

A Guide to the Teaching Portfolio

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Academic Programs in College Teaching

The UNH Graduate School

in partnership with

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Introduction

*"One roadblock to change has been that it was more difficult to document teaching than to compile evidence for scholarly accomplishments. Teaching portfolios appear to offer a mechanism for providing such documentation."
(Christopher K. Knapper, "The Origins of Teaching Portfolios," 1995)*

This handbook is offered as a general guide for anyone wanting to organize and develop a teaching portfolio. While its primary audience consists of doctoral students fulfilling the College Teaching Praxis requirement (GRAD 990) for either the Cognate or the Master of Science for Teachers, it will also be of help to:

- * junior faculty wanting to document their teaching activities in anticipation of tenure review;
- * full-time faculty interested in using a portfolio to reflect on and improve their teaching, and/or in anticipation of promotion review;
- * adjunct faculty interested in the portfolio process as a means of professional development and/or career advancement

We begin with a short description of the portfolio, including its purposes and functions. We then go on to discuss some portfolio features that are required specifically for the completion of the Praxis, as well as some other materials you might choose to include. We also provide a sample table of contents to demonstrate the types of things many portfolios include in an order that makes items readily accessible to anyone reading the document.

There is an enormous amount of information and advice about portfolios available in print and on the World Wide Web. Our list of resources provides a representative sample of useful sources. Many of these sites provide examples of portfolios prepared by experienced faculty. While these are intended to give you ideas about how to go about the process, please note that the UNH portfolio represents a step beyond the traditional portfolio models you will find in these readings. The portfolio you produce for Grad 990 will be markedly different from any of them.

We hope this handbook furnishes you with a useful general framework for building a successful portfolio. As you will see in the following pages, a portfolio can be as individual as the person assembling it. The title and signature pages are consistent with UNH standards for thesis and dissertation formatting, and we recommend some other conventions of format and organization. More important, we also stipulate that the portfolio must be built around evidence of a set of "core competencies" (see section below), which will become the organizing principle behind your portfolio.

Please do not view this handbook as a set of "rules." Rather, see it as a set of guidelines and suggestions to help you get started. Rigorous stylistic and content constraints are not demanded. How you use these guidelines will be governed by your individual needs, talents, and objectives, as well as by the guidance and direction of your Teaching Committee.

What is a teaching portfolio and what purpose does it serve?

Typically, the teaching portfolio is a relatively short collection of materials selected to document, summarize, and highlight one's growth, experiences and strengths as a teacher. For those new to

the academic job market, it can help set them apart from other candidates. For permanent faculty, it provides concrete evidence of teaching effectiveness to offer promotion and tenure committees. For adjunct faculty--and for anyone else who teaches--it can become part of a formal process for reflecting on one's practice and developing one's strengths as a teacher.

While you can certainly provide evidence of teaching experience through such traditional means as the "classes taught" list in your *C.V.*, the portfolio presents this information in a fuller, more useful, more compelling manner. Not only can you note *that* you have taught, you can also show *how* you teach and *why* you teach as you do.

Because teaching is such a complex, multi-dimensional activity, the portfolio has as a primary strength the ability to integrate information from several areas, rather than relying on a single measure. The portfolio allows teaching and learning to be considered in their appropriate context--a context that changes by field and discipline and/or class size and level. And because teaching is such a creative activity, with no two individuals teaching alike, no two portfolios will look alike. Rather, each one mirrors the unique attributes and styles of the person who created it. Just as teaching approaches vary, student learning styles vary as well. While faculty must teach in accordance with expectations set within a discipline and shaped by the curricular objectives of a specific course, knowledge of the best professional practices based upon available scholarship in the field of college teaching should foster teaching that best facilitates student learning. To this end, we expect that you will use the teaching portfolio to highlight and explain your specific strategies and approaches to prioritizing, enhancing, and assessing the student learning that results from your teaching.

The term "portfolio" is not used loosely. An effective teaching portfolio is neither a "file cabinet" nor a "highlights film," but rather a thematic collection of materials selected to publicly define your teaching and to demonstrate the effectiveness of your approaches and the quality of your outcomes. Think of your teaching portfolio as an artist or designer thinks of his or her "book": as a collection of your best work presented systematically and thoughtfully for your own self-improvement and for others to learn about your solutions to the problem of effective teaching in the contemporary college or university.

