Developing a Teaching Portfolio

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Common questions of graduate students

- What is a teaching portfolio?
- Why do I need one?
- What do I include?
- How do I get evaluations of my teaching?
- What is my approach to teaching?
Session Overview

• Define the teaching portfolio
• Explore why we use teaching portfolios
• Examine organization of the teaching portfolio (McGill as an example)
• Begin articulating your teaching philosophy
• Explore ways of obtaining evidence of and documenting teaching effectiveness

• Resources
• Questions
• Evaluate workshop

What is a teaching portfolio?

• A concise compilation of selected information that systematically documents the effectiveness as well as the scope, complexity, and individuality of an instructor’s teaching.

• It reflects the progression of an instructor’s teaching.

• It is formatted and organized so that this progression is obvious to the reader.
Who will read your teaching portfolio?

- Search and hiring committees
- Reappointment, promotion and tenure committees
- Awards committees

General Guidelines

A. Teaching portfolio (5-10 pages)
   1) Teaching philosophy/statement
   2) Responsibilities
   3) Evidence of effectiveness
   4) Development activities

B. Appendices (30 pages maximum)

### Purpose of your teaching statement:

- Clarifies your own thinking
- Helps uncover [tacit] beliefs about teaching
- Provides your rationale for decisions and actions
- Communicates your identity and development as a teacher

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### Table of Contents

- Teaching Philosophy
- Teaching Responsibilities
- Teaching Materials
- Teaching Methods
- Innovative Teaching Practices
- Assessment of Teaching Effectiveness
- Awards
- Goals

### Appendices

- A: Sample Course Syllabi
- B: Course Handouts
- C: Summary of Student Evaluations
- D: Comments concerning supervision of Graduate Students
- E: Statements from Peers on Teaching Effectiveness

Excerpts from graduate students’ teaching philosophies

I never particularly loved school, but I loved to learn. That is how I teach: to cater to those students who enjoy learning. For my students who do not love to learn, I try to ease the process by giving them in-class and web resources to pique their interest and enhance course material. (Patti Davis, Psychology) http://www.cti.uga.edu/teach_asst/ta_mentors/philosophy/2008phil/Patti%20Davis/index.html

One of my main goals in teaching is to ensure that this groundwork is formed within each student so there is always a reserve of physics knowledge to draw upon in solving problems that are encountered. I attempt to do this by revisiting the fundamentals often and show how new subjects can be linked to what is already known. Encouraging inquiry and stressing the importance of experimentation can help immensely in supporting this structure of knowledge. (Adam Schneider, Physics and Astronomy) http://www.cti.uga.edu/teach_asst/ta_mentors/philosophy/2008phil/Adam%20Schneider/index.html

The goal of a liberal arts education is to become a self-reflective, critically-thinking and responsible global citizen. I therefore endeavor to instill in my students the confidence to ask challenging questions and the drive to seek diverse responses to them. As a political scientist, this usually takes the form of challenging students with some of the greatest classical and contemporary political questions, and unraveling them together in lectures, activities and debates in class, while also reflecting on and engaging in the world outside the university. (Holly Ann Garnett, Political Science)

Developing a teaching philosophy

INDIVIDUAL QUICK WRITE

1. Describe a successful teaching/learning episode (either as teacher or learner) and what made this a positive teaching/learning experience?

2. Under what circumstances do you think students learn best?

DISCUSSION

1. Discuss your example.
Teaching and Learning Attitudes, Values and Beliefs

From your discussion, extract a few general attitudes, values, beliefs you hold about teaching and learning and write them down.

Congratulations! You have just begun articulating your teaching statement.

Teaching statement:
Summary

• Intentionality of teaching
• Principles, conceptions that underlie your approach to teaching
• Learning goals you have for students
• Why certain teaching methods are used
• Why you evaluate learning as you do
• Directions and plans for developing teaching
2) Teaching responsibilities:

- Teaching a course
- Teaching assistantships
- Tutoring
- Peer or student mentoring
- Designing and facilitating educational workshops or programs
- Any non-academic related teaching experiences and accreditation (e.g., coaching)

Teaching responsibilities: Example

University:
Department:
Number of terms as teaching assistant:
Courses: Level? Program? Variety?
Students: How many? What level? What program?
Tasks: Explain assignments, provide feedback on assignments, meet individually with students, update myCourses site

Remember: there is no universal job description for a TA.
3) Evidence of effectiveness

- Summary of course evaluation numerical ratings
- Interpretation of student written comments
- Measures taken in response to feedback on teaching
- Letters from professors with whom or for whom you have taught
- Comments/letters from people you have tutored in the past
- Teaching reference letters from former students

Evidence of effectiveness:
Summarizing numerical evaluations and interpreting written comments

http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/teaching/course-evaluations
Course evaluations at McGill

- Each unit has a designated person (Mercury liaison) responsible for coordinating course evaluations.

