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DOCUMENTING: DEVELOPING A TEACHING PORTFOLIO

The outstanding characteristic of man is his individuality. He is a unique creation of the forces of nature. Separated spatially from all other men he behaves throughout his own particular span of life in his own distinctive fashion.

—Gordon W. Allport
Personality: A Psychological Interpretation (1937, p. 3)

Teaching psychologists' professional responsibilities are staggering, yet their work in and out of the classroom can be ignored and forgotten if it is never documented. Many teaching psychologists therefore gather together the artifacts of their teaching in a portfolio or dossier that describes their involvement in, and success at, teaching. Portfolios are unique, individualistic summaries of one's work in the teaching arena, but most will include a teaching vita, a personal statement about teaching, a selective sample of teaching materials, and documents that provide objective evidence of teaching effectiveness. Portfolios describe the teaching professor's work, but they can also be used to guide development, innovation, and assessment.

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Gordon W. Allport (1968) summarized his years of research into personality and prejudice with these questions: "How shall a psychological life history be written? What processes and what structures must a full-bodied account of personality include? How can one detect unifying threads in a life, if they exist?" (p. 377). Allport believed answers to these questions elude psychologists because each personality is a unique configuration of patterns and combinations. In his now-classic distinction between the nomothetic and idiographic, he argued that generalities can be applied to personality, but these generalities underestimate the richness of each case. Personalities change over the course of a lifetime as individuals react to

new experiences, make choices based on their goals and values, and grapple with issues of self and satisfactions. As Allport said (1955, p. 19): "Personality is less a finished product than a transitive process. While it has some stable features, it is at the same time continually undergoing change." Allport, drawing on the work of humanistic psychologists, called this process of change "becoming" or "individuation."

Allport's conclusions about personality apply to that part of the professor's life that has been spent teaching. His questions, when put to the professor, ask: How shall the life history of the teaching psychologist be written? What processes and what structures must a full-bodied account of college and university teaching include? How can one detect the unifying threads that run throughout a career in the classroom? Here I consider how teaching professors can chart the process of "becoming" a professor by detailing their unique accomplishments in teaching.

THE TEACHING PORTFOLIO

Allport did not favor simple approaches to measuring personality. He sometimes gauged traits and temperament with checklists, surveys, and inventories, but he believed that these methods overlook the unique qualities of the individual. Traits like gregariousness or aggressiveness are more widespread than others, for "the original endowment of most human beings, their stages of growth, and the demands of their particular society, are sufficiently standard and comparable to lead to some basic modes of adjustment that from individual to individual are *approximately* the same" (Allport, 1937, p. 298). But the way in which people's actions are consistent over time and situations is unique to each person: an idiographic tendency, rather than a nomothetic one. "Everyone knows that each human neuropsychic system is unique. With unique genotypes of inheritance and never-repeated personal environments, it could not be otherwise" (Allport, 1968, p. 107).

Allport sought to capture the uniqueness of each person's life by analyzing personal documents: "any self-revealing record that intentionally or unintentionally yields information regarding the structure, dynamics, and functioning of the author's mental life" (Allport, 1942, p. xii). Allport believed that people are relatively accurate when judging their own motives, values, and interests, and so their letters, diaries, journals, and autobiographies yield information that a more standardized assessment would overlook. His famous "Letters from Jenny," for example, offered a detailed analysis of Jenny's unique relationship with her son, with Jenny herself providing all the raw material for the analysis by expressing herself in letters written to friends for many years (Allport, 1946).

A *teaching portfolio* or *teaching dossier* is just such a personal document,

for like the personal documents that Allport studied so earnestly, it reveals the personality, accomplishments, and plans of its author. The portfolio strategy comes from fields and professions that make things. Marketing firms' portfolios of their prior advertising successes impress new clients. Architects' portfolios of previous designs and structures convey their style and proficiencies. Actors bring with them to each casting call a history of their prior appearances and accomplishments. And so professors' portfolios should include a detailed account of their *products*; the artifacts of their teaching and scholarship, including capsule summaries of the classes they have taught, the lectures they have crafted, the educational materials they have developed, and the curricula they have built. It is "a comprehensive record of teaching activities and accomplishments drawn up by the professor" himself or herself (O'Neil & Wright, 1992, p. 6).

Portfolios, as personal documents in the Allportian sense, combine both idiographic and nomothetic elements. Each portfolio is unique, for it documents the activities of a single individual's work in teaching. But, as nomothetic records of teaching, they also reflect the common experiences of most professors. Just as the press of environmental circumstances creates dimensions of variation in people's personalities, so the university setting with its demands for teaching, research, and service creates consistencies in the life history of the teaching psychologist. These common themes create similarities in professors' portfolios, so that even though each portfolio is a unique description of a unique professor's life, most nonetheless contain the categories of information summarized in Table 9.1: (a) a vita-like listing of all professional accomplishments related to teaching; (b) a personal statement or narrative that provides the reader with the professor's personal perspective on his or her work in teaching; (c) teaching materials, annotated so that readers can understand their connection to the professor's educational mission; (d) objective and subjective indicators of teaching effectiveness; and (e) ancillaries that the portfolio-builders believe are essential for conveying a sense of their teaching to the reader.

Why Develop a Teaching Portfolio?

