“Tell us about your teaching philosophy.”
Developing Your Teaching Portfolio

What's your story?

Dr. Barbi Honeycutt, Director of Graduate Teaching Programs
NC State University & Flip It Consulting
Learning Outcomes

1. Describe what a teaching portfolio is (and is not)
2. List reasons why a teaching portfolio is important
3. Explain the main components of a teaching portfolio
4. Generate ideas for materials to include in your own portfolio
5. Explain the importance of the teaching philosophy
6. Generate ideas for your teaching philosophy statement

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Why is a teaching portfolio important?
What is a teaching portfolio?

- Container
- Scrapbook
- Whole life history

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A scholarly research project about your teaching:

• **Thesis**  
  Purpose and teaching philosophy

• **Evidence/data**  
  Materials from self, students, and others

• **Descriptions and analysis**  
  Reflections and analyses of data

• **Conclusion**  
  Summarize & explain future goals

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Purpose

Context

Philosophy

Evidence & Analysis

Reflective Summary

Your Portfolio in 5 Steps

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What are the different types of portfolios?

• Comprehensive
• Course-based
• Theme-based
1. What is the purpose of your portfolio?

2. Which type of portfolio will work best for your purpose?
Your Portfolio in 5 Steps

1. Purpose
2. Context
3. Philosophy
4. Evidence & Analysis
5. Reflective Summary

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1. What do you teach, or what have you taught?

2. Which teaching experiences fit best with your purpose and format?
Your Portfolio in 5 Steps

Purpose

Context

Philosophy

Evidence & Analysis

Reflective Summary

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What is the teaching philosophy statement?

It is...
- Required
- Most important part
- The “glue”
- Your “thesis”
- Hard to write
The Teaching Philosophy

• May evolve throughout your career.
• If it changes dramatically, tell the story.
• Format:
  – First person – use “I”
  – Your voice – tell your story
  – 1-2 pages
  – Non-technical language
  – Avoid generalities; balance the big picture with specific examples
  – Creative? Consider quotes, stories, analogies, etc.
  – Be ready to share in an interview
Examples & Rubric
(See worksheets #1 and #2)
1. What are your goals when you teach? (list 2 or 3)

2. How could you tell your story?
Your Portfolio in 5 Steps

1. Purpose
2. Context
3. Philosophy
4. Evidence & Analysis
5. Reflective Summary
Show me the evidence!

From Self

From Others

From Students

Refer to worksheet #3

Worksheet: Collecting Evidence

Review your teaching goals. What do you have right now, in your office or at home, that you could include in your portfolio today as evidence to support these goals?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence from Self</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence from Students</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence from Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examples: My advisor observes my</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lab last semester. I have a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>copy of the evaluation form.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1. Refer back to your goals for teaching.

2. What evidence do you have now?

3. Make a plan for gathering more evidence.
Your Portfolio in 5 Steps

1. Purpose
2. Context
3. Philosophy
4. Evidence & Analysis
5. Reflective Summary

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Reflective Summary

• Make the connections for your reader.
  – It’s not a collection → It’s a story
  – Reflect, describe, and analyze each section.

• What lessons have you learned?

• What’s next? How do you plan to continue your professional development in teaching?
Since we can’t write this section today, identify one strategy for continuing your professional development in teaching.
It’s a Fine Balance...

- Materials from self
- General knowledge about teaching
- Personal & Reflective
- Materials from others & students
- Discipline-specific knowledge
- Data & Evidence

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Let’s take a look at a few examples...
Example: Notice the categories and purpose statement

Purpose of Portfolio

Teaching portfolios are prepared for a variety of reasons. I am preparing this one, because my memory is not what it used to be. I know that I’ve tried some things in the classroom that have worked well -- or failed miserably -- and then forgotten what they were. I have been seeking a more systematic way to track and evaluate the things I do as a teacher -- this appears to be a reasonable approach.

I also have questions about the effectiveness of my teaching that I am unable to answer, the main one being "Is my teaching effective?" Creating and updating a teaching portfolio incites my thinking about these questions and provides a framework in which to seek the answers.

Philosophy

Our Job, Your Job
(from the Natural Resources Measurements syllabus)

The teaching assistants and I will do our very best to present material in an organized manner and provide a rich and varied learning environment. We won’t give you the answers, but we will help direct your efforts and minimize obstacles to your learning.