"Teaching effectiveness" and "effective teaching"

The words fit so naturally, the phrases come so easily--perhaps too naturally, too easily to promote clear thinking about what they mean. The fact is, throughout your teaching career you will be asking yourself the question (and in different ways and for different reasons others will be asking it of you): "In what ways am I (or are you) an effective teacher?" How you answer that question, and how others answer it about you, depends, of course, upon the meaning of "effective" teaching. One important contribution of the portfolio movement to the ongoing conversation about college teaching is that it forces members of the profession to address that question *a priori*. In addition, individuals benefit from the portfolio-building process as it forces them to make explicit their own ways of answering the question. Because the implied thesis of every teaching portfolio is "I am an effective teacher," everyone building a portfolio should be addressing the question of what that means.

What should be included in a teaching portfolio?

As stated earlier, no hard and fast rules govern what you may or may not include. However, we do know that there is a consensus

among experts in the field of college teaching as to the professional values and behaviors most directly associated with "best practice." Thus, for those submitting a portfolio as one of the requirements for either the Cognate or M.S.T. in the UNH Program in College Teaching, the portfolio must demonstrate a set of specific competencies which reflect those professional values. These "core competencies," which are outlined and discussed below, will be demonstrated by such items as the following:

- * a statement of philosophy of teaching and learning
- * description of methods used to assess student learning
- * statement of teaching competency
- * course syllabi
- * analysis of samples of student work related to course objectives
- * analysis of student evaluations
- * statement of teaching goals

Best practice and core competencies

"What we have looked for, but not seen, in advice for developing portfolios is advice on how to go about a concurrent process to understand and express what constitutes excellent teaching in the academic unit in a way that reflects actual teaching practice." (Laurie Richlin, "A Different View on Developing Teaching Portfolios, " 1995)

The Program in College Teaching at UNH rests upon a foundation of professional values which are directly linked with current scholarship on effective teaching and which inform our curriculum. We consider the following professional values vital to effective teaching and believe they are manifest in the skills of those teachers who are most successful in ensuring student learning:

- * having an understanding of how students learn
- * having a concern for students' intellectual development

- * using research on teaching in one's discipline
- * wanting to work with and learn from colleagues
- * reflecting continually on one's own professional practice
- * being aware of the importance of "student culture" in the classroom

The teaching portfolio represents a dual opportunity. It allows you to articulate the beliefs and values you hold about teaching, and to demonstrate your mastery of the competencies that make up your "best practice." While some studies of effective teaching list as many as twenty-seven "competencies required for good teachers" (Smith and Simpson, 1995), we believe a teaching portfolio should be centered around a more focused set of "core competencies."

To this end, your portfolio should provide evidence that in your teaching you can effectively accomplish the following:

1. Articulate appropriate course goals and objectives.

Note: Course goals and objectives should be a) tied to specific learning outcomes consistent with existing scholarship about how students learn; and b) explained clearly to students - perhaps in a syllabus - to allow them to use these goals and objectives to assess their own progress and learning.

2. Organize and design courses with these goals and objectives in mind.

Note: This includes but is not limited to: designing formal assignments and examinations appropriate to the learning goals/outcomes of the course; using multiple approaches to instruction, such as multimedia technologies, computer-based materials, and writing to enhance students' understanding of course

material; designing and applying appropriate assessment techniques to insure student learning by getting useful feedback from them.

3. Present material effectively and communicate with students in a variety of settings, including large classes and small groups.

Note: Effective communication with students has two dimensions that can be addressed in the portfolio: stimulating students' interest in and engagement with the course material by making it relevant to their lives; and facilitating students' participation in classroom activities and interactions that evoke their interest and appropriately challenge them.

4. Provide feedback to students to give them clear messages about their performance in ways that will help them improve before the semester is over.

Note: Your portfolio should show that you: a) know how to give students frequent, timely, and constructive feedback; and b) use fair and consistent grading methods, with criteria that are clearly conveyed to students.

5. Employ varied teaching methods that appeal to the various learning styles and "intelligences" of today's diverse student population.

Note: Examples include lecturing to convey information and concepts clearly, using forms of group learning and collaborative learning, and running effective discussions. Other examples

include introducing service learning and using cases when appropriate to the discipline and to the course content.

