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Rhetorical Landscapes of Teaching Philosophy Statements: A Genre Analysis

Hem Lal Pandey[1], **Pradip Raj Giri**[2]
[1]The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), USA
[2]Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Nepal

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Corresponding Author: *Hem Lal Pandey,* ***Email****: hlpandey@miners.utep.edu*

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Abstract

This paper conceptualizes the teaching philosophy statement (TPS) as a genre, examining how composers articulate their envisioned perspectives, styles, views, and commitments of their teaching journey. By analyzing five TPSs written by prospective instructors from five departments of Humanities, the study investigates this genre's defining features and roles in relation to the writers' stated positionalities and strategies of pedagogical practices in the university classrooms. The primary texts are sourced from the University of Michigan's repository. Employing Johnny Saldaña's pattern coding methodology, the paper critically examines the TPS texts through the lens of genre criticism as advanced by theorists like Carolyn Miller and Charles Bazerman. The analysis explores how TPS constructs a rhetorical structure within the interplay of personal values and the institutional, disciplinary, and social contexts. This study underscores the significance of the genre for fostering writers' rhetorical awareness in navigating transitions from graduate student identities to the roles of adjuncts, lecturers, or tenure-track professors. By illustrating the generic attributes of the selected TPSs, the paper highlights the genre as a tool for the writers to exhibit their professional teaching development and academic identity formation.

Keywords: Genre studies, social action, discourse community, pedagogy, rhetoric, persuasion

Introduction

Teaching philosophy statements (TPS) are a distinct genre characterized by unique features. Their uniqueness arises from the particular purposes they serve and the audiences they are addressed to. The purposes range from seeking faculty positions, tenure, promotion, teaching fellowships, and grants to awards. Its audiences are the selection committee members. TPS is also considered a critical document in which applicants are required to articulate their teaching philosophy, including their identity, positionality, curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, and commitments. Schönwetter et al. describe a strong TPS as “a systematic and critical rationale that focuses on the important components defining effective teaching and learning” (84). Scholars’ appraisal has underscored it as “a standard piece of academic writing in which instructors articulate their beliefs about, approaches to, and accomplishments in teaching and learning” (Kaplan et al. 242). As a form of reflective and philosophically expressive ‘personal’ writing, writers critically examine and reflect on themselves regarding teaching prospects, express their commitment to fostering students’ critical thinking, empower them through their enhanced skills, and enact all other exigent educational needs (242). In that sense, TPS evolves from the writers’ commitments and self-refections.

TPSs are characterized by shared structures, forms, and thematic characteristics, as well as by diversity and heterogeneity, depending on each discipline’s unique contexts and situations. For example, the discourse community of Rhetoric and Composition in the United States generally holds pedagogical principles of cultural awareness, community values, multiculturalism, multilingualism, translingualism, Critical Race Theory, counterstorytelling, student agency, voice, empowerment, and others. In contrast, the discourse communities in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) hold objective, mathematical, and analytical epistemological values and their corresponding pedagogical strategies. Given these distinct disciplinary values, TPS composers are required to align their statements with the specific priorities of their respective discourse communities.

TPS falls within the disciplinary domain of Rhetoric and Composition because it comes with composition practice. Scholars within this discipline consider the TPS as an expressive artifact of the writers, an expression of their commitments to transforming classrooms, and a confirmation to the pedagogical practices of inclusivity, equity, and social justice. Since the late twentieth century, Rhetoric and Composition instructors have been recognized as “agents of social change” (Cushman 8), a theme central to TPSs across Humanities and Social Sciences departments in the United States. As a genre, TPSs in the Rhetoric and Composition discourse community are integral to a framework that implicitly or explicitly requires its members to engage with “peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing” (Bartholomae 605). Writing a TPS, therefore, becomes a purposeful act of demonstrating one’s competence and alignment with the evolving expectations and values of the discipline’s pedagogical context.

TPSs, regardless of the disciplines, are microcosms of the broader epistemic spirit of the discourse communities. The epistemic traditions of the discourse communities are shaped by the shared values that are deeply considered while composing the TPS. However, developing a universal set of qualifications for TPSs is inherently challenging, which is beyond the scope of this paper. Because there is no fixed “criteria about what constitutes a good teaching statement” (Montell 2). Nevertheless, TPS writers often need to align with the expectations of their discourse communities, balancing the universal value of “teaching as a serious profession” with their individual commitments, plans, and objectives (2). By analyzing TPS samples, this study examines how the TPS composers utilize it to accomplish their rhetorical goal of commitment expression to persuade the readers who read their statements.

Literature Review

Scholarly discussions on the discourse on TPS have been ongoing since the 1990s. Nancy Van Note Chism's "Developing a Philosophy of Teaching Statement" provided a foundational explanation of this genre's format and other components. She described its form as "brief," its language as "plain," its narrative style as "first-person," and its tone as "reflective and personal" (n.p.). Additionally, Chism highlighted that a well-written TPS includes "descriptions of how the teachers think learning occurs, how they think they can intervene in this process, what chief goals they have for students, and what actions they take to implement their intentions" (n.p.). So, writing a TPS requires knowledge of the conventions of teaching practices and the values they contain.