Your job is to do your very best to learn the material that we present. You will have to figure out the learning strategy that works best for you. It’s your responsibility to tell us if you’re having problems and need help.

My goal as a teacher is to excite students about the process of learning and figuring out things for themselves. At the beginning of each course, I ask students to accept the philosophy that there are no stupid questions and no dumb ideas. I also try to convey the message that, although I take my teaching responsibilities seriously, I DON’T TAKE MYSELF TOO SERIOUSLY. I’m not a fountain of wisdom, and I’m not afraid to say "I don’t know." This helps establish an atmosphere in which most students are willing to explore ideas and ask questions without fear of ridicule or penalty.
### Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Name / Brief Description</th>
<th>Number of Times Taught</th>
<th>Recent Class Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regularly Offered Courses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NATURAL RESOURCES MEASUREMENTS</strong> is a required course in the undergraduate natural resources curricula. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE COURSE is to expose students to the theory and practice of measuring, analyzing, and describing natural resources through classroom and field experiences. [Offered every spring.]</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MODELING BIOLOGICAL SYSTEMS</strong> is a required course in the graduate Biomathematics Program. Many students from other departments take it as an elective course. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE COURSE is to teach students how to create mathematical models of biological systems. Every student BUILDs A MODEL and presents the results in a CLASS POSTER SESSION. [Offered fall of odd years.]</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EFFECTIVE SCIENTIFIC POSTERS</strong> is an elective course, open to graduate and advanced undergraduate students. The OBJECTIVE of this short (five week) course is to have each student design and develop a poster. [Offered every spring.]</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LANDSCAPE ECOLOGY</strong> is an elective course. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE COURSE is to introduce students to the field, with a focus on application to solving natural resources problems. Every student DOES A SEMESTER-LONG RESEARCH PROJECT and presents the results in a CLASS POSTER SESSION. [Offered fall of even years.]</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaborative Research Special Topics Courses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Measuring Suburban Sprawl</strong> was a one-time, elective graduate course that involved graduate students in collaborative research. We defined suburban sprawl and developed quantitative measures of the phenomenon. This effort built on my experiences in &quot;Ecology and Economics of Clearcutting&quot; and was more successful. We produced a manuscript during the course -- Just what is sprawl, anyway? -- that was published in Carolina Planning.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Example: Linking courses, methods, and strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Documentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measuring Suburban Sprawl 2001</td>
<td>Establish a collaborative research project in which graduate students perform research on the issue.</td>
<td>Expose graduate students to collaborative research, working with one another and faculty as peers to carry out a research project.</td>
<td>• PAPER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resources Measurements 2000</td>
<td>Integrated GIS, GPS, and sampling into a class and lab sequence.</td>
<td>Spatial information technologies increasingly are used in natural resources management and research, but generally they are taught separately and not well integrated with other course material.</td>
<td>• PAPER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resources Measurements 1997</td>
<td>Established a client-consultant relationship between students in this course and students in a landscape architecture course. Teams of students in the two classes worked together to complete projects.</td>
<td>Expose students to a realistic client-consultant relationship, as they might encounter in their jobs; and increase communication across disciplinary boundaries.</td>
<td>• Teaching Excellence Initiative Grant Proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeling Biological Systems 1997</td>
<td>Each student completes a project and presents the results at a class poster session at semester’s end.</td>
<td>Poster sessions are becoming a major component of scientific meetings, and graduates students receive little training. Teaches valuable communication skills -- students must be clear and succinct, yet able to discuss orally details of their work.</td>
<td>• Teaching Excellence Initiative Grant Proposal   • Grant Report • Class Web Pages • Project • Published Paper • 1997 Evaluations • 1998 Evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Ecology and Design 1998</td>
<td>Teams of students research and debate a current natural resource issue.</td>
<td>A debate is a very focused event that requires students to understand both sides of an issue, if they are to do well.</td>
<td>• Debate Overview <strong>link comments from student evaluations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecology and Economics of Clearcutting 1996</td>
<td>Established a web-based, collaborative learning environment in which students performed research on the issue.</td>
<td>Expose students to collaborative research, working with one another and the instructors as peers to develop a base of information needed for further research.</td>
<td>• Teaching Excellence Initiative Grant Proposal   • Grant Report • Published Paper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The following table summarizes my teaching evaluations on a scale of 1-5, in which 5 is the highest rating. Some departments report differently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course (Semester)</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Course Overall</th>
<th>Instructor Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FOR 595T (Spring 2001)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NR 300 (Spring 2001)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>4.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMA 567 (Fall 2000)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>4.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAR 492 (Spring 2000)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NR 300 (Spring 2000)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>4.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NR 300 (Spring 1999)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>4.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMA 567 (Fall 1998)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Unavailable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAR 492 (Fall 1998)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NR 300 (Spring 1998)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMA 567 (Fall 1997)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NR 300 (Spring 1997)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>4.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOR 692 (Fall 1996)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although student evaluations of my class have been good, and are generally improving, I don't believe that they are a complete measure of effectiveness. To me, a more satisfying measure of effectiveness would be demonstrated changes in capabilities, knowledge, or attitudes. In teaching the "Ecology and Economics of
### Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Major Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing and Speaking in the Curriculum.</strong> A workshop intended to increase the effectiveness of writing and speaking assignments. (2001)</td>
<td>Provided more guidance for writing and speaking assignments in NR 300, including</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WORK PLAN CHECKLISTS;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IMPROVED EVALUATION CRITERIA; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE MEETINGS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The result was much better written assignments and the best oral presentations seen in this course to date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Portfolio Workshop.</strong> Main objective was to introduce the concept of a teaching portfolio and get each of the participants started on their own portfolio. (1999)</td>
<td>Developed the first version of this portfolio, and a more systematic approach to evaluating my teaching effectiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effective Teaching Workshop.</strong> Focused on active teaching techniques and creating measurable objectives for courses and classes. (1998)</td>
<td>By focusing on desired outcomes for COURSES and INDIVIDUAL CLASSES, my teaching became more directed. These techniques help me do a better job deciding which things to include and which to omit from a class. Increased the amount of active learning in my courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NC State University HEWLETT INITIATIVE.</strong> An NC State initiative to improve general education through the application of inquiry-guided instruction. (1997-1999)</td>
<td>Developed a network of other faculty interested in teaching. Increased my repertoire of teaching techniques and activities, particularly active learning techniques. For example, I started applying the &quot;one minute paper&quot; concept in my Landscape Ecology and Design Class -- I called it &quot;CLEAR AS MUD&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty Strategies for Engaging on-line Learners.</strong> This on-line conference allowed people trying on-line learning concepts from all over the world to &quot;chat&quot; about their efforts. (1997)</td>
<td>I discovered that many people were having the same problems with on-line collaborative learning that I encountered in the &quot;Ecology and Economics of Clearcutting Class&quot;, and that viable solutions were scarce.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example: Making connections for your reader

