

PHASE 1

Getting Ready

Get Ready. Student teaching is your one chance to pull everything that you've learned over the course of your teacher preparation program together. It's your opportunity to try new things, learn as much as you can about schools, students, strategies and standards. It's your chance to meet parents, paraprofessionals, and principals. It's your one chance to figure out what you believe about teaching and learning and what you know to be true about you as a teacher. Get ready—to change the world.

You've got a lot ahead of you and chances are you're feeling the nerves. If you haven't already met your cooperating teacher or soon-to-be students, you have to be wondering what they'll be like. They're surely wondering what you're going to be like. It's an exciting event—even for students. Some student teachers become that one person that the student remembers from their elementary days. Get ready—to build relationships and make memories.

But you probably recognize the steep learning curve that's ahead. You've come a long way, but you know there's a lot for you still to learn. In the next several weeks, you're going to experience so many new situations that will test your ability to stay the course—don't worry, we know you can do it. The first part of this book is devoted to making the most of your student teaching experience. There's a lot that student teachers take for granted and miss out on in their student teaching experience. We don't want that to happen to you, so read carefully; employers shared with us their most valuable tips for helping student teachers make the most so they can get hired. Get ready—get ready to have a successful experience student teaching.

This is your chance to become a teacher.

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PART 1 The 10 Truths of Student Teaching

PART 2 Becoming a Teacher

PART 3 The List of 100 Things Employers Will Ask about You

PART 4 Ethics and Integrity in the Job Search

PART 5 Professional Web Presence

PART 1

The 10 Truths of Student Teaching

Jeff McCanna, Human Resources Director of one of the largest school districts in the nation, says: "Our future rests in our next generation—we must have good teachers in our classrooms. Because of the unprecedented growth in our region, we recruit year-round, in the United States and abroad. Each year we pass school referendums and build new schools—that's the easy part. Finding talented new teachers to help each student succeed is our biggest challenge."

My To-Do List

1. Discover the 10 Truths of Student Teaching and plan for a successful classroom experience.
2. Set the stage for a productive relationship with your cooperating teacher.
3. Plan for a successful student teaching experience by knowing who you are; finding experiences, not waiting for them to find you and becoming a strong team player. Be a teacher.

My Project Overview

1. Take 5: Getting Ready for Student Teaching
2. My ePlanner:
 - a. *Demographics and Data*: Using data to make decisions.
 - b. *Field Experiences Summary*: Organize past experiences for future success.
 - c. *Goals*: Long and short term goals to get you ready for your career.
 - d. *My Weekly Summary*: Key observations and self-assessment.
3. Take 5 Again: Discover Your Strengths; Know Your Needs

The student teaching experience is a bit like study abroad: total immersion. Those who study abroad are changed by the experience—you too will be changed by student teaching—you'll become a teacher. For some of you this

transformation will be very real and noticeable, and for others that change may be less obvious. What's important is to acknowledge and embrace these opportunities for growth as they occur. There is no such thing as a perfect student teacher. You'll enjoy several successes along with a few bumps in the road. All of your experiences during your internship will be beneficial in your development as a career teacher. Employers expect to hear what you've learned during your student teaching, and how those experiences—good and bad—have made you the teacher sitting in front of them at the interview.

TAKE 5



Getting Ready for Student Teaching

It's time to launch the most important part of your development as a teacher. Time to take 5 and write about student teaching. Use the space below to jot down your thoughts about student teaching. Be prepared to discuss these ideas with your cooperating teacher, university supervisor, peers, and a potential employer—you're all part of a team now.

If you were to write a status update on Facebook or Twitter about your first day of student teaching, what would it be (160 characters or less).

Gandhi once said, "Be the change you wish to see in the world." How do you hope to make a difference as a student teacher?

How would you want students to describe you, the new student teacher, to parents?

● IDENTITY IN FLUX

Your student teaching internship is just the beginning of an immense professional identity transformation. Teaching is complicated, and master teachers devote years of attention to the processes, products, and professional knowledge it takes to become a teacher leader. Few careers have such a long

development cycle. Teaching is a serious profession, and taking your profession seriously—early on—is a must if you plan to have a successful career in teaching.

"In selecting our teaching staff, we are not necessarily looking for the most experienced teacher; we are looking for the best teacher. That may involve experience, it may involve a specialized skill, it may involve the ability to collaborate on a unique teaching team. Bottom line—distinguish your student teaching experience by making a difference that you can talk about during the interview."

