

STARTING YOUR TEACHING PORTFOLIO

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WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

If teaching is part of your future professional life, there is no time better than now to start a teaching portfolio that documents your teaching experiences and the improvements you make. In this workshop we will:

- discuss what a teaching portfolio is and
- get started developing a teaching philosophy statement and considering ways of documenting your work as an instructor.

TEACHING PORTFOLIO BASICS

What is a teaching portfolio?

A teaching portfolio (or dossier) is a collection of materials that represent your teaching and your students' learning. Portfolios are structured deliberately to highlight particular aspects of teaching and learning – they are not exhaustive collections of teaching artifacts and memorabilia. Ideally, a portfolio describes and documents your approach to teaching by combining reflective descriptions with evidence of specific instructional strategies and measures of effectiveness in a way that represents your teaching's intellectual substance and complexity.

How are teaching portfolios useful?

As a "product" for decisions (evaluative, summative):

- to communicate your teaching to potential employer
- to communicate your teaching to students, colleagues, community

As a "process" for development (formative, reflective):

- to record your teaching experiences over time
- to provide themes and evidence for your evaluative portfolio

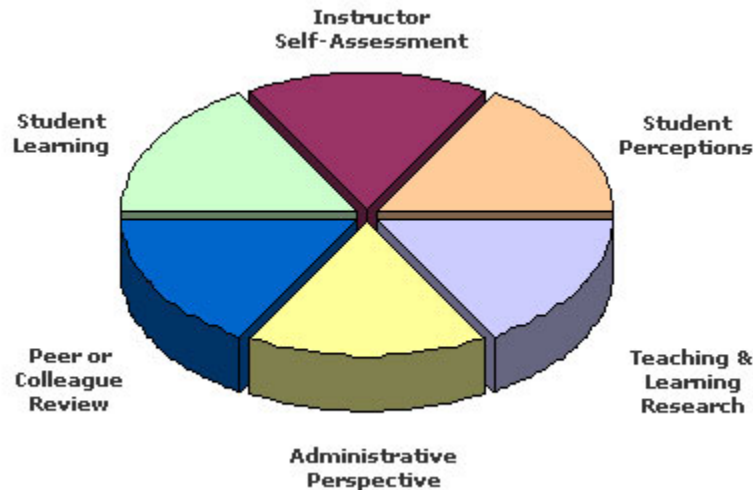
What goes into a teaching portfolio?

Common elements include:

- Overview of teaching experience and responsibilities
- Statement of teaching philosophy
- Description of teaching methods and strategies
- Discussion of teaching goals: short- and long-term
- Examples of efforts to improve teaching (e.g., teaching workshops attended, experiments in pedagogy and methodology, observations of others' teaching)
- Common appendices
 - Course materials (e.g., syllabi, assignments, activities, handouts, lecture outlines)
 - Examples of student work
 - Student ratings and written comments from course evaluations
 - Peer and supervisor reviews

REPRESENTING YOUR TEACHING

A complex activity like teaching is understood best when it is viewed from more than one perspective. This pie chart identifies various sources of information you might draw on as you construct a teaching portfolio.



STATEMENT OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

There are many ways to structure a teaching statement, but effective statements generally combine elements that are descriptive, analytical, and empirical.

Questions to consider:

- Why do you teach? Or why do you teach your specific subject?
- What are your goals as a teacher? What do you want students to learn from your classes?
- What are some specific examples of how you encourage this type of learning?
- What particular challenges to your students face?
- What particular strategies do you use in your classroom to help students overcome those challenges?
- How do you address issues of diversity in the classroom?
- How do you use technology in your teaching?
- How have you helped people in other learning situations (e.g., tutoring, advising, mentoring a new colleague, coaching, leading a project team, working with patients or clients, etc.)? How are teaching and learning in these situations similar to classroom interaction and how are they different?

Tips for effective statements:

- Show your personality. Consider the impression you want to make on your readers. What kind of a teacher are you (e.g., enthusiastic, dedicated, reflective, student-oriented, etc.)?
- Provide specific examples as evidence for general statements.
- If you quote scholarship or drop names, be thoughtful about how that association might be taken up by readers.
- After you have completed a draft of your own statement, read as many other people's statements as you can get your hands on (particularly those written by teachers in your field).
- Get feedback on your statement from peers, advisors, the Koehler Center, etc.