It takes time to develop a teaching portfolio, and most teaching professors are short on that commodity. So, why take the trouble to document one's teaching in a portfolio? The motivations that prompt professors to create portfolios are as diverse as the motivations that Allport (1942, pp. 69–75) identified in his analysis of why people write diaries, letters, and journals. Some write to explain their actions, others are driven by "a single-minded desire to display one's virtues and vices," and others desire to put their accomplishments in order. But across the gamut of motives, portfolio experts most frequently cite these five purposes: documentation, develop-

TABLE 9.1

Possible Components of a Teaching Portfolio or Dossier

Component	Characteristics
Vita	A comprehensive listing of all professional activities related to teaching, including courses taught, service on teaching-related committees, and scholarly activities related to teaching
Personal statement	A narrative describing one's teaching, often containing sections pertaining to personal principles and assumptions about learning, general and specific goals, and autobiographical materials
Teaching materials	An annotated and selective sample of materials used in teaching, including syllabi, lecture notes, reading lists, session plans, self-constructed learning activities and assignments, hypertext documents, tests and examinations, and unique instructional tools
Assessments	Text, numerical, and graphic summaries of evidence of teaching effectiveness gathered from such sources as student evaluations, peer observations, self-assessments, and exit interviews with students
Supplemental materials	Individualized indicators of teaching style and quality, such as videotaped lectures, transcribed supervision sessions and discussions, copies of students' graded assignments, scholarly publications pertaining to teaching and learning

ment, enrichment, innovation, and assessment (Cerbin, 2001; Murray, 1995; Seldin, 1998).

Documentation

Teaching portfolios provide a glimpse (ideally, a reassuring glimpse) into the inner world of the teaching professor. For even though teaching is a very public activity, it often occurs in an exclusive, almost secret, setting. The professor typically meets with many students, but in isolation from fellow professors or administrators. Although everyone remembers what is involved in teaching, for they were students themselves at one time, professors' actual activities in and out of the classroom require specification. The portfolio provides that by cataloging the various obligations of a teacher—such activities as meeting class, lecturing, leading discussions, developing and administering tests, advising, developing curricula, and so on. But the portfolio goes beyond these general, categorical listings by identifying concrete actions and activities that comprise them, while also describing any uncommon, unusual, and innovative activities undertaken by the instructor. They also provide a more complete picture of the professor's accomplishments by offering a long-range look at the teacher

rather than a time-limited sample of a year or two's work. A portfolio generates longitudinal data that describe the professor's accomplishments across a longer period of time, and so provides evidence of changes in patterns and qualities.

Development

The teaching portfolio is a useful tool for stimulating adaptive change across the life history of the teaching professor. Studies of experts in such spheres as sports, chess, problem solving, and science all converge on one conclusion: Experts are particularly good at seeking out feedback about their performances, and then using that feedback to improve their overall performance (Ericsson & Lehmann, 1996). The portfolio is an excellent means of gathering such feedback, particularly because the portfolio forces the professor to create a context for this information. During the day-to-day demands of teaching, one can easily lose sight of the overall reasons behind one's practices. Teaching becomes a series of discrete actions, such as giving lectures, making up exams, giving out grades, and holding office hours. Preparing a portfolio forces the professor to put these specific actions into a broader context and so see the forest rather than just the individual trees. The very act of developing a portfolio helps professors gain an overarching perspective on their varied accomplishments and activities.

The portfolio-building process also provides the opportunity to discover inconsistencies in one's practices, identify weaknesses, and devise ways to improve. In many cases portfolios include sections that ask the professors to describe ways in which they expect their teaching will change in the future, so that they can identify new goals and plan for their implementation.

Enrichment

Administrators in higher education often confuse job enrichment strategies with job enlargement strategies. Job enlargement is most useful when individuals, bored with the routine of their work and its minimal demands, are given the opportunity to take on new duties. Job enhancement, in contrast, increases the value of the individual's work, particularly by stressing the intrinsic rewards the work generates.

Teaching portfolios should not be just one more burden placed on an already overburdened teaching professor. Rather, building a teaching portfolio gives professors an opportunity to revisit their motivations for teaching and redefine the intrinsic satisfactions that teaching provides. When professors catalog all the many and varied activities that are associated with teaching, they can better recognize the magnitude of their contribution to others' learning. Portfolios, by providing an opportunity to plan future directions, also increase a sense of efficacy as individual faculty chart out

their own goals. Portfolios are also protective and empowering. They protect faculty, to a degree, from the disappointment, disillusionment, and distress that can occur when they receive negative evaluations about their teaching from their students. If these evaluations are their sole source of data pertaining to their teaching, then the professor must accept their students' pronouncements. But professors who have assembled a cumulative teaching portfolio can consider student opinions in the overall context of their work as teachers. Portfolios also provide professors with the means to influence how their teaching is evaluated by colleagues and administrators, for they give professors the opportunity to create and select the materials that will determine how they are evaluated.

Innovation

Portfolios benefit not only individual instructors, but also their departments, institutions, and disciplines. Portfolios are often recommended as a tool for refocusing the faculty's attention on teaching, particularly when teaching is afforded little time or energy relative to research. The process of portfolio-building can also increase the amount of time faculty spend discussing teaching, as they share ideas for what elements to include in portfolios, gather information from peers to include in their reports, and identify examples of good portfolios to emulate.