Dr. Jim Pedersen, Executive Director of Human Resources

Part of taking your profession seriously means seeing yourself as a professional. Very few student teachers walk into their new classrooms chin up and chest out; in fact, quite the opposite is true. If you're a new student teacher there's a good chance you feel nervous, intimidated, and insecure about your abilities. If that's not enough, some of you are probably even having second thoughts about your chosen vocation. This is totally normal, and in order for us to begin the task of transforming your identity to one that embraces your strengths rather than apologizing for inexperience, we offer 10 truths of student teaching that will inform your job search, and prove to an employer that you have what it takes.

● TRUTH #1

You're going to make mistakes—learn from them.

Some may be considered "naturals" in the classroom—but even "naturals" make mistakes. Teaching is a challenge—particularly in 21st century American classrooms. Accept mistakes as learning opportunities. This first transformation will be fundamental in your professional development—not to mention during the interview process. The reflective practitioner is constantly reviewing, observing and taking note of classroom successes and shortcomings. Employers and student teaching supervisors alike will want to hear about your missteps in teaching and—most importantly—how you've turned those mistakes into mastery.

● TRUTH #2

Come early, stay late.

Teaching is hard work—and your student teaching experience will demonstrate that this profession isn't for everyone. There will be days where you second guess your ability to stay the course—pay attention to those moments, resolve to work harder. Go the extra mile, put in the extra time—in the end it will pay off not only in an exemplary recommendation, but in the extra knowledge you gained from that hard work. You'll need a good recommendation to get a job and the only way to get that is to prove that you're worth recommending.

"We're looking for new teachers who are going to go the extra mile for students and those who truly understand their content knowledge, build relationships with students, and are willing to look at the individual student and their needs—that's what will make a difference in our schools."

Dr. Mario Andrade, Principal

● TRUTH #3

Know your students—know your school.

Unfortunately too few student teachers really get to know their students in the short period of time that they spend in the classroom. This isn't necessarily a time issue—it's an issue of initiative. Employers need individuals who are able to make a connection to the students in their classrooms. You know from your teacher education coursework that American classrooms are composed of diverse learners who bring all sorts of variables to the learning environment. How can you possibly be an effective teacher without knowing your students? A concerted effort should be made to know the demographics of the community, school, your classroom, in addition to the unique learning needs of individual students. Perhaps your school or community has unique alternative programming or resources available to families. Each school is different, and a thorough examination of your field experiences will reveal the different contexts in which you've already worked. How were your field experiences similar? How were they different? How can you describe the various student populations you've experienced during your studies? Employers are curious about how well you've gotten to know your students and thus how committed you are to the success of all learners.

● TRUTH #4

When working with adults—act like an adult.

Teaching is high stakes in this day and age. That means your cooperating teachers, teacher preparation program, and university supervisor have a lot riding on you. They're going to need to give you feedback and sometimes even take corrective measures to ensure that your experience—and the experience of your students—is what it should be. Most of you will waltz through student teaching with no conflict—but few of you will leave with no disagreements. They might be small disagreements—you might teach something or approach something differently, or they might be larger in scale—you completely disagree with how a discipline situation was handled, or you felt embarrassed with the way your cooperating teacher called you out when you did something wrong. It's never easy to address potential conflicts that may arise between student teachers and cooperating teachers, but it is realistic to acknowledge conflict and address it when it occurs. Most difficult conflicts are the result of avoidance and inattention to improve. Often, student teachers take offense to honest feedback they receive from cooperating teachers, supervisors, even the students. Feedback is a good learning tool—listen to it, learn from it, and don't take it personally. Most conflict is easily rectified in the form of utilizing different approaches, reconsidering a lesson plan, or making creative changes to the learning environment. Seldom is conflict so severe that individuals beyond the student teacher/cooperating teacher team need to be involved. Conflict during your student teaching is a good dose of reality for work in the real world. Conflict is a normal part of worklife—and conflict resolution is a critical skill—and one that employers want to hear you address.

Tip

Dr. Kristen Rickey, Principal, suggests that serious thought be put into how you have handled an adult disagreement in a school setting. "If you can't talk about a difference of opinion or style, then I might assume that you won't be able to handle a conflict when one does arise. Good conflict resolution skills are important for students and teachers."

● TRUTH #5

Practice makes perfect—organize, plan, practice.