6. Apply your knowledge of undergraduate student culture to specific features of your course design.

Note: Just as learning styles shape what goes on in the classroom, so too do various aspects of the culture of the larger campus. For instance, research tells us that the values of students' peer groups are the single most important determinant of educational outcomes. Therefore, truly effective courses incorporate approaches that help establish appropriate peer group values and behaviors related to course objectives, and then connect these values to intended learning objectives. Demonstration of this competency might include an assessment of your course design and teaching approaches in light of cultural norms associated with undergraduates at your institution.

7. Incorporate into your teaching the latest scholarship in your field or discipline.

Note: Although you may think this is a given, it should nonetheless be made explicit by means of a reflective statement in which you highlight pertinent aspects of a course syllabus or classroom activities.

Sample table of contents

How to best demonstrate these competencies in the portfolio will vary from individual to individual, and from discipline to discipline. What is important is that you consciously set out to do

so, both in the selection of materials to include, and in your explanations of why and how those materials were used. The following sample table of contents offers an idea of the kinds of materials you might use to accomplish this end.

- Title Page
- Table of Contents
- Curriculum Vitae
- Statement of Teaching Philosophy
- Statement of Teaching Competency
- Teaching Goals

- Appendix 1--Overview of a course you've taught.
 - Course description
 - Syllabus
 - Rationale for the course
 - Methods used to assess student learning
 - Examples of assignments, examinations, and/or student work
 - Examples of innovative teaching methods used
 - Connection between course design and your philosophy of teaching
 - Your response to student evaluations
 - Your evaluation of the course

- Appendix 2 - Overview of a second course you've taught (repeat format of Appendix 1)

- Appendix 3 - Teaching-related activities.

What is a statement of teaching philosophy?

As the attached paper by Nancy Chism states, it is a short (1-2 pages), concise and cogent expression of your beliefs, attitudes, and values regarding teaching and learning. Your statement should include commentary on your goals for your students and how you see yourself helping advance those goals. Since much of the actual content of the portfolio will be a logical extension and concrete demonstration of the principles you present in this statement, *keep in mind that what you say here must be supported by materials you choose for inclusion later on*. One expert even advocates writing the statement of philosophy after the materials have been chosen (Richlin, 1995). However, to keep the search for materials focused it might be best to see the development of the portfolio as a reflexive as well as a reflective process. This means you will probably re-write your philosophy of teaching statement a number of times as you fill in other sections of the portfolio. Just as your statement will help you decide what to include elsewhere, some of those choices will help you rethink and refine how you articulate your approach to teaching. Think of the statement as an abstract to a scholarly article. Writing the abstract first is a way of focusing the main points of the paper, even though you know that after you write the paper you'll have to go back and rewrite the abstract.

The important thing to remember is that your strengths as a teacher are really an expression of your beliefs regarding the teaching profession, most of which can be inferred from the materials you choose to document your classroom approaches. This part of the portfolio forces you to make those values explicit--to yourself as well as to others.

Given that the portfolio's implied "thesis" is that "I am an effective teacher," the teaching philosophy statement is a good place to begin a career-long search for an answer to an important question

(one that you someday may have to answer as part of a tenure review process): what do you think constitutes effective teaching, a) in general; and b) in your discipline?

Statement of teaching competency

"With teaching portfolios constructed as arguments, faculty members who may resist assembling a portfolio from a potentially bewildering array of items will be more inclined to make a case for their teaching because every college teacher knows how to construct an argument--and knows the value of building a case and having it evaluated by others." (Lang and Bain, "Recasting the Teaching Portfolio," 1997)

This section serves as a bridge between your teaching philosophy statement and the syllabi and other course-related teaching materials you provide in the appendices. Here you solidify your argument that you have attained each of the seven "core competencies," making direct reference to the items in the appendices which illustrate that attainment. The objective is to provide a context for anyone examining the materials you are using as evidence. In a sense you are answering the unspoken question: What does this syllabus, this assignment, this example of student work, etc. provide evidence of? The answer is your way of linking your stated beliefs about how students learn (teaching philosophy) and your own practice.

One of the hallmarks of an effective teacher is the ability to reflect upon his/her classroom experiences--both positive and negative--and to grow from those experiences. This section shows that you have done so. In essence it's a "lessons learned" statement with an eye to using those lessons as a means of self-improvement. In this section you can be open about approaches you have tried without complete success; you can admit that you, like all teachers, have run up against problems you couldn't solve the first time around. Indicating ways in which you have responded to challenging

situations shows you to be a responsible teacher, one who has learned from mistakes to become a better teacher.