PRESENTING SUPPORTING MATERIALS

What is considered a teaching artifact?

Anything that you have prepared as part of teaching a class or any other teaching activity is considered an artifact of your teaching. Below is a list of some potential artifacts. The specific artifacts you choose to present will depend on your field, the purpose of the portfolio, and the strengths you want to document and demonstrate in your portfolio. The number of artifacts you include in a given portfolio may depend on what you are instructed to present, but it is a great idea to have a range of materials ready to pull from.

- Syllabi
- Assignments
- Lesson plans
- Lecture notes
- Handouts/worksheets
- Quizzes
- Example problems
- Descriptions of activities that students do in your class
- Student work showing your feedback
- Student mid-quarter evaluations
- Student course evaluations
- Feedback from peer and supervisor teaching observations
- Descriptions of your use of office hours as a space for teaching/learning
- Descriptions of your mentoring activities and/or experiences
- Descriptions of curriculum that you have developed
- Teaching awards/honors
- Letters of recommendation or support
- Examples of outreach activities (K-12 outreach, diversity work)
- Articles (newspaper, magazine, journal, etc.) someone has written about your teaching
- Video or audio clips of your teaching
- Scholarly articles you have written about teaching
- Anything else that you have created to help students learn

Why annotate teaching artifacts?

Annotations are essential to hold the portfolio together. They don't need to be elaborate or extensive, but they need to be very clear so that someone who is looking at your portfolio for the first time will understand what is important about each example you have included.

For each artifact, consider the following questions to help you get started describing what the artifact is, how you used it, and how it reflects your teaching.

- What did I want students to learn?
- How did it go (and how do I know how it went)?
- What would I do differently next time?

NOTE: If you have borrowed or adapted elements of your materials from books, websites, another teacher's materials, etc., it is good practice to provide a citation of the source in your annotation.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- “How to Write a Statement of Teaching Philosophy” from The Chronicle of Higher Ed:
<http://chronicle.com/jobs/2003/03/2003032702c.htm>
- Cornell University Teaching Evaluation Handbook (Third Edition, 1997): Chapter II - The Teaching Portfolio: A Model for Documenting Teaching and Its Improvement:
<http://www.cte.cornell.edu/resources/teh/ch2.html>
- Ohio State University has a website on developing a teaching portfolio that includes examples from scholars in a range of disciplines: <http://ftad.osu.edu/portfolio>
- UC Santa Barbara’s Office of Instructional Consultation site includes a “Teaching Portfolios” section with links to other online resources: <http://www.oic.id.ucsb.edu/TA/index.html>
- University of Washington’s Center for Instructional Development and Research teaching portfolio resources: <http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/PortfolioTools.htm>

GETTING STARTED ON A TEACHING STATEMENT

Choose either A or B, and take about five minutes to think through the questions under Part 1. Then join one or two partners and move on to Parts 2 and 3.

A

(based on your experience as a teacher)

1. Think about one activity that you used in class recently, and answer the following questions:
 - *What did I want students to learn from the activity?*
 - *How did the activity work? (And how do I know how it worked?)*
 - *What worked well? Why?*
 - *What would I change next time? Why?*

2. Discuss your reflections on this activity with a partner.

3. How has reflecting on these questions helped you start thinking about the process of developing a teaching portfolio?

B

(based on your experience as a learner)

1. As a way to begin putting a statement of your teaching philosophy into words, answer the following questions:
 - *When you were a new student in your field, what first helped you learn it?*
 - *How do you want students to think about learning in your course?*
 - *What barriers might keep students from thinking about learning in this way?*
 - *What could you do to help students overcome those barriers?*

2. Discuss your reflections on this activity with a partner.

3. How has reflecting on these questions helped you start thinking about putting your philosophy of teaching into words?

GETTING STARTED COLLECTING SUPPORTING MATERIALS

- **Keywords:** What are some keywords or phrases that characterize your teaching approach/philosophy? What types of artifacts would nicely show off these characteristics?
- **Perspectives:** Going back to the pie chart of perspectives on your teaching, try to think of at least one type of artifact for each perspective.