The need to be organized as a teacher goes without saying, but we're going to say it again: Organization is key—and essential to running an effective class-

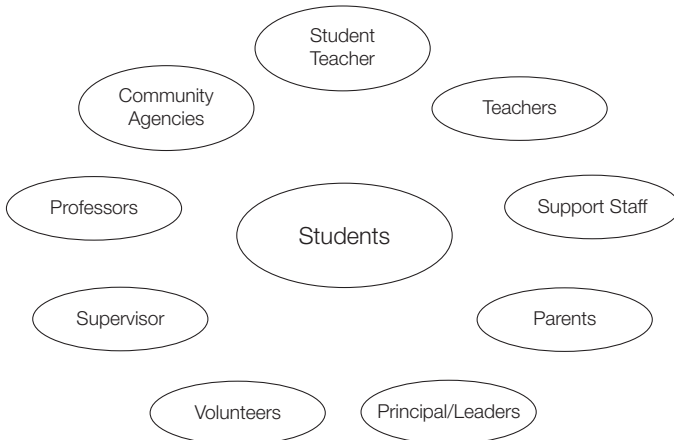
room as well as an effective job search. Teachers are constantly thinking on their feet—but teaching isn't spur of the moment. It's thoughtful, deliberate, and intentional. Planning is imperative as is practice (and we really do mean practicing everything from delivering your instruction, to introducing yourself to new colleagues or parents). You'll be able to make the most of your student teaching by staying organized, and developing a clear plan for your experience that addresses your responsibilities, teaching time, planning time, and opportunities to reflect on your experience. By having a clear plan for your placement, you'll make better use of your time. Don't forget, most of you will also be in the midst of the job search. Plan ahead, practice often, and utilize all organizational tools possible.

● TRUTH #6

Be a collaborator and team builder—get to know your partners in teaching and learn from them.

Your cooperating teacher and university supervisor are but two of the individuals who make up your student teaching team. From faculty members, fellow student teachers to para-educators and even parents—there are so many individuals involved in the school enterprise that it's almost impossible to know where a working relationship begins and where one ends. It's critical that you understand how you as a student teacher and future teacher will fit into that web to maximize the effectiveness of your own collaborations, and most of all to promote student success.

You!



● TRUTH #7

Time is not on your side—learn to prioritize early.

Establishing priorities is never easy—particularly when you're not exactly sure what your responsibilities or expectations will be. One approach is to establish a list of goals or things you hope to accomplish during your student teaching. Certainly some priority setting will occur naturally as you become more familiar with your students, your schedule, and the setting.

● TRUTH #8

Prove it or lose it.

It should be no secret that in a standards-based profession like teaching, you're going to have to demonstrate professional skills. An employer will need proof that you're able to meet the demands of the classroom while delivering a grade A instructional product. Your student teaching experience is designed so that you'll gain experience with all the inner workings of a classroom in your particular content area. An elementary classroom teacher works in a different context than a secondary foreign language teacher. You'll need to address your context by knowing the needs, realities, and outcomes of your particular area. You'll also need to have experiences with classroom management, providing accommodations and differentiated instruction for various learners, family involvement, assessment, lesson planning, communication, professional development, and competence in understanding the culture and environment in which learning occurs. There are a number of ways to demonstrate these competencies—from portfolios to the strategic way in which you'll answer interview questions. The best start is to notice everything and be incredibly attentive to your intention to make the most of this experience.

"It is obvious when a candidate hasn't taken their student teaching seriously and made the most of their time in the classroom to become a teacher. If you don't see yourself as a professional teacher, there's no way I'll be able to see it. Get involved and get serious."

Liz Lagault, Principal

● TRUTH #9

Know who you are.

This knowledge will serve you well as it helps you identify your needs, and make the most of your strengths. Every student teacher should enter their classroom knowing exactly what needs they have and what strengths they can immediately put to good use. A great deal of self-help literature focuses on improving that which we can't do well. It is our opinion that a much better approach to addressing weaknesses is to focus instead on what you can do well. You can count on sharing your special attribute, your best abilities, and your exceptional qualities with potential employers. Start by listing a strength that you now have. (*Odds are good that it will be adjusted by the time you are finished with student teaching.*) These simple statements will help you eliminate the uncomfortable hesitation when you are asked to talk about your strengths and possibly a weakness, too.

