



## Instructor Services

### Observations & Consultations

#### **In-Class Observation**

You can request a CTLE consultant to observe your teaching during one of your class sessions. After the observation, the consultant will meet with you to discuss feedback and suggestions for improvement. We have developed and refined a rubric informed by research and practice to target essential elements of effective teaching and learning. An in-class observation can be a tool to refine your teaching. You can keep the written feedback to support your RPT files or include it in your teaching portfolio.

You can have your class session recorded; you'll have access to the video so you can reflect on your teaching techniques and you may keep an electronic sample for your teaching portfolio.

#### **Online Course Observation**

CTLE can provide feedback for online courses, including observing your course design and learner interaction. After the observation, you'll meet with the CTLE consultant to discuss feedback and review online teaching resources and best practices for online pedagogy.

#### **Syllabus/Materials Review and Consultation**

Meet with a CTLE consultant to:

- Review and provide you with feedback on your teaching materials (course syllabus, teaching philosophy, CV)
- Discuss a teaching topic of your choice with a CTLE consultant (flipped classrooms, classroom management, assessment, active learning).

### Mid-term Student Feedback

Gathering Midterm Student Feedback is valuable for identifying areas for instructional improvement. Many instructors have found that simple changes early on can help motivate students and enhance student learning. Students appreciate the fact that the instructor values their opinions.

#### **In-Class Mid-Term Student Feedback**

A CTLE consultant will facilitate a focus group about what is going well your course and what could be improved. Afterwards, you'll meet with the consultant to discuss student feedback and resources for refinement of your teaching practices.

#### **Online Mid-term Student Feedback**

A qualitative survey will be administered to your students online. After the one-week feedback period closes, you will receive the compiled student feedback via email.

#### **Program Student Feedback**

A CTLE consultant will conduct a focus group to gather student feedback regarding the program. After the focus group, the transcribed responses will be emailed to you.

## **Chism's five components of a teaching statement**

In her article (Chism, 1998), "Developing a Philosophy of Teaching Statement," Nancy Chism, former Director of Faculty & TA Development at The Ohio State University, suggests five major components.

### **1. Conceptualization of learning**

Ask yourself such questions as "What do we mean by learning?" and "What happens in a learning situation?" Think of your answers to these questions based on your personal experience. Chism points out that some teachers have tried to express and explain their understanding of learning through the use of metaphor, because drawing comparisons with known entities can stimulate thinking, whether or not the metaphor is actually used in the statement. On the other hand, most instructors tend to take a more direct approach in conceptualizing learning, i.e., to describe what they think occurs during a learning episode, based on their observation and experience or based on current literature on teaching and learning.

### **2. Conceptualization of teaching**

Ask yourself questions such as "What do we mean by teaching?" and "How do I facilitate this process as a teacher?" Chism suggests that personal teaching beliefs on how the instructor facilitates the learning process would be appropriate for this section. Again, the metaphor format can be used, but a common practice is a more direct description of the nature of a teacher with respect to motivating and facilitating learning. Along with the questions above, you may also address such issues as how to challenge students intellectually and support them academically and how the teacher can respond to different learning styles, help students who are frustrated, and accommodate different abilities. Furthermore, you may talk about how you as a teacher have come to these conclusions (e.g., through past experience as a student or teacher, or as a result of literature reading or taking classes).

### **3. Goals for students**

This section should entail the description of what skills the teacher expects her/his students to obtain as the result of learning. You may address such issues as what goals you set for your classes, what the rationale behind them is, what kind of activities you try to implement in class in order to reach these goals, and how the goals have changed over time as you learn more about teaching and learning. For instance, you can describe how you have expected students to learn not only the content, but also skills such as critical thinking, writing, and problem solving, followed by elaboration on how you have designed/planned individual sessions towards accomplishing the goals.

### **4. Implementation of the philosophy**

An important component of the statement of a teaching philosophy should be the illustration of how one's concepts about teaching and learning and goals for students are transformed into classroom activities. Ask yourself, "How do I operationalize my philosophy of teaching in the classroom?" and "What personal characteristics in myself or my students influence the way in which I approach teaching?" To answer these questions, you may reflect on how you present yourself and course materials, what activities, assignments, and projects you implement in the teaching-learning process, how you interact with students in and outside class, and the consequences.

