ learning and progress; (b) feedback and reflection are important and integral to teaching and learning; and (c) students must play an active role in the learning process. I have also shared how I engaged my students through peer feedback and formative assessment approaches. Going forward, I would like to develop my skills in investigating my teaching practices, as I have recently started to share my teaching strategies with other colleagues and would like to ground my inquiries or studies of classroom learning in more robust and scholarly ways.

References