Gail E. Goodyear and Douglas Allchin conducted a systematic analysis and theorized TPSs, distinguishing them from similar documents such as teaching portfolios and dossiers. They argued that TPSs serve different purposes for professors, administrators, and students. For professors, TPSs are significant because "in preparing a statement of teaching philosophy, professors assess and examine themselves to articulate the goals they wish to achieve in teaching" (106). They list several imperatives that composers can achieve by composing it systematically. TPS composers use a structured approach to clarify why, what, and how they teach. While addressing these rhetorical questions, writing a TPS is inherently reflective and engaging with their identity. Additionally, TPSs also help professors define "the role of teaching in relation to other professional responsibilities . . . of teaching, research, and service" (106). Writing a TPS is, in a sense, to guide oneself by setting specific codes for the future teaching journey. Generally, the composer's motivations, accountability, growth, and development as a teacher in the classroom are reflectively articulated.

For university administrators—such as provosts, deans, and department chairs—TPSs are valuable tools for evaluating the candidate's "ambitions, values, philosophies, attitudes, and ethical beliefs," which contribute to shaping the institution and fulfilling its mission (107). Administrators also use TPSs to promote and regulate the implementation of "good teaching practice" (107) to meet the mission of the departments, disciplines, and the university. For students, TPSs provide insights into professors' commitments as reflected in syllabi, assignments, teaching approaches, classroom environments, and student-teacher relationships. It also addresses critical questions, such as "Why do people teach? Why is learning important? How do teachers decide what and how to teach at a given time? How do others perceive teaching and teachers, and why?" (111). Goodyear and Allchin's ideas highlight the pivotal role TPSs play in the university's larger teaching-learning ecology, emphasizing their significance in aligning individual teaching philosophies with institutional and pedagogical goals.

In his critical analysis of the TPS, Daniel D. Pratt's "Personal Philosophies of Teaching: A False Promise?" examines the "false promises [underlying TPS] and disentangles the assumptions that lie behind them" (32). He contends that TPS composers often make promises that exceed what they can realistically achieve in their classrooms. He also critiques the existing practices of TPS writing on four levels. First, he questions the trends of using a common formalistic pattern, arguing that TPS has become "more descriptive than analytical" (33). He suggests that TPS composers should express and analyze the deeper values, meanings, and justifications associated with the writing instead of simply stating them. Second, he suggests renouncing the dominance of learner-centered pedagogy, which affirms Western teaching conventions as the prevailing framework for TPS. This emphasis, he argues, marginalizes other pedagogical values, such as the teacher-centered approach rooted in Chinese cultural traditions. The TPS genre fails to acknowledge and accommodate diverse teaching practices by adhering strictly to the learner-centered model. Third, Pratt also notes that TPS reviewers and assessors are often influenced by their biases. As a result, “reviewers [of TPS] may look for a reflection of their own philosophies of teaching” (35), potentially undermining the impartial evaluation of these documents. Fourth, he points out that the existing practices rarely incorporate or address students’ evaluations in TPS. Without this integration, TPS writing risks becoming “simple borrowing of ideas and texts from available samples and sites” (35) which makes it challenging for evaluators to “discern the genuine from the contrived, the sophisticated from the naïve, or the profound from the prosaic” (35). Given these possible critical considerations, TPS genre requires to be thoughtfully crafted, adopted, conceptualized, and practiced to achieve its most productive and meaningful outcomes.

Janelle M. Zauha studies the significance of TPS for librarians, a group usually considered not part of TPSs. Zauha argues that “librarians should also voice their philosophy of teaching . . . [to] benefit their students, themselves, and their institution” (64). Like teachers, Zahua posits that librarians must also articulate priorities and values for their professional growth and identity, which can help librarians gain self-recognition and enhance their contributions within academic settings. Since a library is a ‘contact zone space,’ TPS writing in the context of the library discipline, Zahua contends that, “can be a source of personal and professional power, and boost self-confidence” (65). Through this practice of TPS composition, a librarian can bring their perspectives to the teaching faculty during the discussions of curriculum planning and other contexts. Zahua’s ideas on the TPS have contributed to the understanding of the significance of TPS in the cross-cutting contexts of teaching.

Yuanheng (Arthur) Wang’s recent publication on demonstrates his research’s findings on the importance of teaching TPS in the context of English for Academic Purpose. The significance of his study lies in finding ways of dealing with its unstructured generic patterns. As this genre is expressive, writers can freely develop its structure the way they intend. Wang’s study uses rhetorical move analysis to get some patterns in “the occluded nature of TPS” (1). While he acknowledges that it is unlikely to derive homogeneity in the structure of TPS, his research emphasizes the potential of examining it through various theoretical frameworks, each offering unique insights. Wang’s findings underline the richness and variability in the genre, suggesting that every study can contribute new perspectives on it.

