

# Evaluation of Faculty Teaching: Methods of Evaluation

## Teaching Portfolios

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## **What Are Teaching Portfolios?**

Purposeful collections of course material

Teaching Responsibilities  
Teaching Philosophy and Goals  
Evidence of Effective Teaching

Format

Hard copy in binders  
Electronic copy on disk or web

Explanations of teaching context

Aid to faculty development

Tool for teacher evaluation

# Introduction to Teaching Portfolios

## 1. Introduction

*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 suggest the scope and quality of a professor's teaching performance. It is to teaching what lists of publications, grants, and honors are to research and scholarship. (Seldin)*

A teaching portfolio is a document created by academic staff which draws together evidence of the extent and quality of their teaching. Because teaching portfolios are highly personalised, the following guidelines are not intended to be prescriptive but rather to help nominees to organise and think about the materials and narrative they include in the teaching portfolio.

## 2. Purpose

*In truth, one of the most significant parts of the portfolio is the faculty member's self-reflection on his or her teaching. Preparing it can help professors unearth new discoveries about themselves over the years. Are these changes for the better? (Seldin)*

The Teaching Portfolio is not simply a collection of teaching materials, but rather a descriptive narrative of teaching practice, supported with a few selective samples of materials as evidence of teaching excellence. It is a reflective statement about the 'why' of teaching more than the 'what.'

A comprehensive Teaching Portfolio will:

- Show clearly how your teaching practice is consistent with your teaching philosophy and recognized characteristics of effective teaching;
- Provide evidence from a variety of sources to support claims made about teaching;
- Provide a context which allows the claims to be understood.

## 3. Suggested Contents of a Teaching Portfolio

*An important point: the portfolio is not an exhaustive compilation of all of the documents and materials that bear on teaching performance. Instead, it presents selected information on teaching activities and solid evidence of their effectiveness. Just as statements in a curriculum vitae should be supported by convincing evidence (such as published articles or invitations to present a paper at an academic conference), so claims in the teaching portfolio should be supported by firm empirical evidence. (Seldin)*

The teaching portfolio normally contains material from oneself, peers, and students, integrated to support the narrative. It also contains the products of teaching and learning as evidence of teaching excellence. Teaching Portfolios often include the following elements:

- a. Statement of Teaching Philosophy. This statement is normally one to two pages in length and should include the elements described in the article *Developing a Philosophy of Teaching*

*Statement* by Nancy Chism. (You may wish to revise or augment the original Teaching Philosophy Statement included in the Stage Two application.)

- b. Description of your teaching responsibilities (subjects and levels)
- c. Description of learning objectives, teaching strategies and assessment methods.
- Learning Objectives: It is important to discuss what you are hoping for students to learn and why these learning objectives for students are important.
  - Teaching Strategies: Why have you chosen to use these particular teaching strategies to help students to learn? Have they been effective?
  - Assessment Methods: Why have you selected these particular assessment methods to measure of student learning? Do you include formative and summative assessments of learning? Are these the best assessments to use for measuring learning in your discipline? Why?
- Brief samples may be included as evidence.***

- d. Description of course material (course handbook, other course information, examination information, handouts, assignments, learning resources, etc.).

How were they developed and why do you think they are effective?

***Brief samples of materials described should include sample materials prepared by the nominee for two courses, undergraduate and/or postgraduate, taught during the 2004/05 year.***

- e. Description of your involvement in curriculum design and innovations in teaching.

How did you change something in a course to enhance student learning? Why did you select this particular curriculum design or teaching innovation? Have these efforts to improve learning been effective? How do you know?

***Brief samples of your curriculum design or teaching innovation may be included as evidence.***

- f. Discussion of student feedback.

This should be based upon a sample of student feedback questionnaires you have used for two recent courses. How and when do you elicit student feedback? How have you responded to the feedback from students? Have any revisions been made to the course or to your teaching as a result of student feedback?

***Brief samples of student questionnaires may be included, in addition to a sample blank questionnaire.***

- g. Description of your Professional Development and Growth as a teacher.

What are your professional development goals related to your development as a teacher? What have you done so far to make progress toward these goals? (i.e.: participation in conferences or workshops related to teaching and learning, or other professional development activities) What are your plans for future professional development related to teaching?

# Instituting a Teaching Portfolio Program

## What Is a Teaching Portfolio?

Teaching portfolios are purposeful collections of course material and other documents that help evaluators assess the quality and currency of a faculty member's instruction. Teaching portfolios offer evaluators an overview of the faculty member's teaching responsibilities, a summary of his or her course goals and teaching philosophy, sample course material, and evidence of effective instruction.