Teaching goals

Here you can discuss the specific areas and ways in which you would like to improve your teaching. Keep your "goals" statement limited to two or three goals, each of which you can address in a single paragraph. Each goal should be accompanied by a plan, i.e., specific ways of achieving the particular goal.

Appendices

A rule of thumb is that nothing speaks for itself. Your materials "speak" through the selection process, through the contextualizing discussions in previous sections, and through the "transparent" organization of the portfolio. For example, including student evaluations makes sense if you provide your own evaluative statement of those student evaluations. So too, sample assignments or examples of student work should be linked directly to a statement about how the assignment enhances or assesses understanding, or what the student work tells us about that student's learning in your course. If you include graded student papers, you might choose one very good paper and one poor one, both annotated to show why you judged them as you did.

Keep in mind that there should be a three-way link from philosophy to design to execution. A well-constructed portfolio makes the linkage clear with each of the materials chosen for inclusion.

Other items

If there are other items you think might help show your strengths or record your growth as a teacher, consider an appendix devoted to such "teaching related activities" as the following:

- seminars, conferences, etc, regarding college teaching
- descriptions of efforts to improve your teaching
- evidence of work with individual students, such as advising, or research guidance
- materials related to courses not overviewed in prior appendices
- video footage from actual classes, labs, or discussion groups

The portfolio and evaluation: formative or summative?

At different points in your career a teaching portfolio will serve different purposes. For someone preparing for tenure or promotion review, or being considered for a teaching award, the portfolio can be part of a "summative" evaluation process. As such, it is an essentially retrospective process, the intent of which is to document your teaching achievements. While your professional development is never complete, at this point in your career you'll be able to offer evidence of where your professional journey has taken you to date, and what you have accomplished along the way.

As a graduate student you should see your teaching portfolio as part of a more developmental, "formative" process. In many ways the portfolio can be seen as a map of where you intend to go in your teaching career, with the emphasis, of course, on your demonstrable ability to get where you want to go.

The role of your teaching committee

A requirement of GRAD 990 is that your teaching be supervised and evaluated by a faculty teaching committee. This committee consists of three faculty members-- two from your field or discipline and one appointed by the Center for Teaching Excellence. You should coordinate the recruitment and selection process with the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence.

The Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence will review an initial draft of your teaching portfolio, after which your teaching committee will go over it, making suggestions for improvements and expansions. Often one or more members of the committee will ask to visit a class and furnish a formal assessment, which you may or may not choose to include in your portfolio.

Conclusion

Over the past several years the Center for Teaching Excellence and the Graduate faculty have helped many graduate students develop teaching portfolios as demonstrations of their teaching abilities. Along the way we have learned some valuable lessons. Among them are the following generalizations:

* **Effective teaching portfolios are "reader friendly"**

Simply put, keep your writing clear, direct, and as free of jargon as possible. Whatever organizing principles you use, be sure to make the organization clear to your audience.

* **Effective teaching portfolios contextualize everything**

Side notes or introductory statements help readers understand what they are reading and why they are reading it. Raw data should never be presented; instead everything should be summarized and

contextualized. The reader should be given conclusions to consider.

* **Effective portfolios demonstrate teaching-readiness and job-readiness**

Faculty (including department chairs) want peers who can contribute upon appointment to the teaching mission of their academic departments. Experience is still considered the best teacher. Without it you are still untried and untested; with it you can demonstrate your ability to contribute immediately upon appointment and to enhance your contributions over a career. Therefore it is important that the portfolio appropriately document how you have used your Praxis to demonstrate to potential faculty colleagues your readiness to assist their department with its teaching mission.

Competition for faculty positions remains strong in most fields and disciplines. Faculty search committees frequently must sift through many candidates who are interested, to find those that could truly contribute to their department. It is essential that your portfolio make it easy for potential faculty peers to glean from your teaching portfolio a strong sense of who you are as a teacher, as well as evidence of your accomplishments.

As a side note, it is important to remember that a curriculum vitae, a teaching portfolio, and other products of your graduate education can at best help you get face-to-face interviews. A successful candidate for a faculty position is one who has convinced future faculty colleagues that he or she is the best choice for a specific position. In other words, while an effective teaching portfolio will help you get interviews, after that it is your responsibility to demonstrate to a search committee that you (and your unique qualifications) are their best option.

* **Effective teaching portfolios are both biographical and thematic**

Everyone expects that you will continue to mature as a teacher. That is not the point of the portfolio. Instead, the portfolio presents your argument that your education and professional experience have prepared you to begin your formal career. Above all else it communicates who you are as a teacher and illustrates to your committee (and potential colleagues) the special skills and insights you bring to the academic profession.