Building on these critical insights and Wang’s exploration of the generative possibilities and fecundity of the genre, this paper addresses the research question: What salient characteristics can be derived from selected TPS samples through the lens of genre theory, and how do the composers utilize these genre elements in their statements?

Methodology and Theoretical Perspectives

This study is based on the rhetorical aspect of genre analysis. It draws theoretical insights from genre studies and applies them to analyze the selected TPSs which are drawn from the University of Michigan website. It contained the samples written across the disciplinary contexts of Engineering (10), Humanities (14), Natural and Physical Sciences (9), and Social Sciences (16). The discipline of Humanities is purposely selected from the cluster because of relevance of the theory, our own positionalities (both belonging to the discipline of Humanities, specifically to the Department of English), and the overall connectedness of the genre to the discipline (TPS and genre studies are basically taught, discussed, and practiced in the discipline of rhetoric and writing studies).

From the Humanities cluster, 5 of the 14 samples were selected. The choice of anonymous samples ensured adherence to research ethics by avoiding the need to obtain explicit permissions, which would have complicated the study. The selected samples were systematically labeled to ensure consistency in the analysis: TPS 1 for the statement from the Department of American Culture, TPS 2 for Asian Languages and Cultures, TPS 3 for Ethnomusicology, TPS 4 for American Studies, and TPS 5 for Communication Studies. Each sample is listed in the *Works Cited* with corresponding links. The study did not aim to identify stylistic differences in in these TPSs. Instead, guided by the research question, it examined TPS as a typified genre, focusing on its generic characteristics rather than variations in terms of disciplines. Following Johnny Saldaña's coding methodology, patterns within the TPSs were identified for "repetitive, regular, or consistent occurrences of action/data that appear more than twice" (8). Then, the identified patterns were analyzed in rhetorical and genre frameworks. Key terms that emerged repeatedly in the coding were identity, agency, voice, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking.

The analysis is informed by Carolyn Miller's conceptualization of genre as typified social action, which reflects recurring social needs within the contexts in which genre operates. The recurring social needs of TPS were represented by concepts such as teaching critical thinking, fostering collaborative learning, raising consciousness, and encouraging participation. Four major themes—social action, purpose, context, and form—were identified and used to structure the subsections of the analysis. These themes were considered carriers of the rhetorical dimensions of TPS, providing a foundation for systematically examining the statements and their alignment with genre theory.

Traditional conceptions of genre characterized it in terms of shareded form, style, or structure features. This formalistic view suggests that a text belongs to a specific genre based on its stylistic similarities with other texts. For instance, letters are recognized as a genre due to their typical features, such as a date, name and address, salutation, subject line, body, closing, sender's address, and signature. Any text adhering to these structural conventions is likely classified as a letter.

However, foundational genre theorists—including Carolyn R. Miller, John H. Patton, Thomas M. Conley, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, and Kathleen Hall Jamieson—have critiqued this formalistic approach. These scholars advocate for a broader understanding of genre, emphasizing its rhetorical and functional dimensions over mere structural attributes. Carolyn Miller, for example, asserts that "a rhetorically sound definition of the genre must be centered not on the substance of the form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish" ("Genre as Social Action" 151). This reconceptualization shifts the focus of genre studies from taxonomic classification to the pragmatic functions. Instead of valuing genres solely for their formal attributes, this approach examines how genres shape and construct meaning through their rhetorical purposes. Recent trends in genre studies follow this perspective. As Hyon notes, newer research "focuses more on the situational contexts in which genres occur than on their forms and places special emphasis on the purposes or actions these genres fulfill within these situations" (696). Miller further elaborates that genre is "a particular type of discourse classification, based in rhetorical practice and consequently open rather than closed, organized around situated actions—pragmatic rather than syntactic or semantic" (Miller, "Genre as Social Action" 155). Thus, Hyon and Miller's conceptions of a genre as a pragmatically defined artifact rather than a formalistic one are particularly relevant to this study.

The rhetorical practices embodied in a genre encompass key components such as exigence, social action, audience, purpose, and context. The formalistic approach overlooks these symbiotic relationships between text and context, treating genre as a closed and static artifact. Challenging this limited perspective, Carolyn Miller redefines genre as “that aspect of situated communication that is capable of reproduction, that can be manifested in more than one situation, more than one concrete space-time” (“Rhetorical Community . . .” 71). By situated communication, Miller refers to the rhetorical aspects of the author-audience-context relationship embedded within a genre.