## How Can Teaching Portfolios Aid Teaching Evaluation?

Teaching portfolios have proven to be incredibly versatile aids to faculty evaluation and development. Their use can change as faculty progress in the profession. During a faculty member's early years, teaching portfolios are most often used to facilitate tenure and promotion review. They offer promotion/tenure committees and administrators a wealth of material to serve as a basis for discussing the faculty member's teaching and professional growth. Once faculty members have obtained tenure, maintaining a teaching portfolio helps them to reflect on their teaching and the course of their professional careers and offers chairs and committees a basis for post-tenure evaluation. Finally, teaching portfolios offer faculty the chance to showcase their course material and add depth and meaning to other evaluation data. The portfolio provides faculty a place to comment directly on their teaching and students, explaining in detail their experiences as classroom instructors.

## What Do Teaching Portfolios Typically Contain?

Departments typically tell faculty what to include in their teaching portfolios. Portfolios can include material developed by the instructor, material produced by other faculty members, products of student learning, and other documents. No portfolio will include all of the material listed; every department should ask for the material that offers them the best information about faculty instruction.

### *Material from the Faculty Member*

- Statement of teaching responsibilities: course titles, numbers, enrollments
- Brief course descriptions: coverage, required or elective, graduate or undergraduate
- Reflective statement outlining the faculty member's personal teaching philosophy, strategies and objectives, and methodologies
- Representative course syllabi including course content and objectives, readings, and homework assignments
- Descriptions of curricular innovations or revisions including new course projects, materials, or assignments
- Assessments of new practices
- Statement of teaching goals for the next term/next year/next five years
- Reports of steps taken to aid students with special needs
- Description of steps taken to evaluate and improve one's teaching including self-assessment, workshops, conventions, readings, meeting with mentors, class visitations, and so forth

### *Material from Others*

- Statements from colleagues who have watched the professor teach
- Statements from colleagues who have reviewed the professor's course material
- Student course evaluation numbers and written comments
- Honors or other recognitions related to teaching
- Documentation of teaching development activities
- Statements from alumni or former students testifying to the quality of the instruction they received in the professor's classes

### *The Products of Teaching/Student Learning*

- Student scores on pre- and post-course examinations
- Student scores on standardized tests
- Sample student laboratory workbooks, logs, or field reports
- Examples of graded student essays along with the professor's comments on why they were so graded
- Records of students who have succeeded in advanced study in the field
- Evidence of effective supervision of Honor's, Master's, or Ph.D. theses
- Student publications or conference presentations on course-related work
- Information concerning the professor's efforts to aid the professional development of students

### *Other*

- Evidence of help the faculty member gave to colleagues to improve their teaching
- Invitations to teach for outside agencies or institutions
- A videotape of the professor teaching a class
- Information concerning the professor's participation in off-campus activities related to teaching
- A statement from the department chair assessing the faculty member's teaching and contributions to the department
- Description of the faculty member's use of technology in the classroom

### What Formats Do Teaching Portfolios Typically Assume?

Faculty typically collect material for their portfolio in a binder, folder, or notebook that gets turned in for review. However, these binders can become heavy and cumbersome over the years, so increasingly departments are turning to electronic teaching portfolios, placing the same information online or on disc for review.

Other departments are turning to "teaching dossiers" which contain much of the same information teaching portfolios contain, but less of it. For example, instead of including all course material, the dossier may contain a few selected assignments or handouts. Instead of including all student course evaluations, it may contain a summary of the evaluations.

Finally, other departments prefer to look at "course portfolios." These contain all the relevant information for one particular course, not for every course the faculty member taught.

## How Are Teaching Portfolios Evaluated?

Departments typically develop a checklist against which teaching portfolios are judged. The simplest forms of these checklists indicate whether particular documents are present: for example, whether the portfolio contains a statement of teaching philosophy, a set of course syllabi, letters of review from peers, etc. More complex checklists ask reviewers to evaluate the quality of the material in the portfolio, either through a written response or through some numerical scale, for example 5(excellent) to 0 (not present)..

In other systems, only parts of the teaching portfolio play a part in the evaluation process. For example, reviewers may only look at the peer evaluations and the self-reflection essay. Faculty collect the rest of the material to aid their own reflection.

## How Can a Department Institute a Teaching Portfolio Program?

Here is a step-by-step process departments may choose to follow if they are interested in putting a teaching portfolio program in place. This process can be modified as needed.