Resources

Bernstein, Daniel. 1998. "Putting the Focus on Student Learning." In The Course Portfolio, ed. Pat Hutchings, 1998. Washington D.C., American Association for Higher Education: 77-83.

Edgerton, Russell, Patricia Hutchings, and Kathleen Quinlan. 1992. The Teaching Portfolio: Capturing the Scholarship in Teaching. Washington D.C.: American Association for Higher Education.

Hutchings, Pat. 1998. "How to Develop a Course Portfolio." In The Course Portfolio, ed. Pat Hutchings. 1998. Washington D.C.: American Association for Higher Education: 47-55.

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Millis, Barbara J. 1991. "Putting the Teaching Portfolio in Context." To Improve the Academy 10: 215-229.

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Richlin, Laurie. 1995. "A Different View on Teaching Portfolios: Ensuring Safety While Honoring Practice." Journal on Excellence in Teaching 6, (1): 161-78.

Seldin, Peter, Linda Annis and John Zubizarreta. 1995. "Answers to Common Questions About the Teaching Portfolio." Journal on Excellence in College Teaching 6 (1): 57-64.

Seldin, Peter. 1993. Successful Use of Teaching Portfolios. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing.

Seldin, Peter. 1997. The Teaching Portfolio: A Practical Guide to Improved Performance and Promotion/Tenure Decisions, 2 nd ed., Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing.

Seldin, Peter. 2000. "Teaching Portfolios: A Positive Appraisal." ACADEME, January-February 2000: 36-44.

Smith, K.S. and R.D. Simpson. 1995. "Validating Teaching Competencies for Faculty Members in Higher Education: A National Study Using the Delphi Method." Innovative Higher Education 19:223-34.

Web Sites about Teaching Portfolios

- University of Texas at Austin
- <http://www.utexas.edu/academic/cte/teachfolio.html>

- University of Washington -
<http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/TeachingPortfolioIntro.html>

- Washington State University -
<http://www.wsu.edu/provost/teaching.htm>

Appendix A

Sample title page for student teaching portfolios

Teaching Portfolio

For

Anne Goode Candidate

B.A., State College, 1994

M.A., Big University, 1996

Ph.D., Bigger University, 2001

Sample signature/approval page for student teaching portfolios

This portfolio has been prepared under the guidance of, and approved by:

Chair, Teaching Committee

Faculty Name:

Title:

Faculty Name:

Title:

Faculty Name:

Title:

Date

Appendix B

Developing a Philosophy of Teaching Statement
by Nancy Van Note Chism
The Ohio State University

from *Essays on Teaching Excellence:
Toward the Best in the Academy*,
Vol. 9, No. 3, 1997-1998.

When asked to write a statement on their philosophy of teaching, many college teachers react in the same way as professionals, athletes, or artists might if asked to articulate their goals and how to achieve them: "Why should I spend time writing this down? Why can't I just do it?" For action-oriented individuals, the request to write down one's philosophy is not only mildly irritating, but causes some anxiety about where to begin. Just what is meant by a philosophy of teaching statement anyway?

In the current academic climate it is likely that most faculty will be asked for such a statement at some point during their careers. The emphasis on portfolios for personnel decision making, new commitment by institutions to the teaching mission, and the tight academic job market have stimulated more requests of college teachers to articulate their philosophies. At many colleges and universities the philosophy of teaching statement is becoming a regular part of the dossier for promotion and tenure and the faculty candidate application package. Such statements are often requested of nominees for teaching awards or applicants for funds for innovative educational projects.

Besides fulfilling requirements, statements of teaching philosophy can be used to stimulate reflection on teaching. The act of taking time to consider one's goals, actions, and vision provides an opportunity for development that can be personally and professionally enriching. Reviewing and revising former statements of teaching philosophy can help teachers to reflect on their growth and renew their dedication to the goals and values that they hold.

The Format of the Statement

One of the hallmarks of a philosophy of teaching statement is its individuality. However, some general format guidelines can be suggested:

* Most philosophy of teaching statements are brief, one or two pages long at most. For some purposes, an extended description is appropriate, but length should suit the context.

