
TEACHING TIPS: Assembling a Teaching Portfolio
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With the increasingly diverse academic and professional options available to scholars in adult development and aging, it has become increasingly important to demonstrate competence not only in research, but teaching as well. While it is to be expected that large institutions will continue to emphasize research potential and/or productivity in their hiring and tenure procedures, the criticism aimed at such institutions with regard to teaching quality has led to concern among department- and institution-level administrators of the need to document effective instruction. The purpose of this issue's Teaching Tips article is to provide some strategies for individuals involved in academic instruction to provide evidence of pedagogical quality via a strong teaching portfolio.

Fortunately for those who have no idea what a teaching portfolio is or how to prepare one, there exist a number of excellent resources, many online, that can offer some guidance to instructors. A simple google.com (<http://www.google.com>) search, using the term "Teaching Portfolio," includes ten pages of resources. An excellent overview of how to assemble a teaching portfolio is provided by the Center for Teaching and Learning Effectiveness at The University of Texas at Austin (<http://www.utexas.edu/academic/cte/teachfolio.html>). Included on this page are a number of text references that may provide additional, detailed information on why a teaching portfolio is important, what a teaching portfolio contains, and how it is best presented. As the emphasis on teaching and instruction continues to move towards documented effectiveness, these resources may prove extremely available for individual academics trying to respond to increased quality standards.

Although I would not consider my teaching portfolio a model in any sense of the word, reviewing some of the available resources online and elsewhere has helped me construct a teaching portfolio that has proven helpful during faculty review procedures as well as job applications. The specific contents of my portfolio are as follows:

1. *Title page and table of contents:* While seemingly self-explanatory, organizing the portfolio in order to provide a cohesive theme or structure to the portfolio is important;
2. *Reflective statement:* This provides an opportunity for the instructor to provide an overview of teaching philosophy and history, the developmental basis for one's teaching philosophy, aims and objectives of

courses taught, and methods and implementation;

3. *Courses taught:* Tabulating the courses taught by the instructor, particularly if they have taken place over several years and across departments, is important. Moreover, providing brief descriptions of each course is also helpful for reviewers to understand the types of courses taught and/or newly developed by the instructor. One may also describe some of the innovations created, as well as guest lectures or other instructional activity;
4. *Summary of teaching evaluations:* This is probably one of the more important components of the teaching portfolio; summarizing both the quantitative and qualitative feedback of students, and addressing how the instructor has addressed general strengths or weaknesses, is advisable;
5. *Representative syllabi:* Providing 1-3 syllabi that reflect the instructor's teaching style and philosophy can help reviewers gauge the strength of course content;
6. *Training grants, committee memberships, and educational activities:* Effective instruction often extends beyond the classroom and into other activities, such as serving on training grants for graduate and post-graduate training, engaging in community education or similar experiences, or other educational activities (e.g., service on relevant university committees);
7. *Advising activities:* Providing a list of membership on Master's or doctoral level committees, and highlighting those that the instructor is chair of, is further demonstration of effective instructional skills; and
8. *Collaborative work with individual students leading to professional advancement:* Providing a list of all relevant presentations, papers, or book chapters that include students as co-authors can further demonstrate to reviewers the scope of commitment the instructor has to pedagogy.

Clearly, the content of a teaching portfolio will vary by the stage of the instructor's career, the type of institution, and the disciplinary emphasis of one's scholarly department. However, a rigorous and comprehensive teaching portfolio can prove extremely important in documenting the commitment one has to academic instruction. It is hoped that the resources in this article can provide some initial guidance for such an endeavor.