For instance, every genre involves a rhetor who constructs the text with a specific purpose, addressing an intended audience within a particular situational context. This interplay between text and context shapes and defines the genre. Moreover, the concept of *typification*—a key attribute of genre—stems from its inherent capacity for repeatability. As Charles Bazerman explains, “Genre . . . has been concerned with the development of single types of texts through repeated use in situations perceived as similar. . . I wish to present a vision of systems of complex located literate activity constructed through typified actions” (“System of Genre…” 79). Miller theorizes this reproducibility as something governed by the rules and conventions that sustain a genre. These conventions ensure that genres address recurring social needs and exigencies while adhering to established rhetorical frameworks. As Miller elaborates, “The rules and resources of a genre provide reproducible speaker and addressee roles, social typifications of recurrent social needs or exigencies, topical structures (or ‘moves’ and ‘steps’), and ways of indexing an event to material conditions, turning them into constraints or resources” (“Rhetorical Community . . .” 71). The conceptualization of genre as a ‘typification of recurrent social needs’ is closely linked to John Swales’ understanding of genre as a component of discourse communities. Swales argues that “genre belongs to discourse communities, not to individuals” (9), suggesting that a genre derives its meaning from the collective practices and meaning-making processes of the members within a discourse community. For example, the meaning of the TPS genre is shaped by the discourse community members involved in hiring, promotion, and selection committees, university officials, students, and classroom contexts. The TPS becomes a meaningful entity for them because they all comprehend it through the lenses of shared goals, values, and expectations of the teaching communities. Outside this collective framework, the genre exists merely as an isolated artifact, losing its significance and impact. Without the contextual support of a discourse community, it also fails to function effectively or be recognized as an identifiable genre.

A genre gains its recognition with its intertextual features. Charles Bazerman describes this dynamic as “a complex web of interrelated genres where each participant makes a recognizable act or move in some recognizable genre, which then may be followed by a certain range of appropriate generic responses by others” (“Systems of Genre. . .” 96–97). The social practices associated with a genre and its interrelations with other texts contribute to have its meaning and significance. The effectiveness of a TPS is deeply intertwined with related documents such as cover letters, CVs, résumés, and teaching portfolios. Without alignment with these supporting documents, a TPS risks losing its potential as a compelling and persuasive piece. As a genre, it cannot be separated from its operation in contexts which David R. Russell conceptualizes as “a socio-rhetorical action,” defining it as “any ongoing, object-directed, historically conditioned, dialectically structured, tool-mediated human interaction” (510). While broader in scope than Carolyn Miller’s definition, Russell’s perspective finds the role of social contexts in shaping the content and function of a genre.

Anis Bawarshi expands on genre’s communicative and interactive dimensions, illustrating how it guides the composers’ expectations about the roles, behaviors, and language to make it appropriate to specific actions, events, and situations. Bawarshi argues that genres require specific rhetorical processes to achieve these communicative purposes. He asserts, “[g]enres do not simply help us define and organize kinds of texts;

they also help us define and organize kinds of social actions, social actions that these texts rhetorically make possible" (335). Bawarshi provides an example of assignment prompts in a writing classroom as a genre that sets imperatives for the students to utilize the kairotic moments. Confirming the importance of the kairotic aspect of the genre, Bazerman states a genre also embodies a "kairotic coordination," characteristic which leads to "the kinds of shared orientations to and shared participation within mutually recognized moments" ("Constructing Experience" 110). This perspective underscores that genre is inherently constrained by context and shaped by the timeliness of the situation in which it evolves and functions.

Anis S. Bawarshi and Mary Jo Reiff's theory of genre further expands the intersectional characteristics of a genre. They contend that understanding a genre is not limited to the social action and context in which it operates; it also requires a situated understanding of how it builds relations across the interrelated texts. According to them, "genres do not exist in isolation but rather in dynamic interaction with other genres. To understand genre as social action, thus, we need to look at the constellations of genres that coordinate complex social actions within and between systems of activity" (82). In the context of TPS, this theory helps to understand how TPS operates alongside other interrelated genres such as recommendation letters, teaching portfolios, online ratings, teaching evaluations, cover letters, CVs, and résumés. This interplay resonates with Bakhtin's notion of genre as a dialogic utterance, which Bawarshi and Reiff synthesize into the idea that "[a]s typified utterances, genres are dialogically related to and acquire meaning in interaction with other genres" (83). These theoretical insights of genre theory inform the analysis of the selected TPSs in the following section.

Results and Discussion

TPS as a Social Action

Miller's definition of genres as typified rhetorical actions is a primary generic qualification from the teaching philosophy statements analyzed in this paper. To be a genre, it has to serve the social action that Miller calls a genre's pragmatic function. It is also a rhetorical act because a genre establishes a connection point between the addresser's intention and its intended impact. This feature emerges when TPS composers respond to recurring social exigencies such as social injustice and inequity. The imperatives of addressing social action through their proposed teaching goals are evident in the TPS 1 writer's selective attention to the consciousness-raising agenda of their teaching philosophy: "What motivates me to teach in this way is the amazing opportunity to use my research and scholarly training to raise students' level of consciousness about racism, class-ism, and sexism and to inform them about how these – isms so frequently result in injustice and inquality" (1). This author considers the teaching profession as a transformative act by which they contribute to ending racism, sexism, and class-ism. In that sense, a text takes the form of a genre when the writer intentionally designs an action to bring change through the classroom. The writer also intends to teach "to uncover aspects of American culture that we may not have otherwise noticed" (2). In that sense, this TPS writer aligns their teaching pedagogy with social change, confirming Carolyn Miller's genre as a vehicle for enacting meaningful social change.