Assessment

As noted in chapter 8, many colleges and universities use portfolios in their annual review of faculty, when identifying faculty for special awards and honors, and when making tenure and promotion decisions. Portfolios, because they meld many sources of information about teaching, provide a more complete assessment of the quality of the instruction. Portfolios also take some of the sting out of the review process. Faculty reviews can, in some cases, create feelings of competition among the faculty, for when evaluations follow identical formats and use comparative scales, then relative rankings of individuals are unavoidable (e.g., "Relative to the other teachers at this university, how would you rate *this* professor?"). Portfolios, because they are individualized, reduce the tendency to rank order faculty. Many faculty also feel less threatened by the prospect of portfolio-based reviews. The judgments of students and peers are often summarized in portfolios, but the professor has the opportunity to put this information into perspective for the reader.

Types of Teaching Portfolios

Just as the vita or resume is deliberately shaped and recast for differing purposes—the vita one sends when applying for a position as a scientist

at a research institute should look very different from the vita sent with one's application for a tenure-track position at a small, liberal arts college—the teaching portfolio's structure and content change depending on its overall purpose. For example, a *showcase portfolio* that is created when a faculty member is nominated for a teaching award will differ substantially from the *evaluation portfolio* that is requested by the professor's tenure and promotion review committee. A showcase portfolio is deliberately designed to highlight the professor's strengths rather than weaknesses. Just as researchers don't list on their vita their many failed studies or the papers that never were accepted for publication, the portfolio need not catalog every teaching catastrophe. It should be "a factual description of a professor's major strengths and teaching achievements" (Seldin, 1991, p. 3), a "collection of documents that represent the best of one's teaching" (Murray, 1994, p. 34). An evaluation portfolio, on the other hand, should be a more evenhanded review of the prior work in teaching. Such portfolios, too, should adhere more closely to the standards for such documents as established by the department, college, or school. The evaluation portfolio's goal: to "describe, through documentation over an extended period of time, the full range of your abilities as a college teacher" (Urbach, 1992, p. 71). Other portfolio forms include the archival portfolio, the course-limited portfolio, the time-limited portfolio, and the developmental portfolio.

The portfolio will also differ depending on the instructor's stage of development as a teaching professor. A graduate student may begin building a portfolio to qualify for an academic post, a new professor's motivation may be tenure review, and the full professor's motives may reflect exhibitionism or a quest to find order in the accumulated events of a long and distinguished career. As Table 9.2 suggests, graduate students and senior professors might develop portfolios, but the final document reflects their varying purposes (Brems, Lampman, & Johnson, 1995; Stewart, 1997).

BUILDING THE PORTFOLIO

Languishing in those filing cabinets, scattered across the desk top, and interweaved randomly into stacks of last semester's correspondence is the raw material needed to build a teaching portfolio. Teaching evaluations, thank you notes for guest lectures given, old tests and syllabi, handouts and homework assignments, and the lecture notes used on the first day of class that outline the course's larger purposes provide the foundation for what will grow into a more comprehensive life history of the teaching psychologist. Once organized into the basic categories listed in Table 9.1 and discussed in more detail in this chapter, the scattered bits of information will grow into a full fledged portfolio that charts the changes and achievements of its author.

TABLE 9.2

The Purposes of Portfolios for Particular Professors

Position	Purposes
Graduate student instructors	Gaining a perspective on teaching and its relationship to one's professional identity Developing the credentials and experiences needed for faculty positions Increasing sense of efficacy in teaching
New faculty	Defining and implementing a balance across demands for research, teaching, and service Increasing the quality of instruction Documenting teaching quality for tenure review
Tenured faculty	Developing and diversifying teaching activities Renewing teaching methods Maintaining and enhancing motivation for teaching Documenting teaching quality for honors, awards, promotion, pay
Adjunct faculty	Developing credentials and experiences required by employers Increasing preparedness for teaching Developing and sustaining an identity as a teaching professor

The Eruditio Vitae

The curriculum vitae, or C.V., is both the birth certificate and the headstone of the academic. It is literally the “course of the scholar’s life,” the autobiographical record of all scholarly accomplishments. It should therefore be extraordinarily detailed, with no accomplishment excluded. At the same time, though, the C.V. is usually a terse document that lists achievements, organizing them into appealing clusters with meaningful headings and subheadings. The traditional C.V. usually stresses the scholar’s own study, training, and research rather than his or her impact on others’ learning.

Unlike the traditional C.V., the vita in a teaching portfolio should stress *eruditio*: instruction, or one’s accomplishments as an educator, teacher, and disseminator of knowledge. As Table 9.3 suggests, the Eruditio Vitae (or E.V.) should go beyond information pertaining to degrees received, academic appointments held, membership in professional associations, courses taught, and research published to include sections rarely seen on a C.V.—sections that provide more detailed information about the course of the scholar’s teaching life. Because it is a personal document, designed to convey information about the professor’s instructional practices, values, and achievements, its author must consider what impression the E.V. leaves with the reader. As you build a E.V. you must ask yourself: “What do I want to tell people about myself and my teaching?”