- * Most statements avoid technical terms and favor language and concepts that can be broadly appreciated. If the statement is for specialists, a more technical approach can be used. A general rule is that the statement should be written with the audience in mind.
- * Narrative, first-person approaches are generally appropriate. In some fields, a more creative approach, such as a poem, might be appropriate and valued; but in most, a straightforward, well-organized statement is preferred.
- * The statement should be reflective and personal. What brings a teaching philosophy to life is the extent to which it creates a vivid portrait of a person who is intentional about teaching practices and committed to career.

Components of the Statement

The main components of philosophy of teaching statements are descriptions of how the teachers think learning occurs, how they think they can intervene in this process, what chief goals they have for students, and what actions they take to implement their intentions.

Conceptualization of learning. Interestingly, most college teachers agree that one of their main functions is to facilitate student learning; yet most draw a blank when asked how learning occurs. This is likely due to the fact that their ideas about this are intuitive and based on experiential learning, rather than on a consciously articulated theory. Most have not studied the literature on college student learning and development nor learned a vocabulary to describe their thinking. The task of articulating a conceptualization of learning is therefore difficult.

Many college teachers have approached the work of describing how they think student learning occurs through the use of metaphor. Drawing comparisons with known entities can stimulate thinking, whether or not the metaphor is actually used in the statement. For example, when asked to provide a metaphor, one teacher described student learning in terms of an amoeba. He detailed how the organism relates to its environment in terms of permeable membranes, movement, and the richness of the environment; translating these into the teaching-learning context by drawing comparisons with how students reach out and acquire knowledge and how teachers can provide a rich environment. Grasha (1996) has done extensive exploration of the metaphors that college student and teachers use to describe teaching and learning. An earlier classic that also contains an exploration of metaphors of teaching and learning is Israel Scheffler's *The Language of Education* (1960). Reinsmith (1994) applies the idea of archetypes to teaching. Such works might be consulted for ideas.

A more direct approach is for teachers to describe what they think occurs during a learning episode, based on their observation and experience or based on current literature on teaching and learning. Some useful sources that summarize current notions of learning in a very accessible way are contained in Svinicki (1991), Weinstein & Meyer (1991), and Bruning (1994). Teachers can also summarize what they have observed in their own practice about the different learning styles that students display, the different tempos they

exhibit, the way they react to failure, and the like. Such descriptions can display the richness of experience and the teacher's sensitivity to student learning.

Conceptualization of teaching. Ideas on how teachers can facilitate the learning process follow from the model of student learning that has been described. If metaphors have been used, the teacher role can be an extension of the metaphor. For example, if student learning has been described as the information processing done by a computer, is the teacher the computer technician. the software, the database? If more direct descriptions of student learning have been articulated, what is the role of the teacher with respect to motivation? To content? To feedback and assessment? To challenge and support? How can the teacher respond to different learning styles, help students who are frustrated, accomodate different abilities?

Goals for students. Describing the teacher role entails detailing how the teacher can help students learn, not only a given body of content, but also process skills, such as critical thinking, writing, and problem solving. It also includes one's thoughts on lifelong learning - how teachers can help students to value and nurture their intellectual curiosity, live ethical lives, and have productive careers. For most teachers, it is easier to begin with content goals, such as wanting students to understand certain aerodynamic design principles or the treatment of hypertension. The related process goals, such as engineering problem solving or medical diagnostic skills, might be described next. Finally, career and lifelong goals, such as teamwork, ethics, and social commitment, can be detailed.

Implementation of the philosophy. An extremely important part of a philosophy of teaching statement is the description of how one's concepts about teaching and learning and goals for students are translated into action. For most readers, this part of the statement is the most revealing and the most memorable. It is also generally more pleasurable and less challenging to write. Here, college teachers describe how they conduct classes, mentor students, develop instructional resources, or grade performance. They provide details on what instructional strategies they use on a day-to-day basis. It is in this section that teachers can display their creativity, enthusiasm, and wisdom. They can describe how their No Fault Test System or videotaping technique for promoting group leadership skills implements their notions of how teachers can facilitate learning. They can portray what they want a student to experience in the classes they teach, the labs they oversee, the independent projects they supervise. They can describe their own energy level, the qualities they try to exhibit as a model and coach, the climate they try to establish in the settings in which they teach.

