

How to Develop a Teaching Portfolio

For Self-Evaluation and External Review

Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

ABSTRACT

Developing a teaching portfolio is valuable both as a process and as a product. The process of reflection involved in developing a teaching portfolio forces teachers to engage with their teaching activities on a deeper level and prompts thoughts of efficacy and philosophy. This guide is designed to accompany the teacher in the process of developing his/her teaching portfolio; it is a set of questions to prompt deep, integrative thought. The quality of the end-product that results from this endeavor is directly relational to the level of thought and reflection that go into it.

Table of Contents

Important questions to start the process	3
What is your purpose?	3
Who is your audience?	4
What documents (evidence) should you include?	4
What reflections are appropriate?	5
Steps to creating a teaching portfolio	6
Step One: Identify your audience	6
Step Two: Assemble and analyze your documents	7
Step Three: Draft your teaching philosophy	8
Step Four: Finalize your teaching portfolio	9

Important questions to start the process

As you begin to develop your portfolio, you will need to ask yourself important questions:

- Why are you doing this?
- Who will be reading your portfolio?
- What evidence can and should you include?
- What reflections are appropriate?

Of these four questions, the one that must be answered first is **why**? Why are you even reading this “how to” guide? Consider your *purpose* now, because your answer will determine what type of portfolio you will be creating.

What is your purpose?

If you are developing your portfolio to improve some aspect of your teaching, then you will want to include documents that show flaws or need improvement. At this stage of your career, this type of portfolio – a ***process portfolio*** – will likely be for your eyes only.

If you are developing your portfolio to show that specific goals have been achieved, then you will want to limit your focus on documents related to that targeted goal. If you have been charged with program assessment, you will be helping to create a type of portfolio like this – a ***product portfolio***.

If you are developing your portfolio to get a job, tenure, or promotion, then you will want to include documents that provide evidence that you are a thoughtful, effective teacher. The remainder of this guide will focus on this purpose – creating a ***showcase portfolio***.

My purpose is to showcase my teaching knowledge, skills, and ability; I will demonstrate that I am a thoughtful, effective teacher

Who is your audience?

Who do you expect (or want) to view your teaching portfolio after you complete it? Will they be master teachers? Will they be supervisors or administrators with expertise in specific areas of teaching, learning, and/or assessment? What would they expect to see in your teaching portfolio?

It is important to keep in mind that you are a member of a community of teachers and learners. You will want to envision your courses within that community and draw connections between your teaching activities and the teaching activities of your colleagues, your field of study, and higher education in general. For instance, how is knowledge constructed in your field of study? What expectations derive from how your courses fit in the sequence of courses students take to fulfill degree requirements? Stepping back even further, how do your courses support the mission of the University of Mississippi?

What documents (evidence) should you include?

Your purpose and audience should dictate which documents you include in your teaching portfolio. Some documents are always included, while others are optional. Imagine your portfolio as an argument. What teaching and learning materials do you or your students generate that support the claim that you are a thoughtful, effective teacher?

Student products	Teaching materials	Teaching recognitions
Standardized test scores	Sample syllabus*	Student evaluations
Pre- and post-test results	Sample test	Student surveys
Creative essays	Sample writing assignment	Student comments
End-of-semester project	Classroom activities	Colleagues' observations
Laboratory workbooks	Integrated course design	Teaching awards
Student work samples	Supplemental course materials	Technology competency
Service learning reflections	Student-centered teaching methods	Invitations to speak at teaching seminar
Documented changes in student work (drafts)	Powerpoint presentation and/or lecture notes	Comments from faculty teaching trailer course
Formative assessments	Teaching seminars attended	Teaching philosophy
Multimodal projects	Pedagogy research	Teacher development
Classroom recordings	SoTL research conducted	Supervisory assignments

*Include learning objectives, descriptions of teaching methods and assessments, grading structure, attendance policy, and office hours.

One document created explicitly for your teaching portfolio is a summary of all your teaching responsibilities from the past three years, including advising, mentoring, and other teaching or supervisory activities. This document will serve to illustrate to the reader the breadth of your teaching activities. This summary can be presented in tabular form and should include course numbers and titles, when they were taught, the number of students (majors and nonmajors) enrolled, and how you have modified the course (if you have done so).

Looking at each document separately, consider what you want your audience to know about each one. Tag each document with a removable note that outlines those reasons. By cataloging your documents and their contributions to your teaching portfolio, you are essentially drafting the composition that will become your teaching portfolio.

What reflections are appropriate?

Reflections are what weave your documents together and integrate you as an instructor with the nuts and bolts of teaching, the philosophy of teaching and learning, and the nature of knowledge itself. Your narratives tell the story of who you are as a teacher as you describe what being a teacher entails.

Writing a reflective essay entails taking your reader on a journey through your thoughts and experiences. It includes enough detail to describe what you have done and explain why you have done it. Writing such reflections help teachers become more mindful practitioners. Therefore, appropriate reflections are ones that integrate thought and action, demonstrating purposeful teaching practices.

Step One – Identify your audience. *Who is your audience and what do you know about them?*

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Step Two – Identify and assemble your documents. *What materials should you showcase and why?*

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Step Three – Start writing your teaching philosophy. *How do people learn and how does that inform your teaching practices?*

Statement explaining how people learn: Statement

regarding integrated course design: Documents that

illustrate appropriate teaching methods:

Documents that illustrate appropriate assessment methods:

Documents that illustrate appropriate learning objectives:

Step Four-Finalize your teaching portfolio. *Get feedback from peers and/or the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.*