### **Step 1      Decide as a department what role the teaching portfolio will play in the teaching evaluation program.**

As a department, decide who is to maintain a teaching portfolio, how often it is to be evaluated, and how that information is to be weighed along side other types of information regarding the faculty member's teaching.

### **Step 2      Decide what material should be included in the teaching portfolio.**

As indicated above, a lot of material can go into a teaching portfolio, which does not mean that it all should go into a portfolio. As a department, decide how extensive a collection of material you want in the teaching portfolio--what material must be included, what material can be included, and what material should be excluded.

### **Step 3      Decide who is to maintain a teaching portfolio.**

Will non-tenured and/or tenured faculty members be asked to maintain a portfolio?

### **Step 4      Ask faculty to maintain and build the portfolio throughout the term.**

It is difficult to assemble a teaching portfolio after the term or academic year has ended. A far better idea is to ask faculty to assemble the portfolio throughout the term or academic year. Give them a list of what to include so that at the end of the term or academic year all they need to do is organize the material they have already assembled.

### **Step 5      Decide when the teaching portfolios will be collected for review.**

Will the portfolios be reviewed every term, every year, or on selected years? Will the same timeline apply to tenured and non-tenured faculty?

**Step 6      Decide who will review the teaching portfolios.**

Again, there are several options here. Will the portfolios be reviewed by the chair, by members of the Promotion and Tenure Committee, or by both? Will all members of the Committee review the contents or just a few? Will it be the job of the faculty member's peer reviewer? If everyone on the Committee does not review the contents of the portfolio, how will the person who does review it communicate his or her responses to the other members of the Committee?

**Step 7      Decide how the teaching portfolios will be evaluated.**

Will there be a rubric against which the contents of the teaching portfolios are evaluated? Without one, how will you ensure consistent evaluations? If you plan to use one, who will construct it?

**Step 8      Decide who sees the results of the evaluation and how that information is to be communicated.**

The results have to be shared with the faculty member, but how will this be done? Will it be a written or oral response? What type of response best ensures that the faculty member can use the results of the review to improve his or her teaching? Who else sees the results of the evaluation-- the chair, the full department, dean? How will the results of the evaluation be communicated to them?



## **Faculty's Uses of Portfolios at Various Stages in Their Academic Careers**

### Early Graduate School

- ❑ Stimulate the collection of artifacts pertaining to teaching and research
- ❑ Promote self-reflection about initial teaching and other professional experiences

### Late Graduate School

- ❑ Encourage discussion about professional activities with faculty mentors
- ❑ Stimulate thinking about a philosophy of teaching and a future research agenda

### Pre-tenure Years

- ❑ Facilitate promotion review
- ❑ Facilitate tenure review
- ❑ Encourage discussion about professional growth with colleagues, department chairs, and deans

### Post-tenure Years

- ❑ Encourage reflection about professional growth throughout one's academic career

*Texas Tech University*

## What Might Be Included in a Teaching Portfolio

### Material from Oneself

- Statement of teaching responsibilities: course titles, numbers, enrollments
- Brief course descriptions: coverage, required or elective, graduate or undergraduate
- Reflective statement outlining the faculty member's personal teaching philosophy, strategies and objectives, and methodologies
- Representative course syllabi including course content and objectives, readings, and homework assignments
- Descriptions of curricular innovations or revisions including new course projects, materials, or assignments
- Assessments of new practices
- Statement of teaching goals for the next term/next year/next five years
- Reports of steps taken to aid students with special needs
- Description of steps taken to evaluate and improve one's teaching including self-assessment, workshops, conventions, readings, meeting with mentors, class visitations, and so forth

### Material from Others

- Statements from colleagues who have watched the professor teach
- Statements from colleagues who have reviewed the professor's course material
- Student course evaluation numbers and written comments
- Honors or other recognitions related to teaching
- Documentation of teaching development activities
- Statements from alumni or former students testifying to the quality of the instruction they received in the professor's classes

### The Products of Teaching/Student Learning

- Student scores on pre- and post-course examinations
- Student scores on standardized tests
- Sample student laboratory workbooks, logs, or field reports
- Examples of graded student essays along with the professor's comments on why they were so graded
- Records of students who have succeeded in advanced study in the field
- Evidence of effective supervision of Honor's, Master's or Ph.D. theses
- Student publications or conference presentations on course-related work
- Information concerning the professor's efforts to aid the professional development of students

## Other

- Evidence of help the faculty member gave to colleagues to improve their teaching
- Invitations to teach for outside agencies or institutions
- A videotape of the professor teaching a class
- Information concerning the professor's participation in off-campus activities related to teaching
- A statement from the department chair assessing the faculty member's teaching and contributions to the department
- Description of the faculty member's use of technology in the classroom