TABLE 9.3

Information Often Included in a Curriculum Vitae and in an Expanded Teaching Vitae (Eruditio Vitae)

Category	Example
The curriculum vitae	
Academic appointments	Professorships, lecturerships, significant work experiences
Awards and honors	Fellowships, memberships in scholarly societies
Education	Universities attended, degrees
Grants and contracts	Support garnered from government agencies, private foundations, private industry
Memberships	Disciplinary and professional memberships, such as APA member, state-association membership, etc.
Professional and disciplinary service	Editorships, reviewing for scholarly journals, service to community organizations, etc.
Research and scholarship	Books (monographs, texts, edited volumes, etc.); articles (both refereed or non-refereed), review articles, semi-popular or popular magazine articles; professional reports, journal editorships, proceedings or symposium editorships; conference paper presentations, participation as a panel chair or discussant, invited colloquia, etc.
Service	Involvement with and role taken in departmental, school, and university committees and organizations
Teaching experience	Teaching interests, courses taught, graduate student supervision experience, advising
The eruditio vitae	
Advising	Assisting students in curriculum planning and career exploration
Courses taught	Undergraduate and graduate courses taught, including descriptions of topics covered
Curriculum development	Creating new courses, extensively revising existing courses, developing new methods of instruction, developing entirely new educational programs
Faculty development	Activities that enhance other faculty members' skills in teaching (developing and conducting teaching workshops, consulting with faculty regarding their teaching, conducting informal and formal assessments of teaching)
Graduate student mentoring and supervision	Mentoring graduate students in research and practice (e.g., laboratory supervision, thesis and dissertation research)
Grants and contracts	Grants dealing specifically with educational issues, such as projects supported by the Funds for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education

Table continues

TABLE 9.3 (*Continued*)

Category	Example
The eruditio vitae (<i>continued</i>)	
Memberships	Membership in associations focused on teaching, such as Division 2 of APA, local faculty consortiums
Self-development	Participation in workshops dealing with teaching skills, attendance at conferences on teaching, continuing education enrollments
Service in teaching	Participation in and leadership of committees and task forces dealing with teaching (departmental curriculum committee, university task force on instruction, etc.)
Specialized forms of teaching	Nonroutine types of teaching, including guest lectures, public teaching (speeches to lay audiences, educational newspaper articles, and interviews), interdisciplinary teaching, colloquia at one's own university and other universities
Teaching scholarship	Publications, presentations, and talks dealing with teaching and learning (research into teaching effectiveness, publications in <i>Teaching of Psychology</i> , etc.)
Technology and teaching	Using technology for instructional purposes, including development of multimedia, films, distance education, Internet-based instruction
Texts and teaching materials	Authored materials used in teaching, including textbooks, instruction manuals, test item banks, and websites
Undergraduate student mentoring and supervision	Individualized forms of instruction (student internships, field work, honors theses, membership on thesis committees)

I Am Involved in Teaching

Each publication usually gets some mention on the vita: every conference paper, chapter, book, and article gets a line or more. Yet, professors who have taught two sections of personality each semester for 15 years humbly list only "Psychology of Personality" on their vita, hoping the reader will imagine the scope of the work summarized by that one line. The E.V. distrusts imagination, and so provides a detailed listing of each semester's classes taught, and it may even include essential details such as size, text, and time. The seasoned scholar, looking back at many years of classes, often stops counting each contribution. But if a class is not noted, then a casual reader of the vita may mistakenly think very little teaching has been done.

Professors teach in many places and in many ways. They teach in the classroom, on the sidewalk, in their offices, through technology, by lecturing, leading discussions, questioning, and mentoring. The E.V. should reflect this diversity, and so disconfirm the lay belief that teaching involves classroom instruction only. If professors describe their teaching solely in terms of specific classes offered and they omit other forms of instruction from the E.V., then their message is obvious: these other activities must not qualify as teaching.

The portfolio must document these forms by painstakingly listing supervision of internships, field work, thesis and dissertation research; membership on honors, thesis, and dissertation committees; colloquia; guest lectures; workshops; and so on. Moreover, the concept of teaching itself should be enlarged so that it includes nontraditional forms of instruction, including

- public teaching (presentations to the community at large, including speeches, workshops, educational newspaper articles, and interviews);
- workshops for colleagues and advanced students;
- distance education;
- interdisciplinary teaching;
- colloquia at one's own university and other universities; and
- Internet-based instruction.

The idea here is that outstanding teachers teach—they are literally involved in the act of teaching—in the classroom and in other teaching settings.

I Am a Practicing Teacher

Many professions, including medicine and the law, put great emphasis on improving their work over time. Physicians or lawyers, for example, are called practitioners, and their work is called a practice. Similarly, the E.V. should stress 'teaching professors' development as they "practice" and hone their technique. The outstanding educator who has never attended a workshop dealing with teaching skills or a conference on teaching or earned continuing education credit while studying his or her teaching is a rarity. If you attend the annual convention of American Psychological Association, be sure to go to the poster session dealing with teaching and note your attendance on your E.V. If your university offers workshops in teaching skills, take part and record your participation on your E.V. Join online e-mail groups devoted to teaching. Even informal meetings where you and your colleagues discuss teaching can be upgraded into self-development forums by titling the group and formally defining its focus on teaching.

I Contribute to the Teaching Side of Psychology

Many of the activities of a professor focus on the way knowledge generated in his or her field can be best conveyed to learners. The E.V. should, when possible, mention contributions to teaching in psychology and to higher education in general. Such contributions as research into pedagogical practices, curricular reform, university- and national-level service in teaching, public teaching, and mentorship of other teachers dot the vitas of the finest teachers. They also provide considerable service to their unit and to their discipline by developing courses, organizing offerings, and providing guidance on curriculum, including

- membership in or leadership of state or national committees or organizations that examine questions of teaching methods and curriculum,
- mentorship of other teachers,
- grant activities related to higher education,
- consultations at other universities regarding teaching,
- leadership in faculty development,
- development of educational models adopted elsewhere, and
- conducting workshops for colleagues at professional meetings.

