Developing Your Teaching Portfolio

The Teaching Portfolio

The teaching portfolio or dossier represents your “evolving reflections and analyses, measured against rigorous standards” (Painter, 2001, p. 31). The teaching portfolio must provide a factual description of your strengths and accomplishments in relation to the principles and foundational knowledge-base of tertiary level teaching and learning. It is also a mechanism for self-evaluation and allows you, as a professional, to reflect on your philosophy and practice, and make sound professional decisions.

Portfolio Contents

Inclusions in a teaching portfolio usually fall under four headings according to Seldin (1993). These are Material from Oneself, Material from Others, Products of Teaching/Student Learning, and Items that Sometimes Appear in Portfolios. Your portfolio will, in general, be required to meet this universal standard relevant to the nature and type of inclusions as follows:

I. Autobiography – Statement that introduces you to the reader

II. Professional Identity – Teaching philosophy - personal statement of views, understandings and rationales for choices made with respect to methods and approaches used in the classroom; indication of influences on views and practice, changes in thinking about practice and rationale.

III. Reflective Journal Extracts – From journal entries, selected pieces showing evidence of self awareness and critical reflections on actions that guide practice, interpersonal skills and interactions with other professionals.

IV. Reflective Readings – Personal view on selected readings from the recommend reading list.

V. Products of teaching/ Student learning
   i. Course material – Outline of courses developed, detailing content and specific objectives, teaching/learning methods, readings, assignments, assessment strategies; description of revised courses, including new course projects, materials and class assignments; instructional innovations and assessment of their effectiveness
   ii. Student Learning – Samples of student work showing progression/development e.g. successive drafts of student essays, graded student essays along with comments on why particular grade awarded, student scores on pre- and post- assessments

VI. Evaluation by Students – Representative views of current students about their learning experiences and effectiveness, their ratings and suggestions for improvement.

VII. Peer Evaluation – Statements from colleagues who observed the teacher in the classroom/reviewed materials produced by the teacher, other form of recognition from colleagues. This assumes an effective Peer Observation Partnership is in place (Module 8 (a))

VIII. Contribution to teaching - Evidence of work with colleagues, projects with colleagues aimed at teaching/learning improvement contributions to or editing a journal

IX. Other – Any other evidence not captured in categories I to VII.

IX. Appendices – Carefully and judiciously selected evidence supporting the narrative; economy of presentation that will not overshadow creativity of narrative

Table 1 illustrates the categories and relevant evidence a listing of the portfolio contents and guidelines.
Guidelines for Compiling Your Portfolio

Based on guidelines provided by Seldin (1993) and amplified in Cain, Edwards-Henry & Rampersad (2005) the following are the steps to be taken in compiling your portfolio:

1. **Clarify teaching responsibilities** – Start with clarifying your role as teacher to ensure your understanding of your various functions.
2. **Select entries for the portfolio** – Select information relevant to your responsibilities. Keep your focus so that you do not include in your portfolio every piece of data that you have collected.
3. **Prepare statements on each entry** – Prepare statements [captions] on each entry to show their relationship to the overall responsibilities and how they reflect on your status as a teacher.
4. **Arrange the entries in order** - The order can take different forms, for example, importance to your responsibilities, chronology to show growth over time, or types of teaching responsibilities. The order should also reflect the purpose of the portfolio.
5. **Compile the supporting data** - This is the evidence that relates to the statements on each entry. The evidence should support conclusions you draw. This evidence is best placed in an appendix.
6. **Incorporate the portfolio into your curriculum vitae** - The portfolio should be viewed in the total context for accurate interpretation.

Perhaps the most important characteristic in compiling a teaching portfolio is the teacher’s self-reflection on his/her teaching. It is critical and advisable that the teacher reflects on his/her underlying philosophy of teaching. Next, the teacher describes the teaching strategies and methodologies that flow from his/her philosophy, and only then selects documents and materials that provide hard evidence of teaching activities and their effectiveness. The teacher must constantly reflect on his/her actions and activities in relation to teaching effectiveness.