# Sample Table of Contents 1

## TEACHING PORTFOLIO

Faculty Member's Name

Department/College

Institution

Date

### Table of Contents

1. Teaching Responsibilities
2. Statement of Teaching Philosophy
3. Teaching Methods, Strategies, Objectives
4. Student Ratings on Summative Questions
5. Colleague Evaluations from Those Who Have Observed Classroom Teaching or Reviewed Teaching Materials
6. Statement by the Department Chair Assessing the Professor's Teaching
7. Detailed, Representative Course Syllabi
8. Products of Teaching (Evidence of Student Learning)
9. Teaching Awards and Recognition
10. Teaching Goals: Short-term and Long-term
11. Appendices

*Peter Selden, The Teaching Portfolio. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003.*

## Sample Table of Contents 2

TEACHING PORTFOLIO  
Faculty Member's Name  
Department/College  
Institution  
Date

### Table of Contents

- A. Statement of Teaching Responsibilities**
  - Courses Taught
  - Student Advising
  - Practicums Organized and Supervised
  
- B. Statement of My Teaching Philosophy and Goals**
  
- C. Efforts to Improve Teaching**
  - Formal Courses in Education
  - Conferences Attended
  - Workshops Attended
  - Participation in Peer Consultation
  
- D. Redevelopment of Existing Courses**
  - Description of Changes
  - Sample Syllabi, Assignments, etc.
  
- E. Information from Students**
  - Summary of Student Ratings
  - Comments from Students Regarding Advising
  
- F. Service to Teaching**
  - Committee Work
  - Peer Consulting Work
  
- G. Information from Colleagues**
  - Letters from Peers
  - Letters from Chair
  
- H. Other Information**
  
- I. Future Teaching Goals**

### Appendices

*Knapper, Christopher, and W. Alan Wright. "Using Portfolios to Document Good Teaching: Premises, Purposes, Practices." Fresh Approaches to the Evaluation of Teaching. Ed. Christopher Knapper and Patricia Cranton. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001. 19-29.*

## Self-Evaluation of Portfolio Material

### How Effective Is My Teaching Portfolio?

- ❑ Do I show a broad, deep, current knowledge of the content, as demonstrated by the course materials included in the portfolio?
- ❑ Is there feedback from peers about this knowledge through reports of classroom visits, review of materials, or the like?
- ❑ Does my portfolio demonstrate my use of effective design principles to facilitate learning in the courses I have taught, as demonstrated by my teaching philosophy statement and course materials?
- ❑ Does my portfolio demonstrate that I delivered effective instruction, as indicated by summaries of student evaluation ratings, reports by peers, and review of the products of student learning, such as tests, papers, and project reports?
- ❑ Does my portfolio demonstrate that I show effectiveness in non-classroom teaching roles, such as student advising and supervision of student research, as demonstrated by feedback from students, student progress, and the products of student learning?
- ❑ Does my portfolio demonstrate that I invested in teaching development and engaged in the scholarship of teaching, as demonstrated by the teaching philosophy statement; the record of teaching leadership efforts inside the department and externally; and the record of publication, presentations, and conference participation in the teaching of my discipline?
- ❑ Does my portfolio demonstrate that I have contributed to the teaching mission of my department, as indicated by the record of teaching responsibilities, both through formal courses, non-classroom teaching and course development?
- ❑ Overall, what does my portfolio say about the quality of my teaching and what recommendation would I make on this personnel decision?

*Ohio State University*

## Suggested Checklist for Evaluation of Teaching Portfolios

- ❑ Does the portfolio include current information?
- ❑ Does the portfolio balance information from self, from others, and from products of student learning?
- ❑ Is there coherence among the various components of the portfolio, revealing demonstrated effectiveness in practice tied to an articulated philosophy?
- ❑ Does the portfolio demonstrate teaching consistent with departmental and institutional strategic priorities and missions?
- ❑ What constitutes valid documentation and evidence?
- ❑ Are multiple, selective sources of information included, offering a diverse and objective assessment of teaching?
- ❑ Does the portfolio adequately supplement narrative description, analysis, and goals with empirical evidence in the appendix?
- ❑ How clearly and specifically does the portfolio reveal the relevance of professional development, research, and scholarship to the teaching enterprise?
- ❑ Does the portfolio include a core of agreed-upon seminal statements with accompanying evidence?
- ❑ Do products of student learning reveal successful teaching?
- ❑ Does the portfolio provide evidence of efforts to improve teaching? Is there evidence of improvement in methods, materials, evaluations, or goals?
- ❑ Is the portfolio the only source of information on teaching effectiveness? Or is it complemented by additional materials and corroborative information about a professor's complex and varied roles?
- ❑ How does the portfolio profile individual style, achievements, or discipline? Is a strong case made in both narrative and documentation in the appendix for the complexity and individuality of a professor's particular teaching effort in a particular discipline with a particular group of students?
- ❑ Does the portfolio meet established length requirements?

