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)

Based on McGill Guidelines: http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/teaching/portfolio/guidelines

Organizing the Portfolio: Sample

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 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

Excerpts from graduate students' teaching philosophies

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.ctl.uga.edu/teach_asst/ta_mentors/philosophy/2008phil/Adam%20Schneider/index.html

In order to help students begin to think like a scientist, I encourage them to form hypotheses and discover knowledge on their own. One way that I achieve this is through the use of case studies. After presenting students with some basic information about a subject, they meet in small groups to work through a real life scenario. Students must analyze information and apply their knowledge to solve a pertinent problem. *(Carly Jordan, Cellular Biology)*
http://www.ctl.uga.edu/teach_asst/ta_mentors/philosophy/2008phil/Carly%20Jordan/index.html

Excerpts from graduate students' teaching philosophies

I believe that every member of society can benefit from learning how to think with a sociological imagination, and that this type of thinking emerges through interacting with curriculum material as opposed to rote memorization [....] My critical thinking approach allows learning to take place in multiple ways, such as discussions/debate, group projects, and writing, as opposed to restricting learning to isolated study. (Christen Lynn Bradley, Sociology)
http://sites.google.com/site/christenlynnbradley/home/teaching-philosophy

Through writing exercises, discussions, and student presentations, I hope to give students an opportunity not only to think critically, but to develop their ability to communicate their ideas effectively. I encourage students to consider audience, to experiment with writing styles, and to develop their own "voice" [...] Teaching, for me, is synonymous with learning.
(Sara Steger, English)
http://www.ctl.uga.edu/teach_asst/ta_mentors/philosophy/TAMentors0708Philosophies/Steger/index.html

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

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McGill Policies and Guidelines

Focus on Teaching

Course & Program Design

Resources

Course Evaluations

Policy

Interpretation of Results

Definitions

Information for Students

Linking Questions to Teaching and Learning

Resources

Mercury Access

Reports & Quick Facts

Mercury &

Interpretation of Results

The following documents (*Interpreting End-of-Course Evaluation Results* and *Course Evaluations: Information for Students*) were prepared with three goals in mind:

1. increase the utility of course evaluation results;
2. increase confidence in the value of the results; and
3. reduce instructor anxiety connected to the course evaluation process.

The documents will help instructors, teaching assistants, academic administrators and students to both contribute to and benefit from the opportunities for extensive feedback that the Mercury system provides. The documents are informed by extensive research, both at McGill and elsewhere, and refer where appropriate to specific policies and practices at McGill.

Interpreting End-of-Course Evaluation Results

Interpreting End-of-Course Evaluation Results [.pdf]

This document provides guidelines and recommendations for interpreting

We welcome your feedback

Events & Announcements

2012 Feb 27 **Intimate Critique in Indigenous Contexts**

View more from group_academic_talks_conferenc

MERCURY
COURSE EVALUATION

17

http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/teaching/course-evaluations/interpretation

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:
  http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/sites/mcgill.ca.tls/files/ta_mercury_access.pdf

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

  http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/teaching/course-evaluations/resources/liaisons

- Course evaluation policies and procedures available at:
  http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/courseevaluations/

Evidence of effectiveness: Interpretation and actions taken

"Good feedback was provided on the presentation."

> I gave each student written feedback listing strengths and weaknesses of their presentation. Their final term paper (on the same topic) could then build on the presentation feedback to provide an integrated learning experience.

"The TA returned our assignments the following class. This was quick!"

> I believe it is important that students receive feedback in a timely manner so that they can consider recommendations for future assignments. In my experience, this approach has helped students to make significant improvements in the quality of their work.

"The only problem I had with this class was that it was rushed. Too much to cover in too short a time."

> The first term I taught I created elaborate presentations and felt I had to cover everything. I've changed my teaching approach, in some cases I only have time to plant ideas and have students follow up with what interests them most. I find that I end up learning from their added perspective on a topic.

19

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.

"The TA was a very picky grader."
I believe that students learn from feedback, and I have found that the way to ensure that they actually take my comments to heart is by taking off points. Over time, students, in my experience, come to appreciate that I hold them to a high standard and that this prepares them well for future work.

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:

1. **McGill University** http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/teaching/portfolio/guidelines

2. **University Affairs** website http://www.universityaffairs.ca/developing-a-teaching-profile.aspx

3. **University of Saskatchewan** http://www.usask.ca/gmcte/resources/portfolio

4. **University of British Columbia** http://www.ubc.ca/okanagan/ctl/support/teachingportfolios.html

5. **University of Texas at Austin**, Center for Teaching and Learning
   http://ctl.utexas.edu/teaching-resources/advance-your-career/assemble-your-teaching-portfolio/

6. **Vanderbilt** with links to additional resources http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/teaching-guides/reflecting/teaching-portfolios/

7. **Iowa State University**, Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching
   http://www.celt.iastate.edu/faculty/portfolio_contents.html

Resources

Websites with guidelines and samples of teaching philosophies:

1. Tutorial provided by the **University of Minnesota**'s Center for Teaching and Learning
   http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/tutorials/philosophy/index.html

2. Suggestions for writing the teaching statement from the **University of Washington** Center for Instructional Development and Research
   http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/Bulletin/TeachingStatement.html

3. Information on writing the teaching philosophy from **Iowa State University** Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/philosophy.html

4. Sample teaching philosophies from the **University of Georgia**
   http://www.ctl.uga.edu/teach_asst/ta_mentors/philosophy/index.html

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

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

Resources

Handbooks available online:

1. **Canadian Association of University Teachers** (CAUT). (2006). *Teaching dossier.* Ottawa, ON: Canadian Association of University Teachers. Retrieved March 2008 from http://www.caut.ca/uploads/teaching_dossier_en.pdf (copy and paste link)

2. The Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning, **Brown University***. (2006). *The Teaching Portfolio Handbook. Retrieved February 2012 from* brown.edu/Administration/Sheridan_Center/docs/teach_port.pdf

Teaching related questions for Academic job interviews:

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

Resources

Books available at McGill:

Costantino, P. M., De Lorenzo, M. N., & Tirrell-Corbin, C. (2009). Developing a professional teaching portfolio: a guide for success (3rd edition). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
Call number: Education Library LB1728 C67 2009

Seldin, P. (2004). The teaching portfolio: a practical guide to improved performance and promotion/tenure decisions. Bolton, Mass.: Anker Pub. Co.
Call number: Humanities & Social Sciences Library in the McLennan Building LB2333 S46 2004

Seldin, P., & Miller, J. E. (2009). The academic portfolio: a practical guide to documenting teaching, research, and service. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass,

Call number: Education Library LB1029 P67 S45 2009

Resources

Links to Educational Journals:

1. 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 http://www.kennesaw.edu/cetl/resources/journals.html#disciplineteaching

2. Laura Border of the **University of Colorado** at Boulder offers a list of journals on the POD listserv from 2004 https://listserv.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind0404&L=POD&P=R6495

3. The Center for Instructional Development and Research at the **University of Washington** offers a rather comprehensive list http://depts.washington.edu/cidrweb/resources/journals.html#Disciplinary

4. The Electronic Educational Environment of the **University of California**, Ivring offers an extensive and annotated list of higher education publications organized alphabetically rather than by discipline https://eee.uci.edu/03s/87900/education%20journals.pdf

QUESTIONS?

WORKSHOP EVALUATION

THANK YOU!