Portfolio Summary

I believe education is a path to an enlightened mind that leads to success in real life. It is among my priorities to create a learning environment where students can go beyond what is thought in the classroom. This dynamic portfolio represents my development as an instructor. As time passes, I would be adding new materials and adapt the old ones to be compatible with recent developments.

The first entry on this portfolio is the Teaching Philosophy and Statement. In this section I describe how I approach to teaching and the way I apply this ideas in my classroom. It specifically mentions the targets I set for the students so that they would successfully complete their class work. Discussion of the tutorial and mentoring experience is also summarized in this section. In addition, I explain the methods for adaptation of latest technologies to the class environment.

I created a separate section for Teaching Economics with Games such as Taboo, Family Feud, and Jeopardy. This is the section where I clarified how one can create a friendly class environment for learning economics while having fun. After developing this creative learning system I decided to share it with other instructors and participated in workshops to show my work. In addition to the poster presentation and related presentation papers, this section also includes links to the games where one can easily download and use them for enriching their own class experience.

In the 3rd section materials such as class assignments and some sample student essays are presented. Examples of course syllabuses and primary class materials can be downloaded from this section. Moreover, some student responses along with independent 3rd party evaluations of class experience are included here. The reflection sheets from teaching related workshops can also be viewed within this section. I hope that as I gain more experience, I would be able to add more materials. Lecture notes are available from the instructor on request.

A section for self-evaluation has been added where I discussed my preparation for teaching, on-
Recommendations

• Start early and collect constantly
• Summarize, analyze, combine data
• Remove students’ information or get permission
• “Field test” your portfolio – share it
• Realize the portfolio is never really “done”
“Tell us about your teaching philosophy.”