

Teaching Dossier

What is a Teaching Dossier/Portfolio?

A teaching dossier is a concise summary of your teaching accomplishments and effectiveness. Teaching dossiers and teaching portfolios are referred to interchangeably. "It is to teaching what lists of publications, grants and honors are to research and scholarship...It presents thoughtfully chosen information on teaching activities along with indisputable evidence of their effectiveness" Peter Seldin (2004, p. 3).

It is a summary of:

- Your teaching practices;
- Your practices' scope;
- Your accomplishments; and
- Evidence of your effectiveness.

Teaching dossiers are often requested as part of job, promotion and award applications. As a means of demonstrating your teaching competence to an intended audience, teaching dossiers are:

- Concise (e.g. 10 pages + appendices);
- Highly personalized and critically reflective;
- Evidence-based;
- Intentionally and thoughtfully integrated, organized, and presented;
- Focused on teaching practices and student learning; and
- Do not have one right format.

Contents

- Be specific with responsibilities (include evaluations and measures, if possible);
- Share *just* the right amount of information;
- Include all data in the appendix.
- Be transparent and (appear to be) humble; and
- Demonstrate data literacy and simplicity.

Steps to Creating Your Dossier

1. Collect teaching artifacts ;
2. Plan the dossier;
 - Consider the audience and purpose for your dossier.
 - What are your central claims about your teaching that the dossier will evidence?
 - What evidence do you have already? What evidence do you need to collect?
3. Summarize your teaching responsibilities;
4. Write your teaching philosophy/approach;
5. Select appropriate sections, content and supporting data;
6. Prepare statements for content item (connect these items to your central claims about your teaching);
7. Organize each section and prepare a table of contents; and
8. Arrange items in a 1-2 inch binder or create website.

Portfolios and the academic job market

Teaching dossiers are often requested as part of an academic job application. In preparing for these applications, have four versions ready:

1. 1 pager;
2. 3-4 pager;
3. Full-length; and
4. Full-length with appendices.

Read the job ad

- Submit the version that best fits.

If they don't ask for a dossier:

- Fit 1 pager into CV and cover letter; include link to dossier in cover letter.

Some General Tips for Creating a Dossier

- Create an integrated whole, not disparate sections
- Describe why you do what do as an instructor
- Develop a strong teaching philosophy
- Present teaching strategies and methodologies that support this philosophy
- Select documents and materials which provide strong evidence of your teaching activities and effectiveness and align with your philosophy
- Use supporting documents in the Appendices for support

Adapted from Seldin (2004) and Knapper and Wright (2001)

References

Seldin, P. 2004. *The Teaching Portfolio (Third Edition)*. Anker Publishing Company Inc., Bolton, MA.

Knapper, C. and Wright, A.W. 2001. Using portfolios to document good teaching: premises, purposes, practices. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 88: 19-29.