Developing your Teaching Portfolio

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Why spotlight teaching?

- Teaching is a significant part of your contribution to the university and your workload
- Teaching success is evidence of your participation in the profession
The teaching portfolio:
- Describes your teaching to a hiring committee
- Contains examples of your work
- Allows you to reflect on your teaching
- Might help you get a better teaching job
- Will prepare you for the interview
How important to the hiring process are the following application items for new faculty positions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Most important</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum vitae (CV)</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of research interests</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching philosophy</strong></td>
<td><strong>36%</strong></td>
<td><strong>44%</strong></td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Sample</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>12%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter(s) of Recommendation</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>24%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching Assistant experience</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor experience</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructor experience</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence of teaching effectiveness</strong></td>
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<td><strong>36%</strong></td>
<td>8%</td>
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<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job talk</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
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<td>37.5%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching demonstration</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
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<td>Phone interview</td>
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<td>8.3%</td>
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<td>29.2%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
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<td>Campus interview</td>
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<td>8%</td>
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<td>12%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

How important is it?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of Portfolio Development</th>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>Stage 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>write</td>
<td>refine with practice</td>
<td>articulate</td>
<td>share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from Students</td>
<td>course evaluations</td>
<td>detailed analysis</td>
<td>habits of formative evaluation</td>
<td>long-term follow-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from Peers</td>
<td>classroom visits</td>
<td>syllabi review and dialogue</td>
<td>letters</td>
<td>collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>self-analysis</td>
<td>shaping goals</td>
<td>synthesis with research and service</td>
<td>distillation of best practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Feedback</td>
<td>course materials</td>
<td>collect products of teaching</td>
<td>analyze products of teaching</td>
<td>course portfolios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>experimentation, workshops</td>
<td>habits of development</td>
<td>leadership, publications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>assemble basics</td>
<td>robustness and depth of evidence; professional development</td>
<td>patterns of behaviour</td>
<td>sharing with junior peers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Doug Allchin, Center for Effective Teaching and Learning, University of Texas at El Paso)
Start collecting materials for your portfolio as soon as you start teaching, like:

- syllabi, exams, assignments, in-class exercises, labs, handouts, study guides and notes, as well as special examples of students’ work. Also save informal and formal student feedback. In other words – save everything!

- Keep notes – include insights and observations for each day’s class (or at least the memorable classes).

- Keep a list of highlights – at the end of term, write down notes or memories.
Arrange for a class observation

- By a colleague, someone you trust/respect in the department or the EDC.

- You will gain incredible feedback for your own teaching

- At the very least, the letter of recommendation from a colleague will contain specific references to your teaching.
There is no standard format, but they tend to take roughly the same form:

- Table of contents
- One- to two-page statement of teaching philosophy
- The meat of the portfolio, arranged by
  - Course
  - Type of material (student feedback, assignments...)
  - Theme (for example, critical thinking)
  - ...
- Appendices – includes things that don’t easily fit in with the rest of the portfolio
Teaching portfolios vary according to purpose, audience, need...

Generally, the body of the portfolio is 5-8 pages long.

The appendices follow the body and make up an additional 8-15 pages.

Canadian Association of University Teachers – Teaching Dossier Guide
Constructing the Portfolio

• ‘the evidence’ - Organization or format is up to you, but the important thing is that the portfolio be filled with things that you’ve created, or that speak to you as a teacher.

