

## PROFESSIONAL APTITUDE / TEACHING STATEMENTS

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### ***What do I consider to be my greatest asset for teaching?***

My love for learning! I am very passionate about learning myself, and cannot wait to learn more information, or take on new challenges. I try my best to share this motivation and passion with my students in order to foster a true love of learning, and perhaps fuel the fires within to make my students life long learners. Additionally, I consider my life experience as one of my greatest assets in and outside the classroom. I share with students wholeheartedly the experiences that have brought me to be where I am today (having moved from another country when I was their age as only one example) in order to make them make meaning in their learning experience. I believe in learning together, with the students, to make the entire process as successful as possible.

### ***What assessment techniques will I use to evaluate student learning in my classroom?***

It is important to recognize the need for multiple types of assessment in a classroom. A wide variety of students attend school so it becomes vital to best assess each student according to their ability and their strengths. If a student is bad at writing, I would perhaps have them produce a piece of art instead to showcase their knowledge and skill as it related to our subject. Each student requires unique assessments in order to serve their needs best. Assessment techniques depend on the situation, the student, and the availability of flexibility in the curriculum.

### ***What are my three most important reasons for wanting to be a teacher?***

Love of learning, passion for students, and professional and personal growth.

### ***What special abilities, interests, community activities, high school and/or college activities which would enhance my opportunity for employment, including unique or special achievements do I possess?***

I have excellent personal, organizational, and motivational skills, all with a touch of discipline. Some hobbies of mine include the outdoors, working with my hands, and photography.

I was the Executive Director of Commuter and Off-Campus Student Organization at KSU during my undergraduate years, and received the KSU Student Leader of the Year in 2002. I am a former member of the Police Reserves in Stow, and a veteran from Ohio Army National Guard, having served as a 19D Cavalry Scout.

I am willing to coach or mentor any club or sport. I have played soccer for most of my life, and truly enjoy working with students in an extra curricular setting, after school activities, or other events or programs. I will do what it takes to make the students' learning experience better and well-rounded.

***What professional activities, including professional or honorary organizations, and research studies am I part of?***

I am a member of the following professional organizations:

- NCSS - National Council for the Social Studies
- NEA - National Education Association
- OEA - Ohio Education Association
- National Geographic Society

Research Efforts & Undertakings:

- Research in Secondary Education: “*Extrinsic Motivation – A Factor Of Assignment Completion*” Advisor: Dr. Janice Hutchison
- Research in Political Science: “*Civic Knowledge in a Representative Sample from Northeast Ohio*” Advisor: Dr. Charles Jacobs
- Research in Secondary Education: “*Student Technology Inventory – A Report*” for the Social Studies Department at Nordonia High School, Macedonia, OH.

***How will I promote sensitivity to racial, cultural, religious, and ethnic differences in my classroom?***

It is important to me to make sure my students understand and appreciate the need for a learning community in my classroom. As such, we are all part of the same learning group, and cannot allow any kind of discrimination if we want learning to take place, or personal growth to take place. I strongly believe in learning with my students, and hope students recognize this in my professional appearance as well as pedagogy. I have little time for ignorance, and spend a great deal of time urging students to think critically about a subject as well as discussing it candidly with others.

Through effective means of communication students will be able to successfully handle sensitive matters both inside and outside the classroom, and eventually develop into respectful, considerate, and sensitive life long learners.

***What kind of creative learning, where the students are the center, and I play only the role of the facilitator, can you expect to see from me?***

I facilitated a survey project in my Contemporary Issues class where I had the students make their own survey on a variety of topics, administer it among the school population (study halls, lunch, art classes, whoever was available), and then tally and display their results for all students to see. The students really enjoyed the project, and they were able to learn about themselves as well as other students at the school. The project allowed the students to view others through a new perspective other than before, and made many realize how similar or different they are in many ways.

***What three things do I want know most about my students?***

1. What motivates them?
2. How can I best challenge each individual student?
3. What can I do as a teacher to help them reach their goals?

