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Preparing Course Portfolio

By

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References Material: HANDBOOK FOR CREATING
COURSE PORTFOLIOS,

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Purpose of Course Portfolio

- Course portfolio, a resource exchange of course-specific teaching information, is the solution of following problems.
 1. Many creative and effective teaching strategies are forgotten or misplaced between semesters, only to be re-learned in subsequent semesters or lost forever.
 2. No formal mechanism is in place to pass course-specific teaching information from instructor to instructor.



Why should instructors make a course portfolio?

- Course portfolios prevent the loss of effective teaching techniques, thus providing the means for all instructors to continually improve existing curriculum.
- Course portfolios will enable most instructors get a head start, specifically those who are new to campus, those who are teaching for the first time, or those who receive late assignments and have little time to prepare. By performing all of these functions, course portfolios will complement existing workshops and resources.
- Course portfolios are useful for instructors who plan to continue teaching. Course portfolios can be revised into teaching portfolios, which may be useful documentation to present at job interviews and list on a vitae.



Why should instructors make a course portfolio?

- Many of **the items that could be in your course portfolio are things that you already have.** You just need to collect and organize them.
- The portfolios may not be complete, but **every bit will help the next instructor or help you the next time you teach the course.**
- By having course portfolios from previous semesters, **instructors can spend more time developing new material for their course** to supplement and enhance the previously collected material.



How will course portfolios benefit faculty?

- The course portfolio can help faculty bring new TAs up to speed, can serve as a repository which professors and TAs can draw from, and can provide **a source of information to improve courses.**
- Also, the information contained in the course portfolios is organized **to provide useful accreditation and assessment documents.**



Course Portfolio Contents

1. Checklist
2. Course Syllabus
3. Teaching Materials
4. Support Materials
5. Assignments
6. Student Work
7. Personal Reflections and Student Feedback
8. Future Issues



1. Checklist

- The portfolio begins with checklists, which are intended to help remind you to place material into the portfolio as well as to let others know what information you have placed in the course portfolio.
- Because you will probably be adding to your portfolio several times during the semester, we can separate checklists for various times:
 - before the first day of semester,
 - during the semester,
 - after the last day of the semester.



1. Checklist

- Before your first day, you should read what others have placed into the course portfolio and gather other appropriate handouts. If changes to the handouts are necessary for the new semester, make them before including them in the portfolio.
- During the semester, you may have additional handouts and assignments for the students. You also may have corrections, observations, homework solutions, and grading criteria to document. To save time, add materials to the portfolio as they become available to you, rather than hunting them all down at the end of the semester.
- The end of the semester is a time for instructors and students to reflect upon what worked, what didn't work, and what needs to be improved for next time. Be sure to note any corrections or changes.



2. Course Syllabus

- In general, a syllabus covers topics such as course design, teaching/learning goals and objectives, learning activities, teaching methods, and assessment strategies.
- Specifically, a syllabus contains an outline and schedule of topics taught in the course.
- Also, the syllabus communicates to students what the course is about, why it is taught, where it is going, and what will be required of the students to pass the course.
- Last semester's syllabus is a good place to start when creating a new syllabus.
- While teaching the course, keep track of topics that took more or less time to cover than you predicted. Include suggestions about reorganizing or combining topics, or whatever ideas you have that would make the class run more smoothly.



3. Teaching Materials

- This section should contain all the materials considered essential to teaching your course. Please keep the materials updated, especially if a new instructor will be teaching the course next semester, and place them in the portfolio. Teaching materials are:
 - Course manual or notes
 - Lecture notes
 - Additions and revisions



4. Support Materials

- In order for students to complete their assignments and fulfill the learning objectives, we often must supply them with additional material. A few examples of things to consider follow:
 - Construction techniques (Rig up instruction)
 - Equipment documentation
 - Computer files, programs, and documentation
 - Troubleshooting and debugging tips
 - Departmental resources and shops
 - Additions and revisions



5. Assignments

- This section of the course portfolio covers the expected format for
 - assignments,
 - problems,
 - laboratory experiments,
 - handouts,
 - problems,
 - Quizzes and exams.
- Homework problem sources and page numbers should be provided if they are from a textbook.
- **Corrections, suggestions for improvement, and specific grading criteria such as what factors will be included, how they will be weighted, and how they will be translated into grades should be included with the assignments.** You may also include your grading criteria and partial credit policy.
- **You may write corrections and suggestions directly on the old copy** of the assignment.



6. Student Work

- Examples of student work are an important part of the course portfolio. Include good, average, and poor examples of assignments, exams, or lab reports.
- If applicable, include a list of previous student projects. Also include the grading guidelines. Putting student samples into your course portfolio will give the next instructor an idea of the variety of student work in the class.
- Additionally, your professor or department chair might ask for student work examples for accreditation review. Student privacy is important.
- Any student work samples you choose to include in the portfolio must be unnamed—remove the student's name and other identifying information.

7. Personal Reflections and Student Feedback



- The most valuable component of the course portfolio is the section that **contains the constructive criticism of the instructors and students.**
- Here is the place where you can give your personal reflections and evaluation of the class. Any educational or motivational suggestions are encouraged.
- **This section is the right place to add your ideas. Passing on information such as the difficulty of problems in assignment sets and exams, motivation of students, strengths and weaknesses of students, and problems with lab equipment will be helpful to the next instructor.**



8. Future Issues

- In preparing this manual, the TA Fellows found several issues that could not be resolved at this time due to our inability to predict how the portfolios would develop. These issues can be tentative solutions for developing course portfolio, such as,
 - Guidelines for amending and deleting information
 - Centralized vs. distributed access
 - Computerized vs. printed formats
 - Voluntary vs. mandatory participation
 - Appropriate availability of information
 - Courses with multiple instructors



References

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Q&A Session