Two other characteristics of a portfolio that should be considered in its compilation are **integrity** and **creativity**. Integrity relates to the relationship among the components which should be consistently reflective of the philosophy. Creativity relates to the individuality and uniqueness with which the portfolio has been compiled.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Autobiography</td>
<td>Statement that introduces you to the reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Professional Identity</td>
<td>Teaching philosophy - personal statement of views, understandings and rationales for choices made with respect to methods and approaches used in the classroom; indication of influences on views and practice, changes in thinking about practice and rationale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Reflective Journal Extracts</td>
<td>From journal entries, selected pieces showing evidence of self awareness and critical reflections on actions that guide practice, interpersonal skills and interactions with other professionals Reflective piece on selected readings indicating insight into an area of andragogy/pedagogy of interest and impact on practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Products of teaching/student learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course material:</td>
<td>Outline of courses developed, detailing content and specific objectives, teaching/learning methods, readings, assignments, assessment strategies; description of revised courses, including new course projects, materials and class assignments; instructional innovations and assessment of their effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Learning:</td>
<td>Samples of student work showing progression/ development e.g. successive drafts of student essays, graded student essays along with comments on why particular grade awarded, student scores on pre- and post- tests, student publications, evidence of the teacher’s influence on students’ career choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Evaluation by Students</td>
<td>Representative views of current students about their learning experiences and effectiveness, their ratings and suggestions for improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Peer Evaluation</td>
<td>Statements from colleagues who observed the teacher in the classroom/ reviewed materials produced by the teacher, other forms of recognition from colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. Contribution to teaching</td>
<td>Evidence of work with colleagues, projects with colleagues aimed at teaching/learning improvement, contributions to or editing a journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. Other</td>
<td>Any other evidence not captured in categories I to VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. Appendices</td>
<td>Carefully and judiciously selected evidence supporting the narrative; economy of presentation that will not overshadow creativity of narrative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teaching portfolio should NOT exceed **twelve** pages, excluding separator pages and appendices. Appendices may include tape recordings, CD-ROMs, data analysis spreadsheets, photographs, booklets and various types of media that the teacher used in instruction. Appendices should be no more than **20** pages.
How Your Portfolio Will Be Assessed

As with several other alternative assessment strategies your portfolio will be assessed using a set of rubrics. Rubrics are guides to assessing levels of performance of significant tasks. Rubrics are important because they serve to ensure objective, fair, and reliable assessments. They address the issue of the highly subjective nature of portfolio assessment.

A rubric has two main components – criteria of significance (of essential tasks) and statements that describe the levels of performance on each criterion.

The criteria of significance are the categories of evidence teachers are required to present in the compilation of the portfolio. Levels of performance have been defined for each category of evidence to which have been applied a points system. Table 2 shows the set of rubrics for assessing the teaching portfolio.

The portfolio is worth 30% of the marks of the Postgraduate Diploma programme.

Guidelines for Developing Your Teaching Philosophy

An important element of the teaching portfolio is the statement of philosophy. It anchors the portfolio and provides the scaffolding for the evidence according to Cain, Edwards-Henry & Rampersad (2005). Guidelines for developing your teaching philosophy are as follows:

- Think about what you do in the classroom
- Why do you do what you do?
- To what extent have learning experiences (positive as well as negative) affected how you teach and how you learn?
  - Consider your experiences in both formal and informal education
- To what extent have teaching experiences (positive as well as negative) affected how you teach or how you learn?
  - Consider the influence of teacher training as well as your own teaching experiences
- Can you derive a principle or personal theory from any of your learning/teaching experiences?
- What do you consider to be the dominant influences on your personal theory?
- How has your philosophy of teaching changed over time?
- What is your professional growth plan?
### Table A2: Assessment Rubric for the Teaching Portfolio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE LEVELS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Autobiography</td>
<td>Superbly written piece clearly defining the teacher, his/her journey and interests that led to the profession</td>
<td>Well written piece defining the teacher as practitioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Professional Identity</td>
<td>Clearly stated teaching philosophy expressed in personalized and meaningful terms with explanations and examples of influence on practice</td>
<td>Well expressed teaching philosophy mainly in personalised terms; some influence on practice highlighted; some examples used to illustrate explanations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Reflective Journal Extracts</td>
<td>Well selected journal entries and summaries of readings that clearly show growth as a practitioner - response to issues/influence of new learnings on practice</td>
<td>Selective journal entries and summaries of readings that show fairly well growth as a practitioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Products of teaching/student learning</td>
<td>Well documented course outlines/materials, projects adhering to conventional curricular preparation guidelines</td>
<td>Mainly well documented course outlines/materials, projects adhering to conventional curricular preparation guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRITERIA</td>
<td>PERFORMANCE LEVELS</td>
<td>TOTAL (50)</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>IV. Products of teaching/student learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adequate and appropriate samples</td>
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<tr>
<td>showing excellent student</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>development, achievement and teaching</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>influences</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very good samples showing excellent student</td>
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<tr>
<td>development, achievement and teaching</td>
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<td>influences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good samples of work showing excellent</td>
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<td>student development, achievement and</td>
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<td>teaching influences</td>
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<td>Fair samples of work showing student</td>
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<td>development and influence of teaching</td>
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<td>Ineffective samples of work showing student</td>
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<tr>
<td>development and influence of teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>V. Evaluation by Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Views and experiences of current students</td>
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<td>objectively obtained and assessed</td>
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<td>strongly support learning strategies and</td>
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<td>environment created, find experiences</td>
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<td>rewarding, no/very few suggestions for</td>
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<td>improvement</td>
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<td>Students views objectively obtained and</td>
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<td>assessed; views support most of the</td>
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<td>interactions and strategies used by the</td>
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<td>teacher; some suggestions for improved</td>
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<tr>
<td>interactions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students views objectively obtained and</td>
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<td>assessed; views generally support</td>
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<td>interactions and strategies used by the</td>
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<td>improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students views objectively obtained and</td>
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<tr>
<td>assessed; views support very few</td>
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<td>interactions and strategies used by the</td>
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<td>teacher</td>
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<td>teacher</td>
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<td>VI. Peer Evaluation</td>
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<td>Colleagues view very favourably classroom</td>
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<td>practices observed and/or materials produced</td>
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<tr>
<td>by teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colleagues generally view favourably</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>classroom practices observed and/or materials</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>produced by the teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colleagues view some classroom practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>observed and/or materials produced by the</td>
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<tr>
<td>teacher with favour</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colleagues show little support for</td>
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<tr>
<td>classroom practices observed and/or</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>materials produced by the teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>VII. Contribution to teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>FOUR excellent examples of evidence of work</td>
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<tr>
<td>with colleagues aimed at teaching/learning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>THREE excellent examples of evidence of work</td>
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<tr>
<td>with colleagues aimed at teaching/learning</td>
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<td>improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>TWO excellent examples of contributions to</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>ONE excellent example of evidence of</td>
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<td>contributions to teaching</td>
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<td>Examples of evidence of work with</td>
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<td>colleagues</td>
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<td>weaknesses evident</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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Postgraduate Diploma/Master in Tertiary Level Teaching and Learning
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE LEVELS</th>
<th>TOTAL (50)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. Other</td>
<td>Special and uniquely applicable evidence of teaching/learning support and/or effectiveness</td>
<td>Additional evidence applicable to improving teaching/learning effectiveness and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. Appendices</td>
<td>Appropriate number of appendices; all are relevant and clearly support the narrative without distracting or detracting from the narrative; sequence appropriate</td>
<td>Appendices all relevant and clearly support the narrative without distracting or detracting from the narrative; but too many; sequence good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. Creativity and integrity</td>
<td>Creatively and interestingly put together; excellent relationship among the pieces of evidence; provides a unique and clear picture of teaching competence/professionalism, all done within the limits of the prescribed number of pages</td>
<td>Well put together; good relationship among the pieces of evidence; generally provides a unique picture of teaching competence/professionalism, limited/no attention paid to page limits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>