Personal growth plan. For some purposes, including a section on one's personal growth as a teacher is also important in a statement of teaching philosophy. This reflective component can illustrate how one has grown in teaching over the years, what challenges exist at the present, and what long-term goals are projected. In writing this section, it helps to think about how one's concepts as well as actions have changed over time. It might be stimulating to look at old syllabi or instructional resources one has created, asking about implicit assumptions behind these products. Dialogue with colleagues,

comparison of practices with goals, and examination of student or peer feedback on teaching might help with the task of enumerating present questions, puzzles, and challenges. From these, a vision of the teacher one wants to become will emerge. Describing that teacher can be a very effective way to conclude a philosophy of teaching statement.

Examples of Statements

By far the best philosophy of teaching statement examples for most college teachers are those: of peers who teach in similar settings or disciplines. Since statements tend to be tailored to specific contexts, peer examples are thus highly appropriate models. Dialogue with colleagues on these statements can help to stimulate ideas for one's own statement as well.

Other examples are contained in several recent books on teaching portfolios, such as Seldin (1993) and O'Neil & Wright (1993). Reflective books on effective college teaching often contain extensive descriptions of teaching philosophies, such as the chapter on "Developing a Personal Vision of Teaching" in Brookfield's *The Skillful Teacher* (1990) and "Three Teaching Principles" in Louis Schmier's *Random Thoughts* (1995).

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Appendix C

Developing a Teaching Portfolio: A Necessity for the Academic Job Search

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As recently as 1995 I told graduate students that if they had a good teaching portfolio they would be unique and would have an edge in finding a college teaching job. Today I think that you will be at a disadvantage if you don't have one; you need a teaching portfolio to keep up with your competition and meet the expectations of many potential employers. That depends, of course, on where you are searching. Major research universities will be less interested in your teaching materials than will institutions where teaching is the primary mission.

The purpose of this article is to provide suggestions and sources that will help you develop a teaching portfolio. Doing this well will take a significant amount of time and effort. It is not something to do a couple of weeks before a job interview.

What is it?

A teaching portfolio is an organized collection of material that reflects your ideas about teaching and your performance as a teacher. It should show who you are and what you do. As a potential employer I want to see your commitment to teaching and to your students, and the depth of your thought about the craft of teaching. I also want to learn about your style, the content of your courses, and see some evidence of your effectiveness.

What does a teaching portfolio look like?

There is no set format. Each portfolio is unique, and it should be because it represents the characteristics of the individual teacher. Peter Seldin's book, *The Teaching Portfolio*, (Anker Publishing, 1991) includes eight examples. Seldin suggests that the portfolio be 7-9 pages long plus appendices. At the end of this article I present an example of a structure for a portfolio and I will suggest having different versions of your portfolio that vary in length depending on your purpose.

Getting started

It never is too early to begin to develop your teaching portfolio. First, get a container for all your potential portfolio items and put those items in it. Remember that a portfolio is an organized collection of material, so this first step simply involves getting most of that

material in one place. Seldin's book (p, 9-12) has a list of 30 items that you might include.

Second, get a three-ring binder and index tabs. When various items and sections are completed put them in this binder, so you can easily add or remove items. Style matters. Your portfolio should look good, but not flashy, and it should be clearly organized and reader-friendly.

Third, select a teaching mentor. Find someone who is an experienced teacher, who cares about your future as a teacher, and who will give you honest opinions about your teaching. This person may be someone other than your dissertation advisor or clinical supervisor.

Reflecting and Writing

I enjoy helping graduate students and faculty develop their portfolios in structured seminars and workshops. You should take advantage of any opportunities in this area that your university may provide. There are three areas in which you can do some work on your own: describing your teaching background and responsibilities, writing your teaching philosophy, and designing the contents of your portfolio.

Your teaching background and responsibilities

Here you describe your past teaching experiences. This is not a simple listing (put that in your vita), but a story about how you got interested in teaching and what you have done. Two or three paragraphs should be enough.

Then describe your current and recent (past year) teaching responsibilities. Say whether you were an assistant or had full responsibility for the course. Describe important characteristics of the course, e.g., required or elective, class size, freshman or upper level. Was it something you created?

Philosophy of teaching

Most philosophies will say something about your beliefs and values, your idea of teaching excellence or of the ideal teacher, your style, and your view of how people learn. I hesitate to suggest any topics to include because this statement should be your philosophy in both content and style. I usually ask my students, without any instructions, to write their teaching philosophy. Just do it. Having done so, reflect on it, then rewrite it and show it to a peer and to your mentor. Self reflection and the perspectives of others is essential.

Most philosophy statements are not more than two pages long. Write in the first person and use non-technical language. Your statement can use creative forms, e.g., a poem or a story, but consider the reaction of your audience.

