

Developing a Teaching Portfolio

Center for Teaching Excellence

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What is a Teaching Portfolio? It is a factual description of a professor's teaching strengths and accomplishments. It includes documents and materials, which collectively represents the scope, development and quality of a professor's teaching performance. Think of the function behind portfolios kept by architects, designers, artists, etc.-to display their best work and the thought process behind their work.

Why take the time to create a portfolio? One obvious answer is to submit one to an evaluation committee. But you may also create one to reflect on your own progress over time, or you may want to share your experiences with other faculty. Occasionally, you may be asked to submit one for an award at some time.

Is a portfolio an exhaustive compilation of all documents related to teaching? No, it presents selective information on teaching activities and solid evidence of their effectiveness. It should include course planning and preparation, actual teaching examples, evaluation of students and feedback, evidence of keeping up with your professional field as it relates to teaching.

Basics: What goes in the portfolio?

* For a detailed list, please see the external links at the end of this document

Material from oneself:

- Personal teaching Philosophy, strategies, objectives and methodologies. (Activity: have participants write what they do in the typical class, then get them to explain why or what are their objectives in doing that.)

The Teaching Philosophy is the cornerstone of a teaching portfolio. It serves as the reflective narrative that ties all of the pieces together in a logical, meaningful way. You should consider devoting ample time to the development and revision of your teaching philosophy. For assistance, please see the online resources at the end of this document

- Statement of teaching responsibilities, including titles, enrollments, level, required or elective.
- Representative course syllabi detailing course content and objectives, teaching methods, readings, homework assignments.
- Participation in programs for improvement of teaching skills.
- Description of curricular revisions, including new course projects, materials, and class assignments.
- Instructional innovations and assessment of their effectiveness.
- A personal statement regarding long term teaching goals.
- Description of steps taken to evaluate and improve one's teaching.

Material from others:

- Statements from colleagues who have observed the professor in the classroom.
- Statements from colleagues who have reviewed the professor's teaching materials.
- Student course or evaluation data.
- Honors or awards.
- Documentation of teaching development activity through the campus center for teaching and learning.
- Statements by alumni on the quality of instruction.

Products of Teaching/Student learning:

- Student scores on pre- and post-course examinations.
- Examples of graded student essays, along with professor's comments.
- A record of student who succeed in advanced study in the field.
- Student publications or conference presentations.
- Successive drafts of student papers along with professor's comments.
- Any letters, emails or other evidence of professor helping a student with his career.

Other possible items:

- Evidence of help given to colleagues.
- A videotape of the professor teaching.
- Invitations to present a paper on teaching one's discipline.
- Participation in off-campus teaching.
- Invitations to guest lecture in other classes.

Preparing the portfolio:

- Working with a mentor or an outside collaborator is very helpful. They will see your pedagogy rather than the content.
- Another tact is to team up with another junior faculty member for a semester or year to work together to make improvements and suggestions.
- Working with the CTE as external consultants to help build a portfolio can be beneficial.

Self-assessment of your portfolio:

1. Does the portfolio clearly identify what you teach, how you teach it, and why you teach it as you do?
2. Is a descriptive table of contents included?
3. Is every claim made in the narrative supported by hard evidence in the appendices?
4. Does the portfolio present reflective observations?
5. Are creative or innovative teaching approaches described?
6. Is the portfolio sufficiently selective?
7. Does it include a balance of items from oneself, from others, and from student learning?
8. Have efforts at growth and improvement been cited?
9. Should any non-print items such as photos, reviews, or videos of student work or your own work be included?

Materials to help you:

Books

The Teaching Portfolio by Peter Seldin published by Anchor Books, 1997.
Lots of examples of portfolios plus guidelines.

The Teaching Portfolio: Capturing the Scholarship of Teaching

Online Resources

Developing a Teaching Philosophy

- Teaching Perspectives Inventory
<http://www.teachingperspectives.com/>
- Teaching Styles Inventory
<http://www.texascollaborative.org/TSI.htm>
- FAQ's about the Philosophy of Teaching Statements
<http://www.oic.id.ucsb.edu/TA/port-FAQ.html>
- How to write a Teaching Philosophy-The Chronicle
<http://chronicle.com/jobs/2003/03/2003032702c.htm>
- Sample Teaching Philosophies
http://www.tc.umn.edu/~rozai001/teach/tphil_samples.html

Creating a Teaching Portfolio

- Developing a Teaching Portfolio (Ohio State)
<http://ftad.osu.edu/portfolio/>
- Sample Teaching Portfolios (Texas El Paso)
<http://sunconference.utep.edu/CETaL/resources/portfolios/samples.htm>
- Items for Inclusion in a Teaching Portfolio (Stanford)
<http://ctl.stanford.edu/Tomprof/postings/13.html>

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Possible Items for Inclusion in a Teaching Portfolio*

Faculty members should recognize which of the items which might be included in a teaching dossier would most effectively give a favorable impression of teaching competence and which might better be used for self-evaluation and improvement. The dossier should be compiled to make the best possible case for teaching effectiveness.