Invoking such contextual or situational social factors recurs with TPS 2 as well, but in a slightly different way. Being the writer in the music department, he or she does not reflect on the sense of the social context because music is more of an aesthetic discipline than the others. However, the writer addresses music teaching in relation to social action such as maintaining "connections between aesthetics and religious beliefs in nineteenth-century America" (1). Even if the writer is framing this TPS in the aesthetic discipline, they can't disconnect teaching of this discipline from "ethics, multiculturalism, and musical borrowing" (1). Additionally, the writer also brings the references to "cultural significance of musical genres" (1), and "musical expression in the context of migration" (2), which also contributes to shaping the genre identity in relation to social actions. The writer holds that "students bring their ideas into dialogue with one another through classroom discussions, oral presentations, and musical performances" (1), which suggests the writer recognizes music as also situated discipline.

TPS 3 writer pulls a quote from Confucius and keeps it as an epigraph in the statement, suggesting their preference in teaching. The composer's anticipation to have "students of diverse background and experience are encouraged to clarify their thoughts and expose their assumptions implied in their interpretations of the course material for mutual examination" (1) establishes an exigency that it is teaching through which they intend to give respect to the diversity of students and their identities. In this consideration, the author designs this genre to address the social needs of the inclusive classroom, which requires dialogue and critical engagement between the students and the instructor. In particular, this writer picks up an issue of identity recognition as a social action. For instance, the writer mentions that "in the past, I had a traditionally underrepresented African-American student who insisted to be addressed Mr. Frank (not a genuine name). By asking for this additional and "unfair" respect, I think he wanted us to keep alert to the issue of diversity and where he is coming from historically and where he is headed for socially" (1). As in TPS writer 1 discussed above, this writer also considers the imperative of teaching as a matter of justice concern.

TPS writer 4 adopts a narrative style to frame their philosophy by extracting a compelling experience of teaching in the past: "In one such meeting, a white student, who had grown up in a mostly-white suburb of Chicago, claimed to have been unaffected by racism. When I related what he said to the course lectures for that week and pointed out to him that his community was racially homogenous because of racism and 'white flight,' I watched a change happen in him" (1). This narrative instance articulated by the writer stands out as a pivotal social action as the writer expresses their commitment to helping students connect their personal experience to broader social dynamics such as race and privilege. Similarly, the writer reinforces their value of empowering students by stating, "In my upper-level beauty pageants course, I began that effort by not including a grading scale on my syllabus . . . we as a classroom community would brainstorm categories of evaluation . . . and then develop a system to measure student performance that reflected my values as a teacher and their values as a class" (1). This example also shows how the TPS genre requires one to state a teacher's engaging strategies in determining how to deal with social issues for intended social action through learning activities in a classroom.

In TPS 5, the role of TPS becomes a means to function as a pedagogical commitment for the social action related to transforming classroom space for "enhanc[ing] critical self-awareness and understanding of the media and their impact on individuals and the world at large" (1). The writer also evokes the importance of "appreciation and understanding for the more historical and theoretical aspects of communication studies and research" (1), which is where we can find the connection between disciplinary knowledge and the contextual references in which the knowledge is socially enacted. As Miller suggests, genres are typified social actions; in this case, the teaching philosophy becomes a conventional means of demonstrating reflective and strategic teaching approaches in higher education: "My overarching goal for students is to think critically about their engagement with the media and understand the subsequent effects this engagement has on our individual, social, and cultural value systems."

All the TPS authors discussed here situate their statements within the higher education teaching discourse, reflecting the social context of the TPS. A common theme across all writers is their role in fostering social action-based knowledge. This shared emphasis aligns with Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of a speech genre: "Any utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances" (69). This suggests that every piece of TPS exists in relation to others, creating a dialogic connection across the contexts. Similarly, as a genre, it embodies and reflects shared social values, understandings, and conventions of the writers across the disciplines and fields. This perspective resonates with Carolyn Miller's argument that any composition, when framed as a genre, inherently reproduces and reinforces the social action associated with it.

TPS and Its Purpose

The second key component of the TPS is its purpose, a crucial rhetorical element of any discourse, including TPS. The purpose component of the TPS why-ness of the teaching. For instance, TPS 1 writer articulates their purpose through a positionality statement: "I make it clear that although I have a racial identity which brings with it particular experiences that inform my opinions on the course content, my opinions are not the only ones that matter and as such I do not intend to force my views on anyone else" (1). The author also emphasizes their motivation to use teaching as a tool for social justice: "What motivates me to teach in this way is the amazing opportunity to use my research and scholarly training to raise students' level of consciousness about racism, class-ism, and sexism and to inform them about how these –isms so frequently result in injustice and inequality" (2). Additionally, the method of enacting these purposes is outlined through designed assignments and classroom activities, demonstrating the writer's competence in integrating purpose and practice.

