

# How to Prepare a Course Portfolio

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Good Faculty Could be  
Better

Super Faculty Could be  
Superior



# Introduction

Throughout our professional life as teachers we always ask ourselves the following questions:

Are our students truly learning what we think we are teaching them? Are we meeting our course goals? Are our course goals right for this course?



# Introduction

Is the work that students do having our impact on their learning? Do the materials we have chosen build connections and perspective?



# Introduction

We can get answers to these questions by creating a written document that makes visible the intellectual effort we put into designing it and measuring its impact on students learning.

# What is a Course Portfolio?

A course portfolio is a personalized document that represents the specific aims and work of its author and is structured to explain what, how and why students learn or do not learn in a class.

# What is the purpose(s) of a Course Portfolio?

To **remind** us of successes,  
questions, concerns encountered in  
a particular course

To **describe** and **analyze** the  
pedagogical reasoning implicit in a  
certain learning site

# What is the purpose(s) of a Course Portfolio?

To **document** student learning and its relationship to instruction

To **enhance** a course's effectiveness

To **make public** and share pedagogical insights

To **enable professional** rewards



# Who is the audience(s)?

Self

Departmental, external, and potential colleagues

Promotion committees

Professional societies

Community

Students

# What Constitutes a Course Portfolio?

A course portfolio consists of three elements:

1. Explanation of the course design
2. Description of the enactment or implementation of the design
3. Analysis of student learning resulting from the first two dimensions

# How to Write a Course Portfolio

The course portfolio emerges through the aggregation of the three memos about goals, methods and learning.

The faculty member's reflection on the relation among those elements is the connecting material that holds the portfolio together.

# How to Write a Course Portfolio

## 1.Design

The **design component** of a course portfolio refers to the overall course vision, its grand scheme, its governing principle - its dream.



# How to Write a Course Portfolio

Design artifacts:

Syllabus

Schedule/Calendar

Course description

Goals

Objectives



# How to Write a Course Portfolio

Governing question (overall question that the course addresses)

Course topics or concepts

Learning outcomes



# How to Write a Course Portfolio

Some questions to consider in writing a Design Narrative:

In answering these questions, we must be sure to explain why we say what we do.

What overall question does the course address?



# How to Write a Course Portfolio

What is our overall vision for this course?

How does this course fit in with other courses in its surrounding curriculum?

How did this course come to be? What is our attitude toward this course?





# How to Write a Course Portfolio

What is the attitude of other faculty in our department toward this course?

What expectations do we have for this course in terms of student learning?

What main challenges does this course present us?



# How to Write a Course Portfolio

What main benefits does this course provide us?

Why did we select this particular course to use as the basis of our portfolio?

# How to Write a Course Portfolio

## **2. Enactment:**

**Enactment** refers to the realization of a course vision, its actual implementation methods.

Enactment artifacts:

Assignments

Readings



# How to Write a Course Portfolio

Exercises

Overhead copies

Lecture notes

Quizzes/Tests



# How to Write a Course Portfolio

In-class/out-of-class activities

Labs/Demonstrations

Study Questions/Guides

Research/Inquiry questions

Videotapes/peer observations of class sessions



# How to Write a Course Portfolio

Audiotapes of out-of-class interactions  
such as conferences

Hard copies of individual and group  
listserv discussions



# How to Write a Course Portfolio

Some questions to consider in writing an Enactment Narrative:

What rhythm does this course have from beginning to end? (starts quickly/starts slowly/gets intense at midterm/or?)

# How to Write a Course Portfolio

If we were going to describe our role in this course, what overall metaphor would we use? (For example, are we like a conductor who orchestrates the learning? Or like a midwife who oversees the labor of the learners? Or?)



# How to Write a Course Portfolio

If we were going to describe the students' role in this course, what overall metaphor would we use? (Musicians working to harmonize their learning? Expectant parents working to birth new ideas? Or?)



# How to Write a Course Portfolio

How would we describe the assignment sequence in this course and our rationale for this line-up?

What is the most important assignment/reading/activity in this course? What is our favorite assignment/reading/activity in this course?



# How to Write a Course Portfolio

What is our least favorite assignment/reading/activity in this course?

If we were going to highlight one piece of this course that is most representative of its process, what would it be?

# How to Write a Course Portfolio

## 3. Results:

**Results** refers to student performance based on learning outcomes, which should rely on evidence of student learning and may include competencies, demonstrated understandings, and attitudes.



# How to Write a Course Portfolio

Results Artifacts:

Learning outcomes

Student papers

Quizzes

Tests



# How to Write a Course Portfolio

Oral

reports/presentations/demonstrations

Lab reports

Conferences

Web board/electronic discussion  
comments



# How to Write a Course Portfolio

Pre- and post-tests

Surveys

Evaluation rubrics

Grades



# How to Write a Course Portfolio

Some questions to consider in writing a Results Narrative: As always, we must focus our reflection on accounting for why the results occur as they do. Based on the evidence of student performance that we have for this course:





# How to Write a Course Portfolio

What main learning outcome do most or all students seem to achieve?

What main learning outcome do some or many students fail to achieve?

How do we account for these results?



# How to Write a Course Portfolio

What is the most surprising result and what does it tell us?

What result are we most pleased about? Why?

What result are we most disturbed about? Why?



# How to Write a Course Portfolio

What feature(s) of the course do we definitely plan to keep? Why?

What feature(s) of the course might we revise/add? Why?

# Is it worth my while to spend time on a course portfolio?

Ultimately it is a question of value:

How long does it take to conduct research? Is such a question asked in the context of research?

Course portfolios should be subject to peer review: is peer-reviewed research worth my time?



## Conclusion

Writing a course portfolio will help us become better teachers by enhancing the classroom experience for current and future student learners.



## Conclusion

By writing and sharing our course portfolios we open our classroom doors to one another to critically examine the teaching that we are enacting and the learning that our students are undertaking.



Thank You for Listening