The Products of Good Teaching

1. Students' scores on teacher-made or standardized tests, possibly before and after a course has been taken as evidence of learning.
2. Student laboratory workbooks and other kinds of workbooks or logs.
3. Student essays, creative work, and project or field-work reports.

4. Publications by students on course-related work.
 5. A record of students who select and succeed in advanced courses of study in the field.
 6. A record of students who elect another course with the same professor.
 7. Evidence of effective supervision of Honors, Master's or Ph.D. theses.
 8. Setting up or running a successful internship program.
 9. Documentary evidence of the effect of courses on student career choice.
 10. Documentary evidence of help given by the professor to students in securing employment.
 11. Evidence of help given to colleagues on teaching improvement. Materials from Oneself
- Descriptive material on current and recent teaching responsibilities and practices.
12. List of course titles and numbers, unit values or credits, enrollments with brief elaboration.
 13. List of course materials prepared for students.
 14. Information on professor's availability to students.
 15. Report on identification of student difficulties and encouragement of student participation in courses or programs.
 16. Description of how films, computers or other nonprint materials were used in teaching.
 17. Steps taken to emphasize the interrelatedness and relevance of different kinds of learning. Description of steps taken to evaluate and improve one's teaching.
 18. Maintaining a record of the changes resulting from self-evaluation.
 19. Reading journals on improving teaching and attempting to implement acquired ideas.
 20. Reviewing new teaching materials for possible application.
 21. Exchanging course materials with a colleague from another institution.
 22. Conducting research on one's own teaching or course.
 23. Becoming involved in an association or society concerned with the improvement of teaching and learning.
 24. Attempting instructional innovations and evaluating their effectiveness.
 25. Using general support services such as the Education Resource Information Center (ERIC) in improving one's teaching.
 26. Participating in seminars, workshops, and professional meetings intended to improve teaching.
 27. Participating in course or curriculum development.
 28. Pursuing a line of research that contributes directly to teaching.
 29. Preparing a textbook or other instructional materials.

30. Editing or contributing to a professional journal on teaching one's subject.

Information From Others

Students:

31. Student course and teaching evaluation data which suggest improvements or produce an overall rating of effectiveness or satisfaction.

32. Written comments from a student committee to evaluate courses and provide feedback.

33. Unstructured (and possibly solicited) written evaluations by students, including written comments on exams and letters received after a course has been completed.

34. Documented reports of satisfaction with out-of-class contacts.

35. Interview data collected from students after completion of a course.

36. Honors received from students, such as being elected "teacher of the year."

Colleagues:

37. Statements from colleagues who have observed teaching either as members of a teaching team or as independent observers of a particular course, or who teach other sections of the same course.

38. Written comments from those who teach courses for which a particular course is a prerequisite.

39. Evaluation of contributions to course development and improvement.

40. Statements from colleagues from other institutions on such matters as how well students have been prepared for graduate studies.

41. Honors or recognition such as a distinguished teacher award or election to a committee on teaching.

42. Requests for advice or acknowledgment of advice received by a committee on teaching or similar body.

Other sources:

43. Statements about teaching achievements from administrators at one's own institution or from other institutions.

44. Alumni ratings or other graduate feedback.

45. Comments from parents of students.

46. Reports from employers of students (e.g., in a work-study or "cooperative" program).

47. Invitations to teach for outside agencies.
48. Invitations to contribute to the teaching literature.
49. Other kinds of invitations based on one's reputation as a teacher (for example, a media interview on a successful teaching innovation).

* From: R. Edgerton, P. Hutchings, and K. Quinlan, "The Teaching Portfolio: Capturing the Scholarship of Teaching," a publication of the AAHE Teaching Initiative, American Association of Higher Education, 1991. One Dupont Circle, Washington, D.C. 20036. p 8. Copyright © 1991 by the American Association for Higher Education. Reprinted with permission.