***What involvement have I had in curriculum development/revision, improvement of instruction, etc?***

Through the graduate program at Kent State University I have had opportunities to look at actual curriculum, lesson plans, as well as unit plans, and been able to improve and add to said plans as part of class exercises and projects. Additionally, as part of our class work I have planned several in-depth lesson plans as well as unit plans complete with assessments, reading activities, pre and post assessment tools, and varied instructional materials.

Once student teaching I developed several pieces of the curriculum, especially in the Contemporary Issues class as there were no set curricula by which to teach already. I also modified and adapted, improved and added to the material available in the Government class I taught. I worked closely with my cooperating teachers in moderating curriculum or lesson materials, as well as developing new materials, activities, assessment tools and evaluative pieces such as portfolios, final products, writing assignments, etc.

***Am I willing to assume responsibility for committee work on curriculum studies, textbook studies, or other professional activities?***

Absolutely! Improving on my work and the work of others for the benefit of all students is one of the parts of teaching that excites me. I see development and revision, as well as research, as key parts of an overall success as educators. I feel very comfortable spearheading new projects and leading committee work, as well as textbook studies and other professional development activities. In my graduate coursework I spent time studying textbooks and their application to teaching, as well as analyzed texts for use in the classroom. I am currently involved with a professional development program called Rivers, Roads, and Rails that study Ohio history in-depth, and meet monthly as a group, as well as in the summer.

***What plans do I have for further professional development?***

I am always seeking out new opportunities to improve myself and my teaching. I believe that I will never stop growing and learning, and the more I know, the more my students will benefit. I am currently committed to the above program, but will absolutely take on other responsibilities and opportunities for improvement as they fit with my area of instruction.

I am also active in Action Research, and plan to use this as a toll by which to improve my teaching. I wish to continue the project that I started this spring on extrinsic motivation as a factor of assignment completion, as well as delve off on other tracks in order to more fully understand the relationships that create successful students as well as successful interactions between students, teacher, administrators, and community alike.

***What approaches do I find to be most effective in motivating students?***

It depends on the student, but all students *are* motivated by something. I believe in an open classroom environment, and getting to know the students well in order to make personal connections and foster solid relationships. I think students are more willing to be motivated if they feel the teachers are on their side, and learning *with* the students has really worked for me in student teaching. Simply asking students to be part of the learning community, and share their own personal knowledge with other students has proven successful as well.

Additionally, I believe motivating students becomes easier if we as educators allow ourselves to ask questions, either of ourselves, or to the students, like “What can I do as a teacher to make your life, as a student, better?” This question has over and over again produced positive responses from my students in the past, and inviting students to give feedback, and become actively involved in their own learning experience produces excellent results.

***What, about my teaching, do I find most rewarding?***

The ability to make a difference in a student’s life. That’s the number one reason I teach, and want to teach for a long time to come. After all, my students will one day make a decision based on what I have showed them in class, or made them think about a few more minutes than usual. Seeing students’ looks when they finally get something is very rewarding as well, and knowing that I have made a difference in their life is very rewarding to me.

***What level of skill in technology, and successfully implementing technology in an educational environment, will I bring with me?***

I have a very high skill level when it comes to successfully integrating technology in my students’ educational environment. I feel very comfortable using a wide range of technology, both for myself, and with my students. I often challenge my students to use more advanced methods of data gathering, or ways to display their knowledge through the use of technology.

After having worked as a software analyst for three years, I feel extremely confident in the following software suits: Microsoft’s Word, Excel, Publisher, PowerPoint, Visio, FrontPage, and Internet Explorer as well as Mac’s Keynote, various online tools, blogs, message boards, photography with Adobe PhotoShop CS2, and more. Here’s what my University Supervisor wrote about me:

“His skills with PowerPoint are among the best I have seen in school or out. It was fun to see what clever presentation he would dream up next. Moving about the room as an actor on a stage, he helped students, emphasized points, or hovered to keep someone on task (the few times *that* was needed).”

- Mr. David Dickson, University Supervisor