TAKE 5 AGAIN



Discover Your Strengths, Know Your Needs

Time to take 5 more minutes and discover your strengths and know your needs. Chances are you'll be asked to talk about it. Use the space below to jot down your thoughts about student teaching. Be prepared to discuss these ideas with your cooperating teacher, university supervisor, peers, and of course, a potential employer. They'll want to know what you have to offer.

If students could give your past field experiences (or other related work) a grade—what aspects of your work with them would get an A?

What aspects of your work with students in past experiences would get a C or below?

Tip

Start talking about your weaknesses as “areas of growth,” “needs,” “or skills in which you wish to improve.”

That alone will help you transform weaknesses into experiences.

Use your weakness to set an attainable goal for student teaching—one that is realistic and will be of benefit to you as you search for jobs. For example, take a look at the table below of common perceived weaknesses of student teachers:

Perceived Weakness	Proposed Goals
Classroom discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• work with challenging students,• implement behavior support mechanisms,• develop own classroom discipline philosophy.
Experience with parents/families	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• send parent newsletter,• create classroom blog,• participate in parent teacher conferences.
Differentiating instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• observe special learning programs,• examine Individual Education Plans,• adapt lesson plans for multiple groups.

Having a plan to address your perceived weakness will make your experience more meaningful, and it gives you useful information to discuss in an interview. Notice that each of the weaknesses were written in the form of needs statements. We find this approach makes addressing your shortcomings as a new teacher more practical. The general goal statements that follow each need are attainable, and reasonable, and believable.

Tip

Let your cooperating teacher know what you hope to accomplish and areas of growth for your student teaching. They can't read your mind!

● TRUTH #10

Student teaching is the beginning of the job search—you are a professional.

Yep, the college days are over; from the moment you step into your student teaching classroom you are a professional. You might not feel like one, and unfortunately, students old enough to know the difference between you and your cooperating teacher will do their best to give you a run for your money. From day one, you have a big stake in how you and your work are perceived by the students, teachers, administrators, supervisors . . . all those people that make up the web of your classroom. You have a lot to learn, for sure, but remember everything you already know. Nerves are requisite and may even be of benefit, if you turn that initial nervousness into positive energy and motivation to get involved from day one.

Tip

"Initiative is very important."

- "When I'm walking down the hallway, is the student teacher greeting students?"
- "When I walk into the classroom, is everything ready?"
- "Is this student teacher seeking opportunities to meet people, to interact with the students?"
- "Is this student teacher looking for every opportunity to learn?"
- "I want to see dedication, serious planning, and intentional actions in a student teacher."

Evelyn Cosmos Smith,
Assistant Principal

● SUMMARY

The 10 Truths of Student Teaching

Now that you've learned about the 10 Truths of Student Teaching you'll be able to make the most of your experience. If you've already started student teaching, don't sweat it—you can incorporate the ideas from the 10 truths starting right now. Treat each day of student teaching as a new start, a new challenge, and a new opportunity to grow as a teacher.

● ON THE WEB



Make the most of your student teaching placement and get ready to get hired. These activities will help:

ePlanner Activities

1. *Demographics and Data*: Using data to inform decisions.
2. *Field Experiences Summary*: Organize past experiences for future success.
3. *Goals*: Long and short term goals to get you ready for your career.
4. *My Weekly Summary*: Key observations and self assessment.

eJournal

1. Write your thoughts about each of the 10 Truths of Student Teaching. Better yet—provide specific examples of actions you've taken or plan to take to make each truth a reality. Employers will likely ask you about each of these truths.
2. Conflict resolution is an important skill for all adults but especially teachers who are responsible to so many different constituents. Write about a conflict you've encountered with another adult in a professional setting (nothing personal here). What was the situation? What did you do to resolve it? And what did you learn as a result? Employers want to know that you'll be a productive and professional colleague.

Video Tips

Making the Most of Student Teaching: listen up as an administrator shares his advice for making the most of student teaching. He'll share out how you can be in the top 10 percent of job seeking candidates who won't have to worry about finding a job.

PART 2

Becoming a Teacher

Dr. Jim Pedersen, Executive Director of Human Resources says, "The most successful job candidates are those who can demonstrate to an employer that they are top-to-bottom professional, can build strong relationships and teams, and know their content and how to teach it."

My To-Do List

1. Learn about and integrate the personality and professional traits of effective teachers.
2. Get dressed to impress your students, supervisors and potential employers.
3. Dive into your discipline, examine your beliefs and communicate your content.