You might be tempted to view this task as an exercise in the creation of socially acceptable cliches. Avoid this temptation; here is where you can show your commitment to teaching and students. Your excitement and the depth of your thought should be clear; it is difficult to fake these things.

Developing your teaching philosophy is more than an exercise in self reflection. This statement actually can guide your teaching from mundane aspects such as your attendance policy to more significant features such as your course objectives. When you see inconsistencies you either change your teaching or your philosophy. I am certain that you will change both over the course of your career.

Designing the Contents

The design is another feature that makes each portfolio unique. Think carefully about who your audience will be. For example, busy people don't want to read a lot, so you usually want to be concise. Seldin and others recommend a narrative that is 7-9 pages long, with supporting materials in appendices. For example, you would put your syllabus and other materials from your statistics course in an appendix, with discussion of that course in the narrative. The discussion is your rationale for doing what you did, as it relates to your teaching philosophy. Evaluations of your teaching would be in an appendix and the narrative would discuss your strengths, the areas you need to improve, and how you have responded to the evaluation.

I suggest that you create three versions of your portfolio:

- * Complete. This would include all your materials for all courses and other experiences with your commentary, covering a 2-3 year period. The purpose is your own development as a teacher and the audiences are your self, your mentor, and peers.
- * Portable. This is a shorter version: the 5-10 page narrative plus selected appendix material. Take it with you on your job interviews. The purpose is to inform readers of your best work. The audience is potential colleagues and prospective employers.
- * Summary. Two pages that give the essentials of your philosophy and the contents of the portfolio. Send this with your application for a position. The purpose is to attract interest in you as a teacher. At the end of this statement say that you have a complete teaching portfolio.

I will try to respond to your questions, and for more help with your teaching portfolio check out this web site:

<http://www.lgu.ac.uk/deliberations/portfolios/urls.html>

where you will find links to other useful sites. My ideas about the teaching portfolio have been informed by numerous interactions with graduate students and faculty, and by my work with Maria Lynn, Ph.D., at the Saint Louis University Center for Teaching Excellence, and James Groccia, Ph.D., at the University of Missouri Program for Effective Teaching. Jim (grocciaj@missouri.edu) kindly has agreed to add his advice to mine.

I hope I have provided enough information to get you started on a document that will help you on your way to an academic career. Preparing a teaching portfolio is not an easy task. Two years ago I put mine together for the first time. It took longer to do that than it takes to prepare a typical research article for publication. Portfolio workshops last from two to three days and I work with students for several months before their materials are in final form. It will be worth it first of all for your self, but also as a necessity for the academic job market. Go for it!

Example of Structure for Teaching Portfolio,

prepared by James H. Korn, February, 1999.

This is only an example. There are other possible structures. See Peter Seldin's book, *The Teaching Portfolio*, for other examples.

1. Detailed Table of Contents.

The table of contents should be related clearly to the contents of the portfolio. One way to do this is by numbering all pages in the portfolio, as you would in a book. However, this reduces your flexibility in adding new materials later because you would have to re-number everything when you teach a new course. I prefer having the contents relate to index tabs in your binder.

2. Personal information.

- * Summary of your background, development as a teacher, and career goals; a complete vitae would go in an appendix.

- * Description of teaching responsibilities.

- * Philosophy of teaching.

3. Teaching experiences.

For graduate students, some teaching experiences will have been as a lab instructor, discussion section leader, or the like. At this time in your career, treat this experience as if it were a course. For each course provide:

- * Rationale for the course. How does your course design follow from your philosophy? Explain innovative methods and unique assignments. This goes in the narrative.
- * Syllabus and examples of materials (exercises, assignments, etc.)
- * Descriptions of how you measure student learning. Put examples of student performance in an appendix.
- * Course evaluation data, summarized. More complete data may be in an appendix.
- * Your self evaluation of the course. Do this for each course in an appendix, but include an over-all self evaluation in your narrative.

4. Teaching development activities.

This section would include anything you have done to help yourself become a better teacher such as involvement in professional teaching organizations, and attending conferences or workshops on teaching. Provide a description of the activity in the narrative. Some materials might belong in an appendix.

5. Other relevant information.

This might include descriptions of awards you have won, newspaper articles about your teaching, and abstracts of relevant research articles that you published (with complete article in appendix). If you have video tapes of your teaching, describe them and how they can be obtained.