

2. The Teaching or Course Portfolio¹

A course-focused teaching portfolio is a purposeful collection of course materials, including the instructor's reflections upon her teaching (usually containing an educational philosophy statement, a discussion of how she has sought to improve learning in the particular course, etc.).

Overview

- It is a kind of argument, developed around claims a teacher wants to make about herself as a teacher, but with supporting evidence in the form of assignments, rubrics, sample student work (perhaps including evaluations), even journal entries about her efforts to teach the particular class. (Evidence of her use of common classroom assessment techniques might be useful too.)
- No two teaching portfolios are identical, nor is there a "required" list of items to include. The portfolio for a particular class might eventually be folded into a more comprehensive portfolio that documents the instructor's teaching in general.
- For outcomes assessment purposes, the most critical feature of the portfolio is that it be genuinely reflective. The instructor (as James Eison points out) must keep trying to answer the question "Why do I do what I do and what impact does this have on desired outcomes"?
- For more experienced instructors, developing a comprehensive teaching portfolio takes time, but a real beginning can be made by the dedicated instructor in fewer than 10 hours, especially given that many of the supporting documents are likely to exist already and need only to be gathered and organized.
- For newer instructors, particularly adjuncts who seek full-time employment, an additional value of doing such a portfolio should be obvious: it can be offered to hiring committees as compelling evidence that the instructor's approach to teaching is serious and purposeful. The Internet contains many examples of good teaching portfolios, as well as primers on their development and use. A particularly good website is by Cornell University's Center for Learning and Teaching:
<http://www.clt.cornell.edu/resources/teh/ch2.html>.

¹ Flick, Arend (2007). "Non-collaborative, single course outcomes assessment