Developing your teaching dossier: A workshop for UVic

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Outline

1. What are teaching dossiers and why might I want one?

2. New developments and current best practices in teaching dossiers

3. Developing your teaching dossier: using the matrix and examples to help

4. Tips for creating your dossier

5. What can I do now? Questions, discussion and resources
1. What is a Teaching Dossier?

It is a factual description of a professor’s teaching strengths and accomplishments. It includes documents and materials which collectively suggest the scope and quality of a professor’s teaching performance. It is to teaching what lists of publications, grants, and honors are to research and scholarship.

Peter Seldin, 1997, p. 2
Why develop a teaching dossier?

• Improving your teaching: a tool for self reflection
• Getting a new job (the interview process, demonstrating T&L scholarship and showing your future potential)
• Taking advantage of technology: a web portfolio
• Teaching awards
• Mentoring others
• Teaching assessment—to attain reappointment, tenure, promotion, teaching professor, etc.
Why use a portfolio to assess teaching?

- Counters problems associated with student evaluations (bias, narrowness, etc.)
- Provides a fairer and more consistent method of assessment
- Allows for triangulation of data/evidence from a variety of sources
- Gives individual faculty the means to present their teaching contributions fully and systematically (as currently done for research)
- Captures change, development and potential
- Is formative as well as summative
- Allows committees to assess whether someone has “reached the bar” for tenure or promotion
Triangulation of candidate’s effectiveness

- Students
- Teaching Evaluation
- Peers
- Candidate
2. New developments and current best practices in teaching dossiers

1. Analytical rigour and succinctness: an argument rather than a collection of raw evidence or examples—**not** an activity report

2. The “philosophy”, “statement” or “approach to teaching” provides the analytical framework and serves as the organising narrative; it should come first and guide the reader through the documentary evidence

3. Clear structure and organisation: Detailed table of contents including list of evidence

4. More inclusive definition of teaching activities

5. Easy to read and assess using a “reverse matrix” (key for chairs!)

6. Readily turns into a portfolio for awards, *etc.*
3. Developing Your Teaching Dossier: Useful questions to guide you

1. What is your goal/argument and who is the audience for your portfolio?
2. What are your major teaching strengths?
3. Which specific examples best illustrate your claims?
4. What evidence (from a variety of sources) can you use to support your claims?
5. Are the sources of evidence and examples balanced to show breadth and depth?
6. What is the feedback from trusted colleagues?
Using the “dossier matrix” to help you write your narrative

Some examples
**Example: Conveying clear organisation**

Marty Wall, Psychology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claim</th>
<th>Narrative Example</th>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Conveying clear structure and organization of course and of discipline. | Using and presenting a graphic syllabus throughout PSY100 to reinforce structure and organization. | • Animated graphic syllabus  
• Score on Qx from Student Evaluations  
• Letters from colleagues who teach courses for which PSY100 is a prerequisite |

**Portfolio Narrative**

**Appendices**
4. Tips for creating a teaching dossier: from matrix to narrative

Sample in Appendix II.1

Organizational Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Teaching Claims</th>
<th>Specific Narrative</th>
<th>Supporting Data for Appendices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source: Data from Oneself</td>
<td>Source: Data from Oneself</td>
<td>Source: Data from Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXAMPLE: I encourage students to adopt multiple viewpoints.</td>
<td>I always include an out-of-class debate over a controversial topic. (e.g., 2000, in my syllabus.) I always include an out-of-class debate over a controversial topic. (e.g., 2000, in my syllabus.)</td>
<td>* My class outline for the debate on X.X. * Student evaluations from my midterms evaluations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Narrative Teaching Statement for Frances Sardone

A considerable amount of documentation has been collected to enable the Committee to assess Frances' performance effectiveness in the three criteria areas: effectiveness as teacher, involvement in student learning, and effectiveness as a professional educator. This documentation includes classroom observations, peer evaluations, student evaluations, and self-assessments. Frances' performance is consistently rated as strong and effective. She is known for her ability to engage students in critical thinking and discussion, and her commitment to continuous improvement. Her dedication to her students is evident in her willingness to go above and beyond traditional teaching methods to ensure that students have a comprehensive understanding of the material. Frances' involvement in student learning is also evident in her active participation in student organizations and her willingness to provide additional support outside of the classroom.

In addition to her teaching, Frances is also known for her contributions to the scholarly community. She has presented her research at numerous conferences and published several articles in peer-reviewed journals. Her research focuses on the intersection of technology and education, and she is considered a leader in the field. Frances' commitment to professional development is further evidenced by her participation in a variety of workshops and seminars, which have helped to enhance her teaching skills and knowledge of current trends in education. Overall, Frances demonstrates excellence in instruction and curriculum design, and her contributions to the field of education are significant and impactful.
Tips for creating a teaching dossier: The anatomy of a dossier

1. Detailed Table of Contents
2. Narrative statement (sometimes “philosophy” or “approach to teaching”) that guides the reader through the materials in the appendices
3. Appendices: contain all the materials “required” by an application (e.g. evals, syllabi, etc.) and some “surprises” unique to the individual’s skills and talents (e.g. policy document or MM CD)
Tips for creating your dossier: The UVic context

• Linking your dossier to your annual activity reports—looking for the teaching statement section and linking it to the evidence
• Building your dossier through time: reflective career-long practice
• Future career opportunities: a powerful tool for academic and non-academic jobs alike
• Think about teaching awards
General tips and next steps

• Don’t panic!
• If using your dossier for assessment at UVic, meet with your Chair or Dean and agree on timelines, criteria, format, etc. Always refer to your faculty/departmental guidelines and the Framework Agreement first
• Begin to collect evidence and examples; always ask students/colleagues for permission at the time you receive their input (in case they leave)
• Draft your narrative early and get feedback
General tips and next steps

- Take a scholarly approach to your teaching: use your class as your lab, try one new idea each term, read & reflect on your evals.
- Look for conferences, workshops etc.
- Start to develop a collegial network of comparable teachers at other institutions; join Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
- Read about pedagogy in your field; participate in the scholarship of teaching and learning in your discipline
- Work with others: “dossiers anonymous”
- Make an appointment at the Learning and Teaching Centre ltc@uvic.ca or X8571
5. Questions, discussion and resources

http://www.usask.ca/tlc/teaching_portfolios/index.html
http://www.cat.ilstu.edu/teaching_tips/portteach.shtml
http://www.jeanmason.ca -web portfolio example
http://www.mcmaster.ca/stlhe/welcome.html -STLHE