Similarly, the writer of TPS 2 expresses that the primary purpose of teaching music is to reveal the power of music and highlight the transformative potential of ethnomusicology. Regarding the first purpose, the author states, "My goal is for students to understand music as a powerful force through which people express themselves" (1). Besides this, their pedagogy aims "to help students "learn to apply the ideas and methodology from the classroom to intellectual questions that they may encounter outside the context of the course" (1). This dual focus illustrates that the TPS as a genre not only emerges from the exigency of teaching rationales of the instructor but also responds to and addresses those pedagogical contexts, reinforcing its rhetorical nature.

Regarding the purpose, TPS 3 states that the purpose is to articulate the pedagogical strategies and promote the students' critical and reflective thinking capacities. The author sees the opportunity with teaching as a tool to "produce independent critical thinkers" (2). This writer repeatedly highlights (stated in three specific instances) that their goal is to enhance the critical and creative thinking of the students. The author also gains credibility for their philosophy by shifting the speaker persona from 'I' to 'we': "We could enhance or radically change our understanding of both ourselves and the world by critically examining our fundamental assumptions and exploring alternative trajectories of our ideas and worldviews" (1). Simultaneously, it also allows the author to articulate their commitment to making the classroom a safe space for the intellectual growth of the students: "My ideal classroom is primarily a safe and comfortable place where students of diverse background and experience are encouraged to clarify their thoughts and expose their assumptions" (1). Confirming

Carolyn Miller's view that 'genre guides social action,' this author kairotically expresses their commitment to teaching for specific goals like enhancing students' critical and creative thinking, intellectual growth, and understanding in the higher-educational contexts.

In TPS 4, the author's two-fold purposes are articulated as: critical thinking and social change through teaching. In the first purpose, the author states: "One of my primary teaching goals is to help students be critical of the world around them in ways that make them want to enact change" (1). As in the previous TPS, this author also affirms that teaching fosters the students' critical thinking skills. In the second purpose, the author states that it is to "relat[e] course material to current events and students' experiences allowed that student to apply what we were learning to understand better both the material and his own experience" (1). This commitment to making the course relevant to real-life situations is the persuasive purpose used in the statement.

Similarly, the composing purpose statement of the TPS 5 author also aligns with other TPS writers discussed above as they see teaching as an opportunity to bridge the classroom and real-life: "One of my goals is to help students see the relevance of academic concepts to their own lives and the field overall" (1). The writer also enumerates their commitment to the general educational mission of the education institutes, which includes fostering students' success and implementing innovative teaching strategies. Notably, the purpose is outlined into three-fold statements: "1) to facilitate the appreciation for complex, big-picture issues inherent in processes of mediated communication, 2) to provide fundamental knowledge and tools applicable to students' academic and future careers in media-related fields, and 3) to enhance critical self-awareness and understanding of the media and their impact on individuals and the world at large" (1). This strategy of stating purposes reflects clarity to the genre structure.

Analyzing the purpose of all these TPSs suggests that every composer is conscious of crafting the statement to articulate the purpose(s) behind teaching. Though the social action aspect of TPS is subtle and stated in a diffracted way, the purpose articulation is explicit and uniform. It shows that the purpose is a key rhetorical aspect of a TPS.

TPS and Its Context

TPSs are typically rooted in higher education contexts. TPS composers basically focus on the societal contexts, connecting the broader influences to the teaching practices they adopt in their classrooms. The TPS samples analyzed in this paper reveal that writers predominantly draw upon either higher education contexts (institutional), societal-environmental contexts (personal), or a combination of both.

Confirming Carolyn Miller and Charles Bazerman's concept of genres arising in specific contexts shaped by recurrent situations, TPS 1 embeds personal and institutional contexts in the statement. For instance, the composer refers to their African American educator's identity to assert their positionality as being instrumental in their teaching: "My own identity, as an under-represented (African-American) minority faculty who teaches very contentious courses on issues of race, gender, and class…could certainly lay the foundation for a potentially unproductive classroom were both teacher and student assumptions and stereotypes [to] preclude effective collaborative learning" (1). The author's acknowledgment of this concern of their identity intersects with the institutional context as well: "university settings . . . are increasingly divided by debates about Affirmative action and equal access to higher education" (1). These two contextual elements serve as a key to shaping the genre as a rhetorical response to the American society's systemic racial inequalities. The author aims to utilize them for critical engagement in their classroom.

