Preparing Your McMaster Teaching Portfolio

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OUTLINE & OUTCOMES

Outline:

• Background
  – Teaching Portfolios: What, Why & How
  – Teaching Culture at McMaster

• The Components of a Teaching Portfolio
  – SPS B2: McMaster’s Teaching Portfolio policy
  – Review each SPS B2 section
  – Articulate your teaching beliefs/values

• How to approach your Portfolio as a new faculty
OUTLINE & OUTCOMES

Intended Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

• Describe the purpose and components of a teaching portfolio
• Describe elements of McMaster’s teaching culture
• Familiarize yourself with SPS B2’s teaching portfolio requirements
• Reflect on the underlying values that shape your teaching
• Create an “evidence wish list” to guide your teaching development efforts
## Key Resources

The image contains a page from a document titled "Preparation a Teaching Portfolio" and "McMaster University Policies, Procedures and Guidelines". The page includes a section on "Preparing a Teaching Portfolio" and a part of the "MacPherson Institute Guidebook". The page also contains a table with columns for "Complete Policy Title", "Policy Number (if applicable)", "Approved by", "Date of Most Recent Approval", "Date of Original Approval(s)", "Responsible Executive", and "Policy Specific Enquiries". The table includes rows for "Teaching Portfolios" with the policy number SPS B2, approved by Senate / Board of Governors on March 11, 2020 / April 16, 2020, dated December 14, 2011 / December 15, 2011 / April 8, 2009 (SPS 10), and responsible to Provost and Vice-President (Academic) for policy specific enquiries. The disclaimer states that if there is a discrepancy between the electronic policy and the written copy held by the policy owner, the written copy prevails.
WHAT IS A TEACHING PORTFOLIO?

A teaching portfolio is a **reflective and developmental tool** used to:

- Articulate your **beliefs** about teaching, learning, and students;
- Demonstrate your **growth** as an educator; and
- Support these claims with a record of your teaching **methods**, **accomplishments** and **goals**.
BENEFITS OF A TEACHING PORTFOLIO

• It can help you develop, reflect on, and enhance your teaching and the student learning experience

• It provides a space to meaningfully reflect on your successes, failures, goals and growth

• It can facilitate and support annual career review conversations with your Chair, or during Peer Observations of Teaching discussions

• It’s required when you apply for promotion, permanence, or tenure at McMaster

• Often required when applying for a teaching award
MCMASTER’S T&L CULTURE

McMaster's 2021 Partnered in Teaching & Learning Strategy: "Inspire and support excellence in teaching and learning"

Themes include:
- Diverse and expansive ways of knowing
- Experience-based learning
- Whole student experience
- Student belonging and inclusion
- Teaching as a professional and innovative practice
- Assessment and evaluation of student learning
- Digital learning
MCMASTER’S T&L CULTURE

Evaluation of Teaching in the strategy:

• *Objective*: Refine policies and processes to *demonstrate that teaching is valued* and recognized as a professional practice

• *Objective*: Build a culture that values **innovative, experimental and playful mindsets**

• “Evaluation of teaching needs to be **multi-faceted** and include self-reflection, peer observations, and student voices. We are committed to ensuring that **quality, relevance, and impact of teaching** is valued.”

McMaster’s culture also emphasizes **scholarly teaching**, acknowledges that simple methods for evaluation of teaching are biased, and views evaluation of teaching as a **constructive professional development process**
THE COMPONENTS OF A TEACHING PORTFOLIO
GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Purpose

Audience

Format
MCMASTER CONSIDERATIONS

SPS B2

Purpose ✓ Audience ✓ Format ✓

https://tinyurl.com/SPSB2McMaster
(note: upper/lower case matters when typing in the URL)
HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR MCMASTER TEACHING PORTFOLIO

First things first…

• Title page
• Table of contents
• Each section starts on a new page

Then…

SPS B2 specifies 2 major structural pieces:

• Part A – Executive Summary
• Part B – Supporting Documentation
BREAKDOWN OF SPS B2 – PART A:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

i. Description of responsibilities and mechanism of evaluation as per appointment letter (1 page max)

ii. Description of teaching approach/philosophy (~1 page)

iii. Description of teaching practice (1-2 pages)

iv. Description of contributions to teaching (~1 page)

v. Complete details of responses to the summative question in the student feedback on all courses taught over the past five years

>>Evidence of teaching effectiveness
FOCUS ON:

PART A i. RESPONSIBILITIES

• Straightforward reiteration of what’s described in your appointment letter - ex. 40% research, 40% teaching, 20% service.