Zubizarreta, John. "Improving Teaching Through Portfolio Revisions." *The Teaching Portfolio*. 2nd ed. Peter Selden. Bolton, MA: Anker, 1997. 37-45.

## Checklist of General Items for Evaluating Portfolios

- ❑ If an institution requires core items, they must *all* be included in the portfolio.
- ❑ Evidence must be presented to show that academic institutional goals (for example, development of critical thinking skills or group presentation skills) are met in the classroom.
- ❑ Evidence of accomplishment, not just a reflective statement must be present in the portfolio.
- ❑ The reflective statement of what and why professors teach as they do must be consistent with the syllabus and with student and peer evaluations of their teaching.
- ❑ There must be evidence of student learning, not just material from others and material from one's self.
- ❑ The degree of documentation in the three areas of student learning, material from others, and material from one's self must be in general balance and several sources should be used as documentation in each area.
- ❑ Efforts of improved performance over time must be reflected in the evaluation reports.
- ❑ The ratings on all common core questions on student rating forms from several courses and several years must be included in the portfolio.
- ❑ Some evidence of peer evaluation through classroom visitation or review of instructional materials must be presented, unless this would be inconsistent with the institution's culture.
- ❑ The teaching responsibilities section must be consistent with the department chair's statement of the professor's responsibilities.
- ❑ Including selected information from years ago is permissible, but the vast majority of data must be current or from the recent past.
- ❑ Data on scholarly research or publication must be considered in a teaching portfolio *only* if it relates directly to teaching, or student learning, in one's discipline.
- ❑ The portfolio must reflect consistency between a professor's reflective statement of teaching philosophy and his or her teaching actions in the classroom
- ❑ All claims made in the portfolio must be supported by evidence in the appendices.
- ❑ Evaluators must focus attention on the *evidence* supporting teaching effectiveness, and ignore an elegant cover, or attractive printer's font, or other such packaging

Seldin, Peter. "Evaluating Teaching Portfolios for Personnel Decisions." Successful Use of Teaching Portfolios. Peter Seldin, et al. Bolton, MA: Anker, 1993. 71-86.



## **Benefits and Limitations of Using Portfolios to Evaluate Teaching**

### Benefits of Using Portfolios to Evaluate Teaching

- ❑ Puts more control of the evaluation process into the hands of individual teachers
- ❑ Requires teachers to take responsibility for documenting their teaching accomplishments
- ❑ Requires teachers to reflect on the quality of their teaching and on the steps they have taken to improve as instructors
- ❑ Challenges departments and promotion/tenure committees to develop richer, more sophisticated, more complex evaluation methods and criteria

### Limitations of Using Portfolios to Evaluate Teaching

- ❑ Requires much more time to compile
- ❑ Requires much more time to read
- ❑ Requires more attention to inter-rater reliability
- ❑ Offers more information than might be needed
- ❑ May not offer a balanced view of teaching (“best case” only)

## **Alternatives to the Traditional Teaching Portfolio**

### Selective Use of Portfolio Evaluations

- ❑ Use only at certain points in tenure review
- ❑ Use for promotion purposes
- ❑ Use for periodic review of tenured faculty

### Electronic Portfolios

- ❑ Material put on disk or on web site for review

### Teaching Dossiers

- ❑ Same types of information, but much more selective
- ❑ Limited to 12-15 pages

### Course Portfolios

- ❑ Same types of information, but limited to one course

## Teaching Portfolio Resources

- Centra, John A. "Evaluating the Teaching Portfolio." Evaluating Teaching in Higher Education: A Vision for the Future. Ed. Katherine E. Ryan. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000. 87-93.
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- Murray, John P. Successful Faculty Development and Education: The Complete Teaching Portfolio. Washington, DC: ERIC, 1997.
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- . The Teaching Portfolio: A Practical Guide to Improved Performance and Promotion/Tenure Decisions. 2nd ed. Bolton, MA: Anker, 1997.
- Zubizarreta, John. "Improving Teaching Through Portfolio Revisions." The Teaching Portfolio. 2nd ed. Peter Selden. Bolton, MA: Anker, 1997. 37-45.