**Teaching Portfolios**

**What Is a Teaching Portfolio?**

* Portfolios provide documented evidence of teaching from a variety of sources—not just student ratings—and provide context for that evidence.
* The process of selecting and organizing material for a portfolio can help one reflect on and improve one's teaching.
* Portfolios are a step toward a more public, professional view of teaching as a scholarly activity.
* Portfolios can offer a look at development over time, helping one see teaching as on ongoing process of inquiry, experimentation, and reflection.
* Teaching portfolios capture evidence of one's entire teaching career, in contrast to what are called course portfolios that capture evidence related to a single course.

**Why Assemble a Teaching Portfolio?**

Portfolios can serve any of the following purposes.

* Job applicants for faculty positions can use teaching portfolios to document their teaching effectiveness.
* Faculty members up for promotion or tenure can also use teaching portfolios to document their teaching effectiveness.
* Faculty members and teaching assistants can use teaching portfolios to reflect on and refine their teaching skills and philosophies.
* Faculty members and teaching assistants can use teaching portfolios, particularly ones shared online, to "go public" with their teaching to invite comments from their peers and to share teaching successes so that their peers can build on them. For more on going public with one's teaching, see the [CFT's Teaching Guide on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning](http://wp0.vanderbilt.edu/cft/teaching-guides/reflecting/sotl/).

**General Guidelines**

* **Start now!** Many of the possible components of a teaching portfolio (see list below) are difficult, if not impossible, to obtain after you have finished teaching a course. Collecting these components as you go will make assembling your final portfolio much easier.
* **Give a fair and accurate presentation of yourself.** Don't try to present yourself as the absolutely perfect teacher. Highlight the positive, of course, but don't completely omit the negative.
* **Be selective in which materials you choose to include**, though be sure to represent a cross-section of your teaching and not just one aspect of it. A relatively small set of well-chosen documents is more effective than a large, unfiltered collection of all your teaching documents.
* **Make your organization explicit to the reader.** Use a table of contents at the beginning and tabs to separate the various components of your portfolio.
* **Make sure every piece of evidence in your portfolio is accompanied by some sort of context and explanation.** For instance, if you include a sample lesson plan, make sure to describe the course, the students, and, if you have actually used the lesson plan, a reflection on how well it worked.

**Components of a Teaching Portfolio**

1. Your Thoughts About Teaching
   * A reflective "teaching statement" describing your personal teaching philosophy, strategies, and objectives (see [Teaching Philosophy](http://wp0.vanderbilt.edu/cft/teaching-guides/reflecting/teaching-statements/)).
   * A personal statement describing your teaching goals for the next few years
2. Documentation of Your Teaching
   * A list of courses taught and/or TAed, with enrollments and a description of your responsibilities
   * Number of advisees, graduate and undergraduate
   * Syllabi
   * Course descriptions with details of content, objectives, methods, and procedures for evaluating student learning
   * Reading lists
   * Assignments
   * Exams and quizzes, graded and ungraded
   * Handouts, problem sets, lecture outlines
   * Descriptions and examples of visual materials used
   * Descriptions of uses of computers and other technology in teaching
   * Videotapes of your teaching
3. Teaching Effectiveness
   * Summarized student evaluations of teaching, including response rate and relationship to departmental average
   * Written comments from students on class evaluations
   * Comments from a peer observer or a colleague teaching the same course
   * Statements from colleagues in the department or elsewhere, regarding the preparation of students for advanced work
   * Letters from students, preferably unsolicited
   * Letters from course head, division head or chairperson
   * Statements from alumni
4. Materials Demonstrating Student Learning
   * Scores on standardized or other tests, before and after instruction
   * Students' lab books or other workbooks
   * Students' papers, essays, or creative works
   * Graded work from the best and poorest students, with teacher's feedback to students
   * Instructor's written feedback on student work
5. Activities to Improve Instruction
   * Participation in seminars or professional meetings on teaching
   * Design of new courses
   * Design of interdisciplinary or collaborative courses or teaching projects
   * Use of new methods of teaching, assessing learning, grading
   * Preparation of a textbook, lab manual, courseware, etc.
   * Description of instructional improvement projects developed or carried out
6. Contributions to the Teaching Profession and/or Your Institution
   * Publications in teaching journals
   * Papers delivered on teaching
   * Reviews of forthcoming textbooks
   * Service on teaching committees
   * Assistance to colleagues on teaching matters
   * Work on curriculum revision or development
7. Honors, Awards, or Recognitions
   * Teaching awards from department, college, or university
   * Teaching awards from profession
   * Invitations based on teaching reputation to consult, give workshops, write articles, etc.
   * Requests for advice on teaching by committees or other organized groups

**Sample Teaching Portfolios**

The website from University of Virginia provides sample teaching portfolios from a variety of disciplines. As you look at these portfolios, ask yourself,

* "What components did the author choose to include and which ones are most effective at describing their teaching?" and
* "What structural and organizational decisions did the author make as they assembled their portfolio?"