• If applicable, include any formal updates made to your appointment

• Typically less than a page in length
FOCUS ON:

PART A ii. TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

• The teaching philosophy is a personal statement that formulates the foundation on which you will build the rest of your portfolio.

• It documents your teaching:
  • Beliefs (What do you think?)
  • Strategies (What do you do?)
  • Impact (What is the effect on learners, self, colleagues?)
  • Goals (How do you plan to improve?)

• The rest of your portfolio should provide evidence to back the statements you have made in your philosophy.
FOCUS ON:

PART A ii. TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Typically:

• About 1 page, single-spaced
• Written in first person
• Structured and organized – but there isn’t one template
• Honest and authentic
ACTIVITY:

PHILOSOPHY VALUES & BELIEFS

Independently, spend 10 minutes answering one or more of the following:

• What are your beliefs about… Teaching and learning? Your role as a teacher? The role of a student? The teacher-student relationship?

• What core values inform your teaching approaches? (i.e. what are the major tenets to your teaching philosophy?)

• Where does your teaching philosophy align with values articulated in McMaster’s Partnered in Teaching & Learning Strategy

• 5 years from now, what do you want your students, your colleagues, your Chair, your Faculty, your Institution to say about you as a teacher?

You may handwrite, draw, type, voice record, etc.
FOCUS ON:

PART A ii. TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Common structure formats:

• Metaphor
• Narrative
• Pillars
• Characteristics
• Quotes

Tip: Authenticity is key!

To see examples, visit University of Calgary’s sample philosophies:
http://tinyurl.com/UCPhilosophies

Structure Examples:

• Narrative: Ken MacMillan
• Pillars: Kyla Flanagan
• Characteristics: Susanne Cote
• Quotes: Heather Addy
• What else do you see?
FOCUS ON:

PART A ii. TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Tips:

• Do not read other teaching philosophies as a ‘starting point’

• Once you’ve written a draft, self-evaluate using Schönwetter et al., 2002

• Do have your statement reviewed by a trusted colleague

• Do check for alignment

• Do share how you plan to grow

• Do revisit your philosophy statement on an annual basis
FOCUS ON:

PART A iii. DESCRIPTION OF PRACTICE

- Whereas your Philosophy is about your beliefs and contains few examples in little depth, in contrast, your Description of Practice is about what you actually do and contains in-depth examples.

- Ultimately, it describes how your philosophy is realized and documents your growth.

- One to two pages, single-spaced.
FOCUS ON:

PART A iii. DESCRIPTION OF PRACTICE

Your Description of Practice should showcase:

- How you teach (characterize your key approaches) and why you do it that way
- Your assessment strategies and how they align with your teaching approach
- How you ensure your teaching is accessible and inclusive
- How you adapt your teaching in different situations
- What your greatest teaching successes and failures been, and what you learned from them
FOCUS ON:

PART A iv. CONTRIBUTIONS TO TEACHING

• Practices beyond your course-based teaching that fosters growth in curriculum, students, colleagues, etc:
  • Contributions to curriculum and other design initiatives
  • Significant challenges and how you addressed them
  • Presentations or professional development sessions you facilitated related to teaching and learning
  • Pedagogical research/SoTL, presentations and reports
  • Examples of teaching and learning leadership
• About 1 page, single-spaced
FOCUS ON:

PART A iv. CONTRIBUTIONS TO TEACHING

What this doesn’t mean:

- A list of courses you’ve taught
- Attendance at workshops & development efforts. However, you could briefly say at the end of this section “I have also done a lot to develop myself, please see Appendix __”.
- Your CV
FOCUS ON:

PART A v. EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

• For each course taught over the last 5 years, provide:
  • Course title
  • Course code
  • Term
  • Number of students enrolled
  • Number of responses to the course evaluation
  • Complete details of responses to the summative question in the student feedback on all courses taught over the past five years, set in the context of all teaching done in the Department (data to be provided by the Chair)
FOCUS ON:

PART A v. EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

• 3+ years ago the question was about rating instruction – now it is about rating the learning experience

• The context and practice around what to include for evidence of teaching effectiveness continues to evolve at McMaster

• While you might be provided with numerical data for the updated question, it is advised that you do the following:
  • Reflect upon and consider what the data means to you and your teaching
  • Talk to your Chair about how to include the data, how to acknowledge the change in question, and how to best provide your reflection
BREAKDOWN OF SPS B2 – PART B:

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Part B = Appendices, the contents of which are up to you!

Directly from SPS B2:

• Part B “is optional and may contain additional material compiled by the faculty member in support of Part A”

Tip: Plan to include a Part B
Appendices to Consider including:

- Professional Development such as workshops and courses
- Copies of teaching certificates earned
- Sample course materials: syllabi, assessments, evaluation frameworks
- Letters of support
- SoTL publications
- If applicable, address aberrations

**ALIGNMENT TIP:** Ensure everything you include in Part B is referred to somewhere within Part A
HOW TO APPROACH YOUR PORTFOLIO
...as a new faculty member
1. Consider your context
2. Collect supporting evidence
3. Construct an argument
4. Review and revise
5. Update with input

(this excerpt is from MI’s Preparing a Teaching Portfolio Guidebook)
1. Consider your context
2. Collect supporting evidence
3. Construct an argument
4. Review and revise
5. Update with input

Plan ahead

(This excerpt is from MI’s Preparing a Teaching Portfolio Guidebook)
PROTECT TIME FOR DEVELOPMENT!

• Book time in your calendar:
  – …to document your reflections following critical moments such as the end of teaching a course, after you’ve just tried something new in the classroom, after an important mentorship moment with a graduate student, etc.
  – …to review Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and plan how this will inform your teaching moving forward
  – …to connect with your colleagues or Chair to discuss teaching ideas, goals, interests, and possible initiatives
ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

• Check in with your colleagues and Chair to glean local culture

• Consider how your philosophy / priorities shift (if at all) in this new teaching context

• Align, align, align

• If you have any questions during your preparation process: Ask your Chair!

• Ask colleagues to see their Portfolios
ACTIVITY: CULTURE & CONTEXT

• Spend 5 minutes writing down questions you have about the teaching and learning context:
  – At McMaster
  – Within the Faculty of Engineering
  – Within your Department

• For each question, write down how you will find out the answer. E.g. search McMaster’s website, ask your Chair, ask a colleague, ask students, etc…
ACTIVITY: INTENTIONAL ALIGNMENT

- Pair up with someone

- One at a time, share one of your core teaching philosophy beliefs/values

- Ask your partner to brainstorm some ways they might expect to see that belief in practice elsewhere in your portfolio

For example, if your value is inclusive teaching, evidence of that value in practice could look like redesigning an assessment to UDL principles, or working with co-instructors to approach a course in an equitable way for students

- Then switch roles!
ACTIVITY: PLAN & PRIORITIZE

• Check out the lists of different types of contributions and evidence on pages 8, 10 & 11 of the *Preparing a Teaching Portfolio Guide*

• What types of projects/evidence speak to you? What teaching development-related initiatives might you like to pursue between now and when you apply for tenure/permanence/promotion?

• Prioritize your ideas and plan who you might want to speak to about what interests you have (hint: your Chair!!)
THE MACPHERSON INSTITUTE CAN HELP!

• Check out the MacPherson Institute’s newly-updated Preparing a Teaching Portfolio Guidebook: https://tinyurl.com/MacPortfolioGuidebook

• Book a teaching philosophy statement or teaching portfolio consultation and review (once you’re ready)

• Take the self-paced Teaching Portfolios at McMaster asynchronous workshop, available via the MacPherson Institute’s Learning Catalogue: https://mi.mcmaster.ca/learning-catalogue/
Questions?

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