Advanced teaching professors are concerned with their own and others' teaching, to the point that they study the process of teaching their discipline itself. Indeed, the professor's dictum, "publish or perish," applies to some degree to the teaching professor—for well-rounded professors communicate their ideas and experiences about teaching to others through papers and texts published or presented on educational topics, manuals developed for classroom use, and textbooks.

I Value Teaching

A traditional C.V., with 90% of its content devoted to research, screams the message TEACHING DOES NOT MATTER. And although this message is attributed to the individual professor who has crafted the C.V., it implies that the professor's college or university agrees with this assessment. When students, parents, or legislators read over a traditional C.V., all they see is evidence of the scholarly credentials and accomplishments. It is little wonder that they often complain that teaching is given too low a priority, for they are misled by the C.V.'s myopia. An E.V., by giving a voice to accomplishments in teaching, underscores the value of this activity.

Personal Statement of Teaching

A teaching portfolio is a personal document that should reflect the unique qualities of the particular teacher and so no uniform table of con-

tents can be either offered or enforced. But most analyses of portfolios in higher education agree that it should contain a statement by the professor that describes his or her beliefs about learning and education, and how these beliefs influence teaching practice. Murray writes: "The only essential component of the teaching portfolio is a statement of what the author believes about teaching and learning" (Murray, 1995, pp. 24–25).

The actual contents of these narratives vary, but the best teaching philosophies are lucid analyses of the professors' views of their mission as a scholar, a teacher, and a psychologist. They are sometimes written in a personal, revealing style, but they nonetheless contain substantive information about teaching professors' theoretical and conceptual orientation, the goals they seek when teaching their students about psychology, and their general assumptions about higher education and learning.

Paradigmatic Assumptions and Outlook

Because college professors integrate the values of the traditional teacher—one who educates and imparts knowledge—and the scholar—a learned person who has a profound knowledge of a particular subject matter—they do not simply serve as relay points for the transmission of information from authorities in the field to the student. Rather, they actively participate in the analysis, construction, and elaboration of psychology's basic findings, theories, and applications, and so have developed a unique understanding of their field. That unique understanding will permeate their teaching just as it permeates their research.

The portfolio provides an opportunity to describe, albeit briefly, one's fundamental assumptions about psychology, in general, and one's subfield, in particular. A behaviorist teaching introductory psychology, for example, may explain that her training prompts her to stress measurement over theory and the experimental analysis of behavior rather than difficult-to-observe psychological events such as cognitions and unconscious tensions. A personality theorist may state that his training and orientation are reflected in his continuing interest in human potentialities, prejudice, religion, and the value of self-reflection. An expert on multicultural issues may introduce a particular model of emic–etic distinctions and note the implications of this view for understanding socialization and development. A social psychologist may describe the basic tenets that she feels sustain that subfield's paradigm, including the concepts of interactionism, constructivism, dynamism, and empiricism. A psychologist teaching perception may explain that, even though he was trained in the psychophysical research tradition, his current work focuses more on the neural systems that sustain perception and attention. These brief descriptions of the professor's background and paradigmatic assumptions remind the reader that the author of the portfolio

is not simply someone who teaches psychology, but rather a psychologist who has chosen to advance the discipline by teaching it to others.

Principles

Skilled professors' base their teaching interventions on a set of assumptions, or principles, about learning and higher education in general. These principles can be one's that the teaching professor personally finds to be important, but they can also be drawn from extant analyses of college-level instruction like those discussed briefly in chapter 1. A professor may, for example, briefly summarize the American Psychological Association's Committee on Undergraduate Education's 1991 report (McGovern et al., 1991) on teaching or Chickering and Gamson's (1987) *Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education* before giving examples of their application in the professor's class on history and systems, experimental methods, or child psychology. Another effective approach is to tie the principles directly to the particular field's paradigmatic assumptions. For example, developmentalists could note what theories of cognitive development say about how a college class should be structured, behaviorists could stress the importance of behavioral objectives and rewards, and personality theorists could explain their student-centered approach by examining individual differences in learning styles.

Recognized expert teachers in the field of psychology are also excellent sources of points to include and discuss in this segment of the narrative. The chapters in Sternberg's (1997b) *Teaching Introductory Psychology: Survival Tips from the Experts* and Perlman, McCann, and McFadden's (1999) *Lessons Learned: Practice Advice for the Teaching of Psychology* are founts of principled insights into how psychology is best taught. Lefton (1997, pp. 65–66), for example, explained his approach as follows:

I design my class and my textbook according to certain guiding principles. I try to (a) be selective in what I teach; (b) adapt to my students' learning styles; (c) teach critical thinking and learning strategies; (d) work from application to theory; (e) help students recognize and be sensitive to issues of diversity, including age, gender, and ethnicity; (f) keep the course current and exciting; (g) engage students; and (h) teach psychology as a unified, coherent discipline.

He then expands on each of these principles, explaining how they determine the strategies he uses in the classroom. In doing so he deals with questions of breadth vs. depth of coverage, the emphasis on facts vs. ideas, the need to organize material vs. the need to let students structure the material themselves, the use of questions to stimulate critical thinking, and the balance between theory and its application to issues.

