

**Preparing A Teaching Portfolio*

Developing a Teaching Portfolio provides instructors with a powerful means to document their teaching practices, philosophies, and performances. The teaching portfolio serves as a guidepost showing where a teacher has been and has still yet to go.

Teaching portfolios can help you reflect on your teaching and examine the development of your teaching over time, and can also be used to represent your teaching to others as you apply for jobs, grants, awards, or promotion and tenure.

“The portfolio is to teaching what lists of publications, grants, and honors are to research and scholarship. As such, it allows faculty members to display their teaching accomplishments for examination by others. And, in the process, it contributes both to sounder personnel decisions and to the professional development of individual faculty members” (Seldin, 1993).

What is a Teaching Portfolio?

It is a factual description of a professor’s teaching accomplishments supported by relevant data and analyzed by the professor to show the thinking process behind the artifacts. Most portfolios are NOT collections of everything that the professor has done in the way of teaching over his or her entire career. Rather they are selected samples that illustrate how that individual’s teaching is carried out in the various venues in which teaching occurs. Edgerton, Hutchings and Quinlan (1991) describe portfolios as follows:

1. Portfolios provide documented evidence of teaching that is connected to the specifics and contexts of what is being taught.
2. They go beyond exclusive reliance on student ratings because they include a range of evidence from a variety of sources such as syllabi, samples of student work, self-reflections, reports on classroom research, and faculty development efforts.
3. In the process of selecting and organizing their portfolio material, faculty think hard about their teaching, a practice which is likely to lead to improvement in practice.
4. In deciding what should go into a portfolio and how it should be evaluated, institutions necessarily must address the question of what is effective teaching and what standards should drive campus teaching practice.
5. Portfolios are a step toward a more public, professional view of teaching. They reflect teaching as a scholarly activity.

What Kinds of Material can be Put into a Portfolio?

Edgerton, Hutchings and Quinlan (1991) drew from a study at Stanford to identify four domains a portfolio might address.

- **Course planning and preparation**, represented by syllabi, handouts, lecture notes, etc.
- **Actual teaching presentation**, represented by comments from observers, written comments from student evaluations, or tapes of actual class sessions.
- **Evaluating students and giving feedback**, represented by evaluation assignments and students' graded work along with a brief discussion by the instructor about how feedback was given.
- **Currency in the field**, represented by changes in the courses as new developments in the field arise, currency of reading materials assigned or drawn on for course presentations, attendance at professional conferences that resulted in changes in content or methods of teaching.

Material from Oneself

- A statement of teaching philosophy reflecting the individual's view of the teacher's role and how the individual's activities fit with that philosophy. The purpose of this statement of philosophy is to describe the individual's general approach to teaching and learning and their changes in response to changing conditions. Teaching statements could provide an opportunity for instructors to formally reflect on their aims, strategies, and tactics in the classroom
- Statement of teaching responsibilities, including course titles, numbers, enrollments and student demographics, a brief description of the way each course was taught and how the courses fit into the overall mission of the department.
- Representative course syllabi detailing course content and assignments, teaching methods, readings, homework assignments and evaluation activities, possibly highlighting how courses have changed over the years in response to student feedback or instructor growth.
- Description of steps taken to improve teaching, either through the improvement of individual courses or in general through activities to enhance teaching skills or background knowledge.
- Descriptions of instructional innovations attempted and evaluations of their effectiveness.

- Descriptions of non-traditional teaching settings, such as work with laboratory assistants, special help sessions, work with students during office hours, out of classroom contact of all kinds with students.
- Samples of student work along with the professor's feedback to show the range of student performance and how the instructor has dealt with it.
- Student journals compiled during the semester and reflecting student growth in a wide range of areas.
- Student scores on class examinations, departmental exams, national certification exams.
- Descriptions of curricular revisions, including new course projects, materials, and class assignments.
- A videotape of a typical class session.

Material from Others

Student course evaluation data

Statements from colleagues who have observed the individual in the classroom or who have taught students in subsequent courses.

Evaluations from other faculty in team taught courses.

Documentation of teaching development activities, such as attendance at conferences or workshops on teaching either locally or at professional conferences.

Statements from colleagues who have reviewed the professor's teaching materials, such as course syllabi, assignments, testing and grading practices.

Honors or other recognition such as a distinguished teaching award or nomination for such an award.

A statement by the department chair assessing the professor's teaching contributions to the department.

Edgerton,R. ,Hutchings.P, and Quinlan.K (1991) The Teaching Portfolio: Capturing the Scholarship in Teaching. AAHE Teaching Initiative. Washington, DC: AAHE.

* Lewis,K.G (2001) Preparing A Teaching Portfolio. A Guidebook Prepared by The Division of Instructional Innovation & Assessment ,The University of Texas at Austin.

Seldin,P. and Associates (1993) In Successful Use of Teaching Portfolios. Belton, MA: Anker Publishing.

Seldin,P. (2007) Teaching Portfolio: A Practical Guide to Improved Performance and Promotion/Tenure Decisions , Wiley, John & Sons, Incorporated

Promoting Culture of Teaching : The Teaching Portfolio at:
http://www.stanford.edu/dept/CTL/Newsletter/teaching_portfolio.pdf

Documenting Your Teaching: Creating a Teaching Portfolio / Speaking of Teaching , Stanford University's Newsletter on Teaching

•What is a teaching portfolio?

It's a collection of materials documenting your strengths and accomplishments as a teacher. Peter Seldin, author of *The Teaching Portfolio*, says, "The portfolio is to teaching what lists of publications, grants and honors are to research and scholarship." As such, a teaching portfolio is an important asset while you are on the job market. But more importantly, the teaching portfolio is an invaluable tool for on-going professional self-development.

•What should my portfolio include?

There is no one formula for preparing a teaching portfolio. However, portfolios typically include a brief table of contents, a personal statement, evidence of effective teaching, and supporting materials from others. Your portfolio is not an exhaustive compilation of everything that reflects your teaching performance. It's a selective compilation making the best case for your effectiveness as a teacher.

•Personal Statement

Personal statements are generally 2-3 pages long and may include the following items: 1) an overview of your pedagogical philosophy, strategies, and objectives; 2) a summary of your past and present teaching experiences; 3) a description of steps you have taken to evaluate and improve your teaching, including changes you have made along the way; and 4) an outline of the appended supporting materials (such as syllabi, exams, and handouts) that you are including in your portfolio.

•Evidence of Effective Teaching

You may wish to submit: 1) syllabi of courses you have taught; 2) sample tests, lab exercises, and fieldwork assignments; 3) sample class notes and handouts you have used; and 4) an audio or videotape of you lecturing or leading a discussion section.

•Supporting Material

You may include: 1) statements from professors with whom you have worked as a teach-

ing assistant*; 2) statements from professors, other teaching assistants, and colleagues who have observed you in the classroom*; 3) student evaluations of your teaching (forms available at CTL); 4) documentation of teaching/development activity with CTL staff, including written results of student small group evaluations and video consultations.

*Please note, however, that professors may prefer to write a confidential letter for your CDC file or to an institution considering you, since a confidential letter usually carries more weight.

•Summary

There is no one way of compiling a teaching portfolio but teaching portfolios are often best prepared in consultation with others. As you put your portfolio together, seek the advice of your academic advisor, other TAs, and members of the CTL consulting staff. One great benefit of assembling a teaching portfolio is that it helps you become more articulate about your teaching strategies as you review and reflect on your work, consult with others, and clarify your pedagogical aims. And remember, your portfolio is not set in stone. The contents will change as your teaching experience and insight grow.