



Teaching Concerns

Newsletter of the Teaching Resource Center for Faculty and Teaching Assistants

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Teaching Portfolios Revisited

With the successful completion of the TRC's third annual workshop last May, approximately 75 faculty and TAs at U.Va. have now developed their own teaching portfolios. Teaching portfolios afford an opportunity to reflect on one's teaching in a comprehensive manner, and can act as a powerful tool for self-analysis. Many of our previous workshop participants have now utilized their portfolios to re-examine various aspects of their teaching. Here is a sampling of their comments:

William J. Kehoe, Commerce: *The Teaching Portfolio Workshop enabled me to accomplish three objectives. One, to have a reflective experience about my teaching. Two, to meet, learn from, and share ideas with educators from across the University who are concerned about teaching effectively. And, three, to improve my teaching skills as part of a personal program of continuously improving as an educator. While I consider myself to be a very good teacher, I want to be an even better teacher, and to have more of my students say of me that I was their best teacher. The Teaching Portfolio Workshop enabled me to evaluate my teaching and to develop goals and strategies for continuous improvement in my teaching.*

Doris Greiner, Nursing: *The portfolio workshop was exceptionally useful for stimulating me to focus on aspects of my teaching that after many years I was "taking for granted." My constant question over the years has been, "Are students learning?" Preparing the portfolio was an opportunity for me to address carefully the question, "What am I doing as a teacher that facilitates student learning?"*

Mike Millner, English: *I have some big ideas about what I want to accomplish, and what I am accomplishing in the classroom. The ten days I spent working on my Teaching Portfolio--where I had to articulate clearly all my big claims and then back them up with classroom proof--provided a favorable environment for reflection on what I am and am not accomplishing in my teaching. The process gave me the opportunity to think deeply about how I could bring some of my ideas out of the world of Walter Mitty and into reality. For someone relatively new to the teaching profession, the portfolio was a sort of incubator for new assignments, approaches to classroom situations, and modes of assessment. Working closely with my mentor, listening to the ideas of others in the workshop, being introduced to the support and tools the TRC has to offer, as well as thinking and reflecting on my own, made all of this possible. I also think that the portfolio document I have produced will continue to serve as a space for and an inducement to growth as I add to it in the future: it's a project I hope will never be quite done.*

Ingrid H. Soudek, SEAS: *The most important aspect of doing the teaching portfolio for me was the systematic exchange of ideas with other people. The experience confirmed vividly for me why I went into college teaching in the first place. More than a year later, I continue to seek out others with whom I can talk about teaching. I have also written a couple of papers that deal with my teaching techniques. There are some wonderful teachers at U.Va., and it is important for all of us to share resources.*

Manuel D. Rossetti, Systems Engineering: *I developed my teaching portfolio at the first TRC workshop in June of 1995. The portfolio helped me to structure my renewal packet information and has helped me to think more deeply about my goals as an educator both in teaching and in research. In addition, I have thoroughly enjoyed being a mentor and assisting others with the use and development of their portfolios.*

Andrew Stauffer, English: *I created my teaching portfolio during the summer of 1996, and used it as a resource when I went on the job market in the fall. Not only did I receive a lot of positive reactions to the document itself, but I found myself much more prepared to discuss my teaching experiences, strategies, and goals during interviews. I've put my teaching portfolio on the World Wide Web, and now I can simply refer interested parties to the Web site, which I update whenever necessary. I would certainly recommend the Teaching Portfolio Workshop to everyone who is interested in a career in academia.*

If you would like to find out more about teaching portfolios, please contact the TRC. If you are interested in developing your own portfolio, it is not necessary to wait until our next workshop, scheduled for May 1998, to do so. The TRC can put you in touch with a mentor who will guide you through the process. Call 982-2185 or e-mail us at trc@virginia.edu for more information.