Gray (1997), whose teaching duties include physiological and intro-

ductory psychology, introduced his own approach to teaching by first describing a comic strip that features a college professor struggling to prompt a reaction from his students. The professor, to goad the students into challenging the ideas he is presenting, makes statements that grow ever more extreme, until eventually he proclaims “Democracy is the source of all evil! Up is down! Right is wrong!” In the comic strips’ final panel two students comment to each other “Boy, this course is really getting interesting,” and “Yeah, I didn’t know half this stuff” (Gray, 1997, p. 49). To Gray, this comic illustrated the tendency for students, and professors, to focus too much on facts and information—to the point that students stop thinking critically about the information presented. Gray then explained how he shifts students’ attention to ideas and arguments (1997):

The essence of the approach is to focus explicitly on ideas as the subject matter of the course, rather than on facts, terms, topics, textbook pages, the unsupported opinions of famous psychologists, or any of the other substitutes for ideas that may attempt to force their way to center stage. An idea, by definition, is something to think about; it is something to defend or refute with evidence and logic. (p. 50)

Bernstein (1997) began by explaining that he “makes no claim to special insight about the best way to teach this, or any other, course. My approach to teaching makes sense to me, but I don’t expect everyone to agree with it” (p. 35). He also prefaced this overview of his principles with engaging autobiographical material that describes the first course he ever taught and his decision to cope with feelings of incompetence by basing his teaching on the Hippocratic oath: “First of all, do no harm.” The narrative set forth a number of key assumptions (pp. 40–44):

- Portray psychology as an empirical science based on critical thinking.
- Portray psychology knowledge as dynamic, not static.
- Portray the breadth and diversity of psychology.
- Promote active learning.
- Emphasize the importance of psychology in everyday life.
- Portray psychology as an integrated discipline.

Techniques and Strategies

The generality of the section dealing with assumptions and philosophies of learning should be tempered by a section that provides concrete examples of how these principles are applied in specific courses, to specific topics, and to specific types of students. If your teaching responsibilities include the introductory course, advanced senior courses, large proseminar courses, and graduate seminars, you need to describe each of these courses, and at least briefly explain your specific goals, strategies, and procedures.

You may, too, wish to provide far more details about your methods for one or two of your classes. If, for example, you teach a large section of introductory psychology, you may wish to use this class to illustrate how you put your principles about learning into practice by stressing critical thinking in your lecturing, breaking the class down into small groups for collaborative learning, by using computer-based technologies, and so on.

Unique Strengths and Concerns

The teaching narrative provides professors with the opportunity to explain, and even highlight, those features of their teaching that are unique, controversial, or even eccentric. Some professors spend a good deal of time describing some specific, if idiosyncratic, concern that they consider to be of paramount importance; Professor X might discuss the rigor of her course in some detail, noting the close connection between exams, final grades, and the primary objectives of the course. Professor Y might stress the importance of remaining sensitive to how men and women are treated in the classroom, because evidence has suggested that in many educational settings women receive less attention relative to men. Professor Z may discuss how students earn points in the class through service learning at local mental health agencies.

Pitfalls of the Personal Narrative

The narrative section of the portfolio is not easily crafted, for professors who do not exercise caution often convey the wrong impression to the reader. The reader of the narrative needs answers to many questions about teaching: What are the writer's teaching values? What is her teaching style? Is this instructor liked or disliked by his students? Does the teacher seem experienced and "wise" in her approach to instruction, or naive and uncertain? Does the teacher seem interested in his discipline and in teaching it to others? Does she seem well-informed or dogmatic? Does he let his personal values surface unnecessarily, or does he set the correct level of personalization?

These narratives should also be carefully written so they are coherent, articulate, and free of grammatical error. This element of the portfolio gives professors the opportunity to explain the reasons behind their teaching methods, but they can also reveal other, less positive, messages. A narrative that is garbled or unstructured raises, sometimes unfairly, warning signs for the reader. If authors cannot communicate their ideas about the teaching clearly, then how well do they communicate information about psychology to their students? A lack of care in developing the narrative can also generate one that sounds pretentious or trite. The professor may explain "I am deeply committed to teaching, for my first obligation is to my students." Another writes, "I love to teach. I've always felt at home in the classroom,

surrounded by young minds.” A third claims “I strive to instill a love of learning in my students, for I believe that education and the ability to acquire knowledge hold the keys to our world’s survival.” These statements are the professorial versions of the painful “What my education means to me” essays that students must write on admission applications. These statements should not be written at the last moment, but well in advance of the deadline so revisions recommended by colleagues and mentors can be made.

Teaching Materials

Portfolios should contain actual samples of the professor’s work. These samples should be carefully organized so the reader can grasp the connections among the various documents. This section can be prefaced with a brief overview of the scheme that organized the various elements, and annotations should be added as needed to help the reader grasp the importance of each exhibit. Again, these materials should be consistent with, and even elaborate upon, the principles and strategies of instruction noted in the personal narrative.