My Project Overview

1. Take 5: Transitioning from College Student to Classroom Teacher
2. My ePlanner:
 - a. *My Content Area*: Pedagogy, Content, and Ways of Knowing in my field.
 - b. *Top Issues*: Know the critical issues facing education and your field.
 - c. *My Book List*: Professional materials that make me better.
 - d. *My Weekly Summary*: A quick and easy recap of the week.
3. Take 5 Again: Building Relationships and Making a Difference

Your student teaching will form the basis of your professional identity as you actively seek employment as a teacher. Few fields require so many competencies—from content knowledge to pedagogy, knowledge of developmental stages to classroom management, not to mention teaching strategies, teaching standards, and teaching styles—it's a lot to keep track of. In fact, you might find the entire process a bit daunting, but don't fret, because we're pretty convinced that successful student teachers do four important things during student teaching. Do these and you'll have a very successful experience. They are:

- Become a professional
- Build relationships
- Teach your content well
- Examine your beliefs

Did we mention that these four things will also prepare you well for your teacher job search? Yep, administrators are looking for someone who is professional, can teach kids well, knows why they want to teach and who knows how to build relationships. In this part you'll learn about ways to make the most of your student teaching to invigorate your job search.

TAKE 5



Transitioning from College Student to Classroom Teacher

It's time to really think about who you are now and who you'll be after student teaching. For most of you, the end of student teaching also signifies the end of college life. Can you really just be a few short weeks away from the end of the "best years of your life"? Yep. Sorry. But teaching can and will be an amazing adventure too. Let's take a minute (or 5) to write about this important transition.

What do you find most daunting about finishing student teaching and graduating from college?

What was the pivotal event that made you decide to become a teacher and enter your teacher preparation program? Employers almost always ask a question similar to this—be prepared to share.

In what ways will your wardrobe change during student teaching and as a teaching professional?

If you could add any article of clothing to your professional wardrobe, what would it be?

● BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL

Easier said than done, right? Wrong! Being a professional is as easy or as difficult as you make it. Here's why. When it comes to professionalism, there are only two key characteristics to perfect: look and act like a teacher. You're not a student anymore (really). If you've made it far enough to student teach, everyone, including your college professors, university supervisors, cooperating teachers, parents (of the kids you're teaching) and building administrators think you're professional and capable! Sometimes the last person to get the "You're a professional now" memo are the student teachers themselves! And um, sorry, your parents generally won't think you're a professional until you're off their payroll.

Looking the Part

So it's time to lay those flip flops to rest, and put the baggy sweat pants away until Friday night at 5 (and yeah, you might think you'll be going out on Friday still, but wait until your first Friday of student teaching arrives—90 percent of you will be asleep earlier than the kids you taught!). Yep, you need to dive into that far corner of the closet . . . the one that contains your "dress clothes," and haul them out, because you're about to begin professional boot camp.

The general idea is look clean and put together. You don't want to distract anyone, kids included, with your clothing or unprofessional attire. Those teaching at the secondary level should place particular importance on professional attire to distinguish oneself as a professional and establish a professional and productive working relationship early on. High school kids can be pretty brutal if you haven't earned their respect. Not to mention the incredible boost in self-confidence you're likely to give yourself by checking out the new "professional" you in the mirror on your way out the door. You look great.

"You should be warm and welcoming to students and dress in a professional manner. You are not going clubbing. You might want to be trendy in your dress but please don't be provocative—act and dress like a professional. How you dress and how you carry yourself say a lot about your character."

Dr. Mario Andrade, Principal

Employers Care about It!

About your professional demeanor and that includes how you look. Your student teaching experience should be treated like a really, really, really long interview. People are watching you and noticing:

- Your clean appearance
- Your trimmed nails
- Kempt hairstyles
- Ironed tops and bottoms (yep—gotta get out the iron 'cause pulling clothes from your floor won't work!)
- Professional yet comfortable shoes (those little ones keep you on your toes)
- Body art covered, make-up shouldn't look like art
- Piercings and jewelry kept to a minimum
- Well trimmed facial hair
- Attentive and interested posture

Go back to the top of the list—do you care about it?

Acting the Part

How does a teacher act anyway? We could really have fun with stereotypes . . . the flighty foreign language teacher, the laid back art teacher, and the frantic elementary teacher, but we'd likely offend lots of people and perhaps we already have. Acting like a teacher means exhibiting a few key behaviors that will be critical to your success . . . but more importantly, critical to the success of the students in your classroom.