### **5. Professional growth plan**

It is important for teachers to continue professional growth, and to do so, teachers need to set clear goals and means to accomplish these goals. Think about questions such as "What goals have I set for myself as a teacher?" and "How do I accomplish these goals?" You can elaborate this plan in your statement of teaching philosophy. For instance, you can illustrate how you have professionally grown over the years, what challenges exist at the present, what long-term development goals you have projected, and what you will do to reach these goals. Chism suggests that writing this section can help you think about how your perspectives and actions have changed over time.

In summary, these are the main questions Chism suggests to answer in a statement:

- How do people learn?
- How do I facilitate that learning?
- What goals do I have for my students?
- Why do I teach the way that I do?
- What do I do to implement these ideas about teaching and learning in the classroom?
- Are these things working? Do my student meet the goals?

## What is a portfolio?

As an academic, you might prepare different types of portfolios, including the course portfolio, the professional (scholarly) portfolio, and the teaching portfolio. The materials provided here focus on the teaching portfolio.

**Course portfolio:** includes information specific to a particular course, including syllabi, course materials, and sample assignments, along with an explanation for the rationale behind the assignments, and a discussion of how your teaching methods and course materials help students learn.

**Professional portfolio:** a collection of documents that you might submit as you go through the promotion and tenure process. This type of portfolio would include all of your work as a scholar, including your research progress, your teaching experience and accomplishments, and your record of academic service.

**Teaching portfolio:** describes and documents multiple aspects of your teaching ability. Teaching portfolios are prepared in one of two basic formats:

- *Summative portfolios* are created for the purpose of applying for an academic job or for promotion and tenure within a department.
- *Formative portfolios* are created for the purpose of personal and professional development.

Because your teaching experience changes as your career progresses, it is a good idea to periodically update your portfolio(s) in order to keep current with your progress, and to give yourself a regular opportunity to reflect on your teaching. At some point in your career, you may find that you need to keep a summative as well as a formative portfolio, because they serve different purposes. However, note that summative and formative portfolios may share several materials in common. Some people describe a teaching portfolio as a place to summarize your teaching accomplishments and provide examples of classroom material. Others describe it as a mechanism and space for reflecting upon your teaching. And for the rest of us, it can be described as a space to do both.

## Characteristics of an Effective Portfolio

There is considerable variety in portfolio formats, but an effective portfolio should be well-documented and highly organized. The American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) suggests that a teaching portfolio should be structured, representative, and selective.

### Structured

A structured portfolio should be organized, complete, and creative in its presentation. Some questions for you to think about might be: Is my portfolio neat? Are the contents displayed in an organized fashion? Are the contents representative for the purpose that it is intended?

### Representative

In addition to attending to structure, a portfolio should also be comprehensive. The documentation should represent the scope of your work. It should be representative across courses and time. Some questions for you to think about might be: Does my portfolio portray the types and levels of courses that I have taught? Does my portfolio display a cross-section of my work in teaching?

### Selective

The natural tendency for anyone preparing a portfolio is wanting to document everything. However, if a portfolio is being used either for summative or formative purposes, careful attention should be given to conciseness and selectivity in order to appropriately document one's work. Peter Seldin (2004) suggests limiting the contents of a portfolio to ten pages. We suggest that you limit the contents of your portfolio to what is required by the reviewer while also keeping the purpose in mind.



## **Key Functions of a Teaching Portfolio**

- Collect evidence of your teaching ability
- Context for your teaching
- Summary data on your teaching in a simple, readable format
- Focus on quality, not quantity
- Organized and its various sections relate to each other
- An ever-changing, living document
- Allows for self-reflection
- Provides an opportunity to be unique, and showcase your personal style of teaching
- The process of creating one is generally much more important and meaningful than the end product

## **Why Create a Portfolio?**

The teaching portfolio can serve many purposes, including:

- Reflecting on your goals as a teacher
- Assessing your teaching strengths and areas which need improvement
- Documenting your progress as a teacher
- Generating ideas for future teaching/course development
- Identifying your personal teaching style
- Using elements of the portfolio to promote dialogue with fellow teachers
- Considering new ways of gathering student feedback
- Gathering detailed data to support your goals
- Collecting multiple sources of evidence that document the implementation of your teaching goals and their success

One would use a portfolio during the academic job search, promotion and tenure process, and for personal and professional development.

## **Portfolio in the Job Application Process**

In a job application process, you can use your portfolio in several ways. For example, you could do one or two of the following:

- make it an appendix to your curriculum vitae
- provide a table of contents of portfolio materials, listing all as available on request
- bring it to your job interview and refer to it as needed
- make it an additional item in your application materials, which is referred to elsewhere (e.g., in a 2-3 page required teaching experience summary)