Syllabi

The syllabus, or course outline, is often the very first piece of paper that professors drop into that file folder labeled “Teaching Portfolio Project.” Syllabi, as noted in chapter 1, are designed to give students a clear idea of the professor’s goals, methods, standards, and policies, which is precisely the type of information that should be conveyed in a teaching portfolio. Professors should, however, be mindful of the fit between the principles that they espouse in their narrative and the objective data of the syllabus. Professors who claim to use teacher-centered methods and engaging activities that demand critical thinking, but whose syllabi list only the chapter topics and the dates for the multiple choice exams, signal their hypocrisy rather than competency. A syllabus that omits critical information, such as the course goals, contact information, and course prerequisites, makes a poor impression, as does a syllabus that goes on and on about attendance, make-ups, and classroom etiquette but says little about the course’s overall purpose and procedures.

Handouts, Assignments, Activities

A college course can be the wellspring of a river of paper. During the course of a semester or quarter, professors inundate their students with lecture outlines, learning objectives, exam prep sheets, reading lists, research summaries, homework assignments, exercises, observation guides, study hints, thought questions, and so on, and these documents are telling

indicators of teaching practices. Even electronic communications and handouts should be included, such as e-mails to students, screen shots of Web pages, online discussion questions, and forum topics. Your classroom might be paperless, but your portfolio should not be (unless you mount it on a Web page).

Notes and Planning Materials

College professors rarely develop the elaborate curriculum guides favored by elementary and secondary education teachers, but some use detailed worksheets to describe topics and objectives, lists of the media to use and readings to cover, key examples to share with students, clippings from magazines and newspapers about course topics, and notes about potential projects. These types of material provide background information about the professor's level of preparation, as do the notes they use when giving a lecture or leading a discussion. Lecture and discussion notes, for example, provide the reader with an idea of how each presentation is structured, and its relationship to the professor's overall assumptions about teaching. The reading list serves a similar function, even if the list was used only by the professor during his or her preparation for the class and was not shared with the students. Such lists of scholarly books, references, and readings impress laypersons, but they also give colleagues a good indication of the instructor's basic approach and emphases.

Tests, Quizzes, and Examinations

The portfolio should include, at a minimum, a description of the procedures used to give students feedback about their progress toward the course's objectives. In many cases, this section will include samples of quizzes, tests, exams, and term paper assignments made in a recently taught class, but professors who use alternative strategies such as graded participation, term projects, observation of students, and oral exams should provide some details about how they carry out these evaluations. This section may also contain examples of the types of feedback given to students about their performance, including graded papers (with student names removed).

Given the importance of assessment in teaching, professors should also include additional information about the reliability and validity of the procedures they use. Examples of tables of specification that indicate the relationship between each item and the course's learning objectives, indexes of difficulty and discrimination, item-to-total correlations, and other psychometric data can give readers of the portfolio reassuring information about the quality of assessment procedures. The professor may also wish to give some indication of the typical distribution of grades—particularly when the portfolio will be reviewed by external audiences that have no way of estimating the difficulty of the exam and the overall course content.

The portfolio should include digests of the results of past and current evaluations of teaching effectiveness based on student evaluations, peer evaluations, and other types of summative evaluation systems. Some of this information may be available on the E.V. but this section should provide much more orientation and interpretation so that the reader interprets the data appropriately. A professor might, for example, list all his PhD students and where they are currently employed on his E.V., but draw attention to these data in this section of the portfolio in a heading named "Mentoring Advance Students" or "Graduate Student Instruction."

Student-Based Evaluations

As noted in chapter 8, the validity of students' perceptions of teaching quality is a matter of debate. This information should nonetheless be included in the complete portfolio, for the portfolio's flexibility provides the author with an opportunity to suggest his or her own interpretation of the data.

Most colleges and universities use a specific system for soliciting data from students pertaining to teaching effectiveness, and they provide professors with feedback from this evaluation on a regular basis. This material provides the basis for clarifying one's success in teaching, particularly if the data are carefully mined and artfully summarized. These inventories often include items with dubious psychometric quality, so the portfolio should focus on those items with the best validity and reliability (e.g., global items that assess satisfaction with the course, the professor, and learning rate; compare d'Apollonia & Abrami, 1997 and Marsh & Roche, 1997). The portfolio should not assume that the reader understands concepts such as range, standard deviation, mean, median, mode, or even the item's metric, so this section requires annotations that provide a verbal interpretation of the numeric data and descriptions of any special conditions that should be taken into account when interpreting the results.

Charts, plots, figures, and other graphics also increase the ease of interpretation of the items, particularly when the data are extensive, inconsistent, or confusing. Figure 9.1, for example, provides a graphic illustration of the charted data from a professor teaching an introductory course over a 5-year period (perhaps the 5 years prior to tenure). A overall mean for this instructor's teaching would not be particularly positive: only a 3.5 on a 5-point scale, where 5 indicates "excellent." The charted data, however, tell a different story; one of remarkable improvement over time, and the promise that future classes will be evaluated very positively. The figure should be annotated, however, to provide an explanation for the trend: Perhaps this professor was developing excellence in teaching over this pe-