Some rules of thumb:

1. You're the adult. Remember that.
2. Make it clear that you care about the content: how students learn it, and how you teach it.
3. It's OK to say no, in fact, you should get good at it.

● BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

It's not as hard as it sounds and if you're going into teaching, you're probably a natural at it. But if not, and if you've got the jitters about making a good impression on your cooperating teacher, future employer, and others who have a stake in your professional outcomes, here's something to remember. Building relationships in a professional setting involves a great deal of interpersonal skill, but it all really boils down to one simple idea—strive to show you care, strive to make a difference by doing your best. If you do those two things regularly in your relationships with students, cooperating teachers, colleagues, peers, you'll definitely be a successful relationship builder. Be prepared to talk about the strategies you used to form and maintain relationships with:

- Students
- Parents
- University supervisors, faculty, and staff supports
- Teachers
- Administrators
- Volunteers
- Administrative staff

You'll need to articulate your ability to work well with lots of individuals when you go on the market. Interview questions and behavioral inventories or assessments often revolve around your interactions with various stakeholders in the educational process. Remember the 10 truths of student teaching? Many of those dealt with building relationships—from knowing your students to classroom management to navigating work related conflict—each of you should be able to speak definitively about your skill in building relationships. Building relationships starts with you.

TAKE 5 AGAIN



Building Relationships and Making a Difference

The best teachers all have one thing in common—they know how to build effective and productive relationships with all involved in the educational process: Students, parents, colleagues, administrators, community members. They are bridge builders, collaborators and effective listeners. They care to make a difference and know that to make a difference hinges on relationship skills. Brainstorm ways you can demonstrate your skill at building relationships with the following individuals. Provide examples for each based on your experience. If you don't have an experience with a particular group—seek one out, or recognize it as an area of growth. Employers are eager to find out ways you'll be a bridge-builder in their district.

Students:

- With disabilities:
- With challenging behavior:
- With exceptional talents:
- With language barriers (non-native speakers, speech and/or language delay):

Cooperating Teachers/School Staff:

Building Administrators:

University Supports (supervisor, faculty, career office):

● TEACH YOUR CONTENT WELL

Student teaching is the most important part of your teacher education program because it gives you the opportunity to truly embrace your identity as an emerging teacher. Just think about all you learned about teaching during your practicum and previous field experiences—now multiply that by about a thousand and you'll arrive at what we hope is the amount of learning that will take place during your student teaching experience. This is your chance to

really figure *you* out. You've got lots to learn for sure—but focus on what you already possess—your knowledge of how kids learn, your content knowledge, and your passion. That's a powerful potion for great teaching. Employers want to hear about your content knowledge and how you plan to share that with your students, how to motivate them to learn your content and how to make it accessible to all learners.

In the secondary areas like math, science, world languages, or social studies, individuals who make up a department may have vastly different skill sets and experiences that make them uniquely qualified to teach in their area. A German teacher might not be able to waltz into an Honors Advanced AP Calculus class and just begin teaching as easily as they'd be able to teach the conjugations of the verb 'to be' in the simple past tense (although for most of us it would be hieroglyphics either way). In elementary classrooms there is often a more common background knowledge and experience base that candidates bring to the classroom. Hopefully, over the course of your field experiences, you've been able to identify your strengths and potential weaknesses with respect to your content knowledge.

My Content Knowledge and Knowledge of the Field

As licensed practitioners in either a secondary area or elementary education, you'll be responsible for being the expert in your field. That means knowing all there is to know about the content you'll teach, but also the most effective ways to teach that content. Elementary teachers, like their secondary peers, are required to demonstrate mastery of content and pedagogical knowledge. Additionally, elementary teachers are required to demonstrate their mastery of the *multiple* components of an elementary curriculum. But that's not all. Your standards-based identity also means that you'll be familiar with your profession. Start by taking an inventory of what you know about your field.

You'll need to communicate a thorough knowledge of your field and demonstrate that you'll be a connected and well informed teacher in your particular discipline. You need to know everything you possibly can about how to be a _____ teacher. (Fill in the blank with your content area). All teachers have to know:

- Developmental stages and how these intersect with content learning in the core areas;
- Key concepts in school readiness, issues in school reform, poverty's effects on schools, approaches to delivering instruction at the various levels;
- The knowledge base and population characteristics of their students.