- TAs now have direct access to their results:
  

  To confirm that your name is on the evaluation or in case of any problems, consult the liaison in your department:


- Course evaluation policies and procedures available at:
  

Evidence of effectiveness:
Interpretation and actions taken

“The TA was knowledgeable, I think, but I can’t be sure because she was hard to understand.”

This was my first experience in “public speaking” in English as well as my first TA position. I was very nervous, and it showed. Since then, my spoken English has improved significantly. I was pleased that despite my difficulties communicating, I still received overall high ratings for this course.

“I thought the readings were interesting and applicable to the course, however there were too many for the short amount of time between classes.”

When designing my first syllabus, I was enthusiastic to engage the students with a wide variety of readings. But because the class was offered in the Spring Semester, we had a three hours of lecture, four days a week. Moving forward, I learned the importance of adapting my syllabus to the context and timing of the course.
Evidence of effectiveness:
Additional information

• Full set of students’ written comments
• Sample student work with your evaluative comments
• Course outlines developed by you, with annotations as to why/how they demonstrate effectiveness
• Comments from peer or faculty observers
• Teaching awards received

4) Educational leadership and teaching development

Formal workshops/courses:

• Non-credit
  • SKILLSETS
  • Learning to Teach Workshop
  • Graduate Teaching Workshop (Tomlinson Project in University-Level Science Education; T-PULSE)
  • Leadership and Facilitation Skills Workshop (First-year Office)
  • Public speaking courses (PGSS)

• Credit
  • Teaching & Learning in Higher Education (EDPH 689)
Educational leadership and teaching development

“Apprenticeship” experiences:

• Seek expert advice on teaching
  — Volunteer
  — Observe
• Participate in departmental/Faculty university teaching committees
• Help to design and facilitate educational workshops or seminar series (e.g., research seminar within faculty)

How can I get more experience?

Volunteer:

• Offer to teach a class / lecture for somebody else
• Participate in programs such as “Let’s talk science”: http://www.medicine.mcgill.ca/expmed/LTSM/
• Get involved in activities run by SKILLSETS such as Learning to Teach Day
Recommendations

• Collect relevant materials (the shoebox)

• Keep an updated record

Recommendations

• Observe and talk to good teachers
• Find a mentor
• Have others review drafts of portfolio
• Attend seminars on teaching
• Review samples available online and at TLS
• Attend information sessions on hiring process for teaching positions (CaPS, department, etc.)
Resources

Websites with guidelines for developing a teaching portfolio:
http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/teaching/portfolio/guidelines Guidelines for developing a teaching portfolio from McGill University
http://www.universityaffairs.ca/developing-a-teaching-profile.aspx Information on developing a teaching portfolio from University Affairs website
http://www.usask.ca/gmcte/resources/portfolio Information on the teaching portfolio from the University of Saskatchewan
http://www.ubc.ca/okanagan/ctl/support/teachingportfolios.html Information on the teaching portfolio from the University of British Columbia
http://ctl.utexas.edu/teaching/professional_development/teaching%20_portfolio Information about developing the teaching portfolio from the University of Texas at Austin, Center for Teaching and Learning BROKEN LINK
http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/teaching-guides/reflecting/teaching-portfolios/ Guidelines for developing teaching portfolio from Vanderbilt with links to additional resources
http://www.celt.iastate.edu/faculty/portfolio_contents.html Guidelines for developing a portfolio from Iowa State University, Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching

Websites with guidelines and samples of teaching philosophies:
http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/tutorials/philosophy/index.html tutorial provided by the University of Minnesota’s Center for Teaching and Learning
http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/philosophy.html Information on writing the teaching philosophy from Iowa State University Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching
http://www.cft.utexas.edu/ta_mentors/ta_mentor/philosophy/index.html Sample teaching philosophies from the University of Georgia
http://www.cft.umich.edu/tstrategies/tstipum Information on writing the teaching philosophy from the University of Michigan—inclu...
Resources

Handbooks available online:

Teaching related questions for Academic job interviews:
http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/html/icb.topic58474/portfolio3.html Information related to academic job interviews provided by the Harvard University Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning

Books available at McGill:
Call number: Education Library LB1728 C67 2009
Call number: Humanities & Social Sciences Library in the McLennan Building LB233 546 2004
Call number: Education Library LB1029 P67 S45 2009
Resources

Links to Educational Journals:
http://www.kennesaw.edu/cetl/resources/journals.html#disciplineteaching The website of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at Kennesaw State University offers a detailed list of discipline-specific journals in higher education
https://listserv.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind04044&L=POD&P=R6495 Laura Border of the University of Colorado at Boulder offers a list of journals on the POD listserv from 2004.
http://www.washington.edu/teaching/journals-on-teaching-and-learning-research-discipline-specific/ The Center for Instructional Development and Research at the University of Washington offers a rather comprehensive list
https://eee.uci.edu/03s/87900/education%20journals.pdf The Electronic Educational Environment of the University of California, Irvine offers an extensive and annotated list of higher education publications organized alphabetically rather than by discipline

QUESTIONS?
WORKSHOP EVALUATION

THANK YOU!