• Created:
  ◦ Assignments
  ◦ Tests or test questions
  ◦ Paper topics
  ◦ In-class exercises
  ◦ Handouts
  ◦ Review sheets
  ◦ Comments on student papers
  ◦ Syllabi that you have taught
  ◦ Feedback forms
  ◦ Labs
  ◦ Study sheets
• Speak:
  ◦ Students’ evaluations
  ◦ Comments from faculty members
  ◦ Comments from consultants, peers, or anyone who has seen you teach
  ◦ Evidence of participation in teaching improvement activities
  ◦ Awards

• Be selective in what you include in the portfolio – use only the most significant evidence in each category
• Including too much material

• Using raw material (especially with no explanation)
• Key things to consider in preparing an effective portfolio
  ◦ What you teach
  ◦ How you teach
  ◦ Changes in your teaching and courses
  ◦ Rigor in your academic standards
  ◦ Student impressions of your teaching and their learning
  ◦ Your efforts at developing your teaching skills
  ◦ Assessment of your teaching by colleagues
• Evidence of course planning:
  ◦ Course titles, numbers, credits, enrollments, descriptions
    • Syllabi, assignments, exams, lesson plans...
• Evaluations and Feedback:
  ◦ Classroom observation evaluations (peer/mentor...)
  ◦ Student evaluations
• Products of good teaching:
  • Assignments and graded work, journals, exams (along with your comments about the grading)
  • Students’ test scores – perhaps pre- and post-scores to demonstrate improved performance

Materials for Inclusion
Materials for Inclusion

- Evidence of Professional Development
  - Documentation of workshop attendance
  - Documentation of giving paper/workshop at a professional conference
  - Contributions to a professional journal on teaching
  - Responses to journal articles on pedagogy
  - Contributions to newsletters (ex. Faculty Wave or TA Talk)
  - Video-taped teaching practice

- Evidence of Teaching Excellence
  - Awards, recognition, notes/thank-you letters from students
Now that you’ve compiled all this evidence, you must reflect. This reflection will help you:

- develop a strategy for representing yourself as a professional
- develop your teaching philosophy statement
- prepare for the interview process
- write persuasive letters of introduction
- Prepare for the application process and later for tenure/promotion review
A brief reflective essay concerning one's understanding about how students learn, how instruction can best assist that learning, and actions that you take to enact such instruction. It may also include the following:

- your teaching goals
- your learning goals for students
- areas in which you would like to further improve your teaching abilities

(Chism, 1998)
Teaching Philosophy Statement

• Should show:
  ◦ You’ve thought about teaching
  ◦ You can apply what you’ve learned in your research and your teaching to a broad range of classroom environments and student populations
  ◦ You’ve taught successfully
  ◦ You continue to reflect upon your teaching skills
• Introduction to your teaching portfolio thus setting the stage for the reader of that portfolio

• A means to professional growth in that it requires you to give examples of how you enact your philosophy, thus requiring you to consider the degree to which your teaching is congruent with your beliefs.

**Purpose of Teaching Philosophy Statement**
• Format: first-person, narrative form, present tense

• Use common terms rather than highly technical language

• Metaphors

Teaching Philosophy Statement
- **Containers**: Knowledge as substance and the instructor as a container filled with content and facts. The student is perceived as a vessel wanting to be filled up. (p. 35)

- **Journey-Guide**: Knowledge is perceived as a perspective on the horizon. The teacher guides students on their journey. Students need to follow a course, must overcome obstacles and hurdles, .... they will come to the end of their journey. (p.35)

- **Master-Disciple**: Knowledge is a skill or habit to be learned. The instructor trains students and the students ideally do what they are told without questioning the master. (p.35)

- Other metaphors:
  - Coach
  - Gardener
  - Director of a play
  - General leading troops into battle
  - Midwife
  - Swiss army knife
  - Evangelist
  - Rabbi
  - Entertainer
  - Choreographer
  - Tour bus driver with passengers who keep their window curtain closed
How to begin...

- Should have a goal (or several goals) depending on its purpose
- More than one depending on the audience...
- Disciplinary cultures and subcultures
• People will be able to “see” you in the classroom
  ◦ Examples, anecdotes, etc...

• Memorable
  ◦ Stay away from clichés
  ◦ Be honest

How will I know if it’s good?
• Ask colleague, supervisor or mentor to go through it for you for feedback

• The EDC – workshops and individual consultations (just contact us!) – edc@carleton.ca

• Last bits of advice:
  ◦ It’s never too early to begin a teaching portfolio...and save everything!