See where we're going with this? If you're able to communicate all those things to an employer, there'll be no stopping you on the job market. If you

think you need to work on any of those skills before you enter the market—now's your chance. To some extent potential employees can ascertain this information on the basis of test scores, coursework, and portfolio examples, not to mention the kinds of experiences you'll write about on your résumé. Remember, writing about it is one thing, you'll need to be able to talk about it too.

Student teaching gives you an opportunity to organize and reflect on your abilities, experiences, and motivation in a way that your coursework can't. Have you taken the time to consider what makes you an effective teacher? What qualities do you have as a student teacher to help students achieve success? Do you see yourself as a professional, strive to build relationships, and know your content and how to deliver it? If you struggle to answer those questions—you've just created a student teaching to-do list. Endeavor to gather specific experiences so that you can articulate and demonstrate your identity as a teacher.

● EXAMINING MY BELIEFS

Over the next several weeks of your student teaching experience you'll develop a better understanding of your own philosophy of teaching and learning. Your philosophy of teaching and learning forms the backbone of your job search. It informs how you describe yourself, it guides your search for an employer, and it helps you to find the right fit. It is critical that you learn to identify and articulate your philosophy, because you'll need a core set of principles to guide your interview answers. Your core philosophy will guide everything, from the way you structure your learning environment to the manner in which you interact with others—from students to parents to colleagues. Chances are you've already had to formulate a philosophy statement in your methods coursework—perhaps even to enroll in your teacher education program.

"The best philosophy statements are those that tell me what you believe, why you teach, and how you teach. Your teaching philosophy—and the way you integrate this philosophy in your classroom—can determine the difference you make in students' lives."

Ann Feldmann, Assistant Superintendent

Your task now is to see if your lofty vision for teaching and learning measures up, is transformed, and matures over the course of your student teaching semester.

Employers too, will want to hear about your philosophy of teaching and learning. They'll also ask for concrete evidence and specific examples that reflect your philosophy statement. In particular, employers are interested in how your philosophy of teaching meets and reflects the school's mission. They're looking for a real understanding of the process of instruction, and a deep understanding of the various ways students learn. It's more than that, though . . . a philosophy statement includes:

- *Why* we want to be teachers and educate students;
- *What* education means to us, and what it is;
- *How* education occurs: the methods, approaches, and mantras of teaching that guide our work with students.

Take the worry out of writing your philosophy statement and use the 3-point check-off scheme to put together a meaningful statement that you own.

A Quick and Easy 3-Point Check-off Scheme for Writing a Philosophy Statement



1. Why

Why do you want to be a teacher?
Why are you called to this profession?



2. What

What does education mean to you?
What are the goals of education?
What does your classroom look like?



3. How

How do you teach kids?
How do you reach kids where they are?
How do you plan to make a difference?

Because you have written the story in your own voice using authentic examples, feel empowered to share it with others.

Educators routinely revisit their philosophy for reasons both personal and professional. Your philosophy statement will likely be strengthened by your student teaching. Examining your teaching behaviors and reflecting on your beliefs will promote positive change and personal growth. Let your vision grow during student teaching by revisiting and reflecting on your teaching philosophy frequently.

A vision helps one stay focused and committed to a purpose. In essence, your philosophy is your vision.

● SUMMARY

Becoming a Teacher

Making the transition from college student to career professional is no small task. From remaking your wardrobe to remodeling your identity, there's a lot to think about. Make it an even more effective transition by completing the activities below:

● ON THE WEB



ePlanner Activities

1. *My Content Area:* Pedagogy, content, and ways of knowing in my field.
2. *Top Issues:* Know the critical issues facing education and your field.
3. *My Book List:* Professional materials that make me better.
4. *My Weekly Summary:* A quick and easy recap of the week.

eJournal

1. Write your thoughts about your relationship-building skills. Provide specific examples of how you demonstrated flexibility, a collaborative spirit, and open-mindedness during student teaching.
2. Why do you want to be a teacher? Include specific examples that helped you determine this career path, and experiences in student teaching and other field experiences that helped affirm your choice to become a teacher. Write down two beliefs about teaching and learning you would include in a philosophy statement.

Video Tips

A Student's Perspective of Winning Job Search Strategies: Feeling overwhelmed with student teaching? You're not alone. Listen in as a student teacher on the market reflects on her experience and offers sound advice to use student teaching as a launch pad for the rest of your career.