Similarly, TPS 2 draws upon the institutional, disciplinary, and personal contexts as recurring situations of their teaching. Referring to the context of the past two teaching experiences, the author highlights, "Students were much more creative and engaged when they took the role of researcher" (1). This institutional contextual reference the author uses in their TPS serves as evidence for constructing instructor ethos in their statement as well as the proposed pedagogic methods. This is further supported by referencing the disciplinary context, "The courses I teach stress critical thinking, working with primary sources, writing, and in-depth understanding of specific musics and cultures" (1). It is also enhanced by the writer's construction of the recurring situation, referencing it to a personal context, highlighting their "background as a performer—as an oboist, saxophonist, wind conductor, and gamelan member—also influences the way that I present music to students" (2). These three contextual sources used by the author make the TPS writing as a genre emerging out of the recurring intersectional contexts.

Like TPS 2, TPS 3 reflects commitments within cultural and disciplinary contexts. Stated concisely and strategically, the writer seeks to help "students of general North American cultural background broaden their intellectual and spiritual horizon by critically reflecting upon their own cultural assumptions and beliefs," addressing the cultural dimension of their statement (2). They also uphold disciplinary standards by incorporating unique assignment types such as "one-word journal" and "free response papers," which the writer constructs as their distinct teaching identity. Furthermore, the writer embraces a broader learning philosophy, asserting, "Learning is hardly a process of rigidifying one's position but a life-long process of widening one's outlook" (2). This flexible perspective of the writer underscores the context of teaching-learning as a part of ongoing phenomena.

For instance, TPS 4 refers to the higher education setting as their reference point of the context: "In an upper-level Ethnic Studies course I taught on beauty pageantry this past Spring Term, I posted a real-time feed of pageant news to our course homepage..." (1). The example shows that the author is shaping this genre by situating the teaching in the media context. The author also envisions integrating current events into the curriculum so that students find the learning material relevant and engaging. The author also brings the societal and real-world contexts into conversation "That term, the college newspaper reported on a race-based hate crime that had taken place in an undergraduate neighborhood" (2). The writer uses this contextual incident in the statement as a kairotic moment. This rhetorical technique effectively works for the writer to demonstrate their familiarity with the importance of engaging students with contemporary, relevant societal issues.

TPS 5 is situated in the context of media studies in higher education. It anticipates that student populations in the classroom will be diverse, and this diverse population brings theoretical and practical orientations. The author outlines the relevant contextual factors that shape the classroom dynamics in two contexts: disciplinary expectations and student backgrounds. The context of the disciplinary expectation is "to reconcile media effects and communication theory with the more professional orientations of their [students'] future careers" (1). The writer recognizes the role of students' backgrounds in understanding the media. While stating the teaching philosophy in these contexts, the author reinforces learning values in and with the contexts.

The analysis of the emerging theme of context from the TPS shows that the genre requires each writer to have rhetorical awareness of the context in which they will be teaching. Every TPS analyzed here demonstrates that their persuasiveness relies on synthesizing learning context across higher education, personal, disciplinary, and institutional contexts.

TPS and Its Form

Though an explication of the formalistic approach to a genre is traditional, it is inevitable to derive the patterns in which a text is shaped. While analyzing the samples, we noticed shared characteristics of forms of TPSs: narrative, reflection, and detailed descriptions. The TPS writers use these common stylistic forms to express their individualistic pedagogical strategies.

TPS 1 writer uses the narrative style to express their personal teaching journey. The narrative explanation of the writer is mixed with a reflective tone as articulated in: “Students in my course know that I believe we all bring unique experiences and points of view to the table. I help students get comfortable sharing their views by having them do ice-breakers which incorporate questions and issues relevant to the course” (1). Through reflection within the narration, the writer establishes, explores, and articulates their commitment to fostering an inclusive and collaborative classroom environment. Moreover, the writer provides a detailed description of classroom activities to illustrate their interdisciplinary pedagogy. For example, one unit on *Blues for Mister Charlie,* the writer shows a combination of literary analysis, historical context, and multimedia resources, delineating that: “To supplement the lecture and to show students a real-life example of how race is constructed through violence, we will view portions of the Marlon Ross film-documentary on Jack Johnson….” (1). The detailed descriptions of pedagogical strategies outlined by the writer portray how the writer, as a prospective instructor, envisions making the classroom lively with the help of materials chosen from various sources.

TPS 2 writer also adopts a personal narrative style to show their pedagogical strategies. In the personal narrative, the writer builds on the learning journey of their lived experiences. For instance, “In my own experience as an undergraduate music major at Brown University, a course project working with Duke Ellington’s sketches of his first extended work *Creole Rhapsody* led me to consider ethnomusicology as a discipline” (1). Then, the writer outlines the plan for specific teaching methods, such as group projects, role-playing, and journal writing. For example, “I envision course projects as a series of short writing assignments that emphasize both academic and creative thinking” (2). Lastly, the writer provides specific instances of how hands-on projects will be used in the classrooms: “The cultural significance of musical genres and styles became more accessible as they became immersed in their projects” (2). These three forms collectively work together for the writer to present their commitments and pedagogical goals systematically and persuasively.

