DEVELOPING A TEACHING PORTFOLIO

Holly Ann Garnett
(Graduate Education Assistant, SKILLSETS)

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Career and Planning Services
Common Questions

• 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?
Agenda

1. What is a teaching portfolio?
2. What goes into a teaching portfolio?
   A. Teaching Philosophy
   B. Experiences
   C. Development activities
   D. Evidence of Effectiveness
3. Tips
4. Sample Teaching Portfolio
5. Resources
6. Questions
7. Workshop Evaluation
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)
   I. Teaching philosophy
   II. Experiences
   III. Development activities
   IV. Evidence of effectiveness

B. Appendices (10 pages maximum, excluding course evaluation comments)

Sample Organization

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

Purpose of a teaching philosophy or 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
Teaching philosophy excerpts

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, from Center for Teaching and Learning at University of Georgia)

I am aware that students’ approaches to learning are informed by their background and previous experiences. In the field of political science, this is a great opportunity for student engagement if harnessed appropriately. In my lectures, I always include contemporary examples and discussions to relate course material to student experiences. In doing so, I strive to create respectful and open learning environments, where students will gain the confidence to ask challenging questions and an appreciation of diverse responses.

(Holly Ann Garnett, Political Science)
Activity: 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? (“I think students learn best when...”)

DISCUSSION

1. Discuss your example.
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.
Summary: Teaching Philosophy

• 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
Teaching Experience

- Teaching a course
- Teaching assistantships
- Undergraduate Supervision
- 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: Information to include

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.
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
Using Course Evaluations
Course Evaluations at McGill

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

• TAs have direct access to their results: https://www.mcgill.ca/mercury/teaching-assistants

• More details on course evaluation policies and procedures available at: https://www.mcgill.ca/mercury
Interpretation of Comments

“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.
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
Professional Development and Educational Leadership

Formal workshops/courses:

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

• Credit
  • Teaching & Learning in Higher Education (EDPH 689)
Professional Development and Educational Leadership

“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 do I get more experience?

Volunteer:

• Offer to teach a class / lecture for somebody else
• Participate in programs such as “Let’s talk science”: http://outreach.letstalkscience.ca/mcgill-university.html
• Get involved in activities run by SKILLSETS such as Learning to Teach Day
Tip: Keep your records

• Collect relevant materials (the shoebox)

• Keep an updated record
Tip: Find Good Mentors

• Observe good teachers – find out what they do to teach effectively

• Find good mentors – ask them about their teaching philosophy
Tip: Refine your portfolio

- Have others review drafts of portfolio
- Review samples available online and at TLS
- Attend information sessions on hiring process for teaching positions (CaPS, department, etc.)
SAMPLE TEACHING PORTFOLIO
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/career-advice/career-advice-article/developing-a-teaching-profile/ 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-portfolio Information about developing the teaching portfolio from the University of Texas at Austin, Center for Teaching and Learning

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
Resources

Websites with guidelines and samples of teaching philosophies:

http://cei.umn.edu/support-services/tutorials/writing-teaching-philosophy 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://wwwCtl.uga.edu/pages/future-faculty-program/2005 Sample teaching philosophies from the University of Georgia

http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tstpum Information on writing the teaching philosophy from the University of Michigan—incluces rubric for evaluating philosophy

http://www.usask.ca/gmcte/resources/portfolio/samples Sample teaching philosophies from the University of Saskatchewan
Resources

Handbooks available online:


**Teaching related questions for Academic job interviews:**

[http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/html/icb.topic58474/portfolio3.html](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
Resources

Books available at McGill:


Resources

Links to Education Journals:

http://cetl.kennesaw.edu/teaching-journals-directory 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=ind0404&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