[Sample Portfolios from the University of Virginia Teaching Resource Center](http://trc.virginia.edu/resources/developing-a-teaching-portfolio/)

**Electronic Teaching Portfolios**

How do electronic portfolios differ from print portfolios?

* **Increased Accessibility:** Teaching portfolios are intended, in part, to make teaching public. Distributing a portfolio on the web makes it even more accessible to peers and others.
* **Multimedia Documents:** Technology allows for inclusion of more than just printed documents. For example, you can include video footage of yourself teaching, an audio voiceover providing context and reflection on the portfolio, or instructional computer programs or code you have written.
* **Nonlinear Thinking:** The web facilitates nonlinear relationships between the components of your teaching portfolio. The process of creating a portfolio in this nonlinear environment can help you think about your teaching in new ways. For example, since readers can explore an e-portfolio in many different ways, constructing an e-portfolio gives you an opportunity to consider how different audiences might encounter and understand your work.
* **Copyright and Privacy Issues:** While examples of student work can be compelling evidence of your teaching effectiveness, publishing these examples online presents legal copyright and privacy issues. Talk to someone at the [VU Compliance Program](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/compliance/) before doing so.

**What Role Do Teaching Portfolios Play on the Job Market?**

* According to an October 11, 2005, search on [HigherEdJobs.com](http://www.higheredjobs.com/), of the 1,000 ads for faculty jobs…
  + 585 include the words "teaching philosophy,"
  + 27 include the words "teaching statement," and
  + 28 include the words "teaching portfolio."
* According to an October 11, 2005, search on [Chronicle.com](http://chronicle.com/jobs/), of the 2,978 ads for faculty/research jobs…
  + 388 include the words "teaching philosophy,"
  + 5 include the words "teaching statement," and
  + 8 include the words "teaching portfolio."
* While these data indicate that teaching portfolios are not frequently requested of job applicants to faculty positions, it is not just the physical document that plays a role. The process of constructing a teaching portfolio—and reflecting on your teaching—will prepare you to…
  + write a meaningful teaching philosophy statement and
  + to discuss your teaching more effectively during interviews.

**Other Resources**

The following books on teaching portfolios are available for check-out in the Center for Teaching's library.

* Seldin, Peter, *The Teaching Portfolio: A Practical Guide to Improved Performance and Promotion/Tenure Decisions*, 3rd edition, Anker, 2004.
* Cambridge, Barbara, *Electronic Portfolios: Emerging Practices in Student, Faculty, and Institutional Learning*, American Association for Higher Education, 2001.
* Hutchings, Pat, ed., *The Course Portfolio: How Faculty Can Examine Their Teaching to Advance Practice and Improve Student Learning*, American Association for Higher Education, 1998.
* Murray, John P., *Successful Faculty Development and Evaluation: The Complete Teaching Portfolio*, ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education, 1997.
* Anderson, Erin, ed., *Campus Use of the Teaching Portfolio: Twenty-Five Profiles*, American Association for Higher Education, 1993.

The following web sites offer additional resources and strategies for creating effective teaching portfolios:

* [Developing a Teaching Portfolio](http://www.washington.edu/teaching/files/2012/12/TeachingPortfolio.pdf), from the Center for Instructional Development and Research at the University of Washington
* [Developing a Teaching Portfolio](http://ucat.osu.edu/teaching_portfolio/teaching_port.html), from the Office of Faculty and TA Development, The Ohio State University
* [The Teaching Portfolio](http://www.crlt.umich.edu/publinks/CRLT_no11.pdf), an Occasional Paper from the University of Michigan's Center for Research on Learning and Teaching
* [What is a Teaching Portfolio?,](http://oic.id.ucsb.edu/teaching-portfolios/what-teaching-portfolio) from the Office of Instructional Consultation, UCSB.
* [Curating A Teaching Portfolio](https://facultyinnovate.utexas.edu/teaching-portfolio), from the Center for Teaching Effectiveness at the University of Texas-Austin
* [The Teaching Portfolio](http://www.duq.edu/about/centers-and-institutes/center-for-teaching-excellence/academic-careers/landing-an-academic-job/teaching-portfolio), from the Center for Teaching Excellence at Duquesne University
* [Teaching Portfolio Handbook](http://Brown-Teaching-Portfolio-Handbook), from Brown University
* ["The Teaching Portfolio,"](http://podnetwork.org/content/uploads/V3-N2-Annis.pdf) an article published by the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network in Higher Education

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