Type of Rating Evaluation

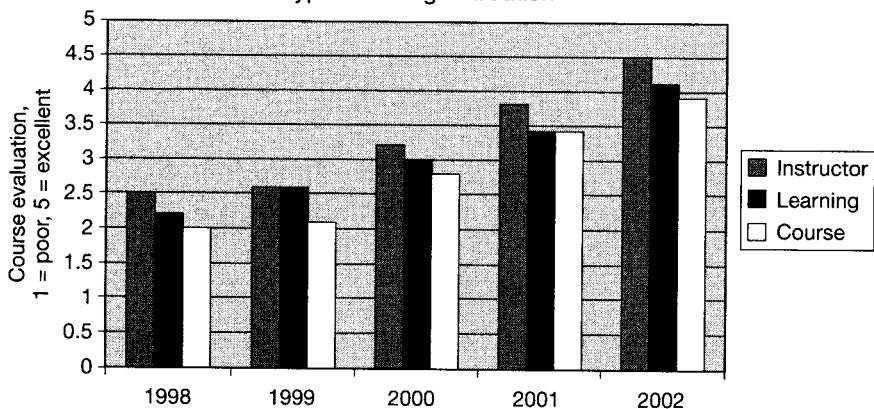


Figure 9.1. Example of figure depicting teaching evaluations over a 5-year period.

riod rather than merely devoting more time to teaching as the deadline for tenure and promotion approached.

Peer-Based Evaluations

Fellow instructors can often provide considerable information about teaching performance; information that goes well beyond that provided by students. In many cases colleagues have seen each other give colloquia, guest lectures, and presentations at meetings, and these experiences can form the basis for a brief commentary about one's communication and presentation skills. Peers also have considerable information about effectiveness gained by participation in joint teaching situations, such as membership on student committees and team teaching situations. Some universities even have objective "teacher evaluators" visit classrooms and provide analyses of the quality of instruction.

Outcome-Based Evaluations

Most indices of teaching excellence focus on the instructor, asking the question "How effective is this instructor?" Yet some universities suggest that the portfolio should also include evidence of the impact of instruction. It is difficult to determine instructors' contribution to their students' achievement, but the following types of information provide some evidence of learning outcomes:

- High scores on standardized or locally developed tests of knowledge
- High-quality essays, projects, and reports written by students

- Publications or presentations with students as coauthors
- Evidence of success following graduation in careers closely connected to specific course
- The performance of students in related or subsequent courses
- Employers' reports after hiring students

Additional Indicators

Teaching effectiveness can be assessed in a variety of ways in addition to the usual student ratings (see chapter 8). In addition to data pertaining to the most critical dependent measure in higher education—Did students learn anything?—one may also wish to include other types of evidence of impact: success in placing students in jobs or graduate schools, comments from parents, testimonials written by students (both those written in response to a direct request and spontaneous submissions), interviews with students or alumni, and special surveys of opinion (often conducted prior to tenure and promotion).

Supplemental Materials

The teaching professor's creativity, and not the standards set by others' portfolios, determines what goes in to and is left out of the portfolio. Depending on the individual teacher, the portfolio may include such novelties as the following items:

- A videotape of a lecture from a class or a presentation at a national conference.
- A computer disk containing the interactive programs that teach a range of psychological topics.
- A map of the United States, with a star marking the location of each PhD student mentored.
- The verbatim, unedited comments made by students on the open-ended portion of the student evaluations.
- Copies of the forms, descriptions, and memoranda created when a new course was guided through the various school curricula committees and into the course catalog.
- Dozens of eloquent recommendation letters written for undergraduate and graduate students.
- A letter from the department chairperson describing the professor's teaching skills.
- Photographs of chalk-filled blackboards after a particularly passionate lecture.

All these varied forms of evidence that testify to the professor's skills as an educator are possibilities for inclusion in the portfolio. For just as evaluators

of teaching quality must cast their net widely if they are to catch all the indicators of teaching discussed in chapter 8, so professors must do all they can to provide readers with the information they need to understand what it means to be a teaching psychologist.

Indicators of sometimes overlooked aspects of teaching are particularly important to include. *Teaching-related service*, for example, can absorb an enormous amount of time, but this contribution to teaching is often overlooked by review committees whose attention is riveted on classroom instruction. Yet, each new course developed or modified, service on committees devoted to issues related to teaching and curriculum, and administrative duties that are primarily focused on teaching all underscore the professor's commitment to teaching. Evidence of effective *mentoring and advising* should also be highlighted, for all teaching does not happen in a classroom lecture or discussion; the portfolio should not overlook indicators of the professor's accomplishments in one-on-one and small group teaching settings. Evidence of teaching scholarship—such as papers on teaching, manuals developed for classroom use, research into the learning and teaching process, textbooks, and books—that examines critical processes and issues in teaching psychology (like this one!), too, are appropriate additions to the teaching portfolio.

BECOMING THE TEACHING PSYCHOLOGIST

Allport, like many psychologists whose views of people were shaped by humanistic assumptions, believed that each human's life is a process of becoming. His studies of religion, personality, and mental health all converged on one conclusion: People are not complacently satisfied with their accomplishments but rather goal-oriented creatures who pursue mastery with great fervor. Psychologically healthy people constantly reflect on their potentialities, set new aspirations, deepen their self-understanding, and strive toward perfection. And so it is for the teaching psychologist. Each day brings new demands and new experiences: new courses to teach when the developments of our field make the ideas and information offered in older formulations obsolete; new studies to conduct as new questions arise that can only be answered empirically; new students to help understand the nature of psychology through teaching and training; and new lectures to give, discussions to lead, activities to design and implement, tests to write, grades to assign, classes to manage, technologies to learn, and courses to evaluate. But each activity, each course, each term, and each year contributes to the process of becoming, and in time the neophyte instructor is transformed into the teaching psychologist.