TPS 3 writer also adheres to structuring the genre in the personal narrative, outlining pedagogical strategies, and evidencing teaching effectiveness. Through personal narrative, the writer reveals their understanding of the significance of the dialogic interaction with the students in their learning process: “In the past, I had a traditionally underrepresented African-American student who insisted to be addressed Mr. Frank . . . I think he wanted us to keep alert to the issue of diversity” (1). Likewise, the writer also outlines concrete teaching methods such as the formation of group discussion and journaling: “I saw many students of mine develop their in-class discussion group into outside-classroom study group and achieve better academic results for the course” . . . “Small group discussion has an ‘ice-breaking’ effect that makes the students feel more comfortable to present their ideas to their peers” (1). Also, the writer explains that their pedagogic style of assigning journaling is to maintain the rigor with the readings. These specific strategies revealed through the form's selection help the writer reinforce their rhetorical purpose in the TPS.

TPS 4 writer also showcases the form of reflective narrative and structural pedagogical goals to articulate what teaching is and how it works for them. The formal characteristics of narrative reflection is articulated in their narration of a class meeting with a white student:

> In one such meeting, a white student, who had grown up in a mostly-white suburb of Chicago, claimed to have been unaffected by racism. When I related what he said to the course lectures for that week and pointed out to him that his community was racially homogenous because of racism and "white flight," I watched a change happen in him. "Why didn't I know about this before," he asked me, "What is anyone doing about it?" That interaction represented a convergence of all the elements of my philosophy on teaching and learning. (1)

The writer uses such a personal and anecdotal narrative to relate specific and significant teaching moments and relate them with any general situations that are likely to come in the future. In another instance, the writer narrates, "In an upper-level Ethnic Studies course... I posted a real-time feed of pageant news... and then asked one student volunteer each day to prepare an article" (1). This narrative also demonstrates how the writer aims to implement the pedagogical plans tangibly. The writer presents their specific pedagogical goal is "to take charge of their learning and others' is an assignment . . . call[ed co-facilitation" (1). This technique of providing examples is one of the effective ways to make TPS specific to sound persuasive to the audience.

Formal elements of narrative style and outlines is the feature of TPS 5 in which the composer expresses how to integrate examples in teaching theoretical ideas. For instance, in the narrative style, the writer draws on the personal anecdotes of using *Everybody Hates Chris* for ideological analysis. For that, the writer references to Stuart Hall, showing how to relate the theoretical ideas in the context. The writer also expresses their preferences for designing classrooms as: "I prefer to use multiple avenues of student assessment including examinations, research papers, group projects, and short in-class writing assignments" (2). Regarding the specific strategy, the writer also mentions that "reading, elaboration through lectures, student-led discussion" (2) will be compelling. The narrative and outlining strategies used here illustrate the writer's proposed style of integrating abstract theory with a specific example in the classroom.

The analysis of the form used in the TPS shows that the genre requires the composers to have rhetorical awareness. Every sample analyzed above adopts specific forms of narrative, reflection, and detailed descriptions that support them in effectively articulating their statements.

Conclusion

Teaching Philosophy Statements (TPSs) have evolved as a key rhetorical genre with their recognizable and stable pattern in the academic hiring system. They have been the tools to adhere to and reinforce the institutional values of university pedagogical practices. As theorized by Carolyn Miller, John Swales, Charles Bazerman, and others, the TPSs analyzed in this study exemplify the idea that their recursive practice in job application contexts has endowed them with typified characteristics that distinguish them as a unique genre. Bazerman describes such characteristics as "standardized formal features" ("Systems of Genres" 82). In this study, these features are analyzed through four elicited frames—social action, purpose, context, and form—which collectively underscore the key defining rhetorical attributes of the genre. The analysis demonstrates that the four frames—social action, purpose, context, and form— can characterize TPS as stabilizing rhetorical genre features. Despite being composed within different departmental contexts, all the writers exhibit identical rhetorical frames, suggesting that recursive properties of such features can be inherent to the formation of genre form and function. Across disciplines, all five writers consistently address social issues such as racism, sexism, and classism (social action), articulate academic goals like fostering social justice and critical thinking (purpose), situate their narratives within personal, institutional, and environmental contexts (context), and utilize styles such as narration, reflection, and description (form). These shared characteristics indicate that TPS composers are encouraged to align their statements with the prevailing pedagogical values of higher education. The dominant themes identified in the TPSs suggest that function, rather than form, defines the genre. As demonstrated by the five TPSs analyzed in this paper, the function becomes a guiding principle for writers in shaping the genre's features. By situating their rhetorical actions within the pedagogical and social contexts of academia, the analysis of the TPS revealed that the composers utilize the functional aspect of the genre which is to reinforce both the established and emerging values of pedagogic practices in the university classrooms.

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TPS 4: PFF+-+Teaching+Philosophy+Second+Draft

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