

# Preparing a Teaching Portfolio



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# What is a Teaching Portfolio?

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A **teaching portfolio**, previously known as a **teaching dossier**, is akin to a curriculum vitae focusing specifically on your teaching; it is a record of your teaching methods, accomplishments and goals. Like a CV, a teaching portfolio is intended to represent you and your work to potential reviewers, documenting your experiences and strengths as an instructor by presenting **facts, evidence, and self-reflection**.

A teaching portfolio can provide a complete picture of who you are, what you have done, and what you value as a teacher. It allows you to represent:

1. Your beliefs about students, learning and teaching.
2. Your teaching methods, responsibilities and goals.
3. Your contributions to teaching and learning in your field, at your institution, or beyond.
4. Evidence of the effects of your teaching.

Teaching portfolios are becoming increasingly common in University settings. They are often required as a part of academic hiring and performance review packages, for instance, and also play a significant role in many teaching award decisions. As Christopher Knapper and Susan Wilcox point out, however, portfolios “are also an excellent tool for developing and improving teaching through a process of documenting goals and achievements and reflecting on teaching activities and accomplishments. For this reason, faculty are encouraged to maintain a teaching portfolio and update it each year even though there may be no immediate prospect of a tenure or promotion review” (p.2).

As the above description suggests, teaching portfolios serve many purposes. Different elements or arrangements of content may be required depending on the context for which the portfolio is being prepared.

Policy SPS-B2 outlines the policies and requirements for teaching portfolios used for the purpose of tenure, permanence, and promotion. While this package is organized to mirror the requirements outlined in SPS-B2, it is intended to provide general guidelines about how to prepare some of the most commonly expected portfolio components. You might use it to develop and maintain the base portfolio that you update on a yearly basis. Specific teaching portfolios for job applications, for tenure/permanence and promotion packages, or for teaching award nominations might then be adapted from this base document, in accordance with the relevant expectations and requirements. It is very important to check with your department or the intended recipient of your portfolio for their specific required format and components.

# Developing a Teaching Portfolio

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The following is a step-by-step list detailing one method by which to prepare a teaching portfolio. It is adapted from Knapper & Wilcox (2007). *Developing a Teaching Dossier*.

## **Step 1. Determine criteria for effective teaching**

Given that teaching portfolios are intended to document the relative success of your teaching, an essential first step in the process of crafting a portfolio is determining what effective teaching actually entails. One helpful resource in this regard is Arthur Chickering and Zelda Gamson's "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education."

In this influential article, Chickering and Gamson describe a set of pedagogical standards derived from decades of educational research, and designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning in colleges and universities. In particular, they suggest that effective undergraduate teaching:

1. Encourages student-faculty contact;
2. Encourages cooperation among students;
3. Encourages active learning;
4. Gives prompt feedback;
5. Emphasizes time on task;
6. Communicates high expectations; and
7. Respects diverse talents and ways of learning.

These widely accepted standards provide a helpful starting point from which to craft your own set of markers of good teaching. You might emphasize certain elements of this list, for instance, based on your individual opinions, experiences and teaching contexts.

Copies of "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education" are available at the Centre for Leadership in Learning. The article can also be read online at <http://www.aahea.org/bulletins/articles/sevenprinciples1987.htm>.

## **Step 2. Clarify teaching responsibilities**

A second part of establishing the guidelines by which to judge your teaching is to clarify your teaching responsibilities. By reviewing your letter of appointment and speaking with your department Chair, determine precisely what is expected from you in terms of teaching (e.g. 'x' number of full courses taught per year, 'x' number of graduate supervisions, 'x' number of new courses developed, etc.)

## **Step 3. Select indicators of teaching efficacy and activity**

Once you have established a framework within which to assess your teaching (steps 1 & 2), you can begin to determine the sources of evidence that will demonstrate your success as an instructor. Subsequent sections of this package detail numerous types of information that might be included in this respect, from descriptions of course innovations to results of student teaching evaluations.

#### **Step 4. Collect supporting evidence**

Ideally, evidence of your teaching effectiveness should be gathered from the very beginning of your career as an instructor. It is highly advisable to maintain and to continually update a file of potential supporting items (e.g. references from students and colleagues, results of student evaluations, mid-semester feedback solicited to improve teaching and learning, records of participation in teaching-related professional development activities, etc.). If this type of comprehensive file exists, exemplary items that best indicate your accomplishments as an instructor can be pulled easily from it for inclusion in a portfolio. If not, this type of evidence will need to be collected and assembled. Often this supporting evidence is included in a separate section from the portfolio proper or in an appendix.

#### **Step 5. Construct an argument**

As Knapper and Wilcox suggest, a portfolio or dossier “is not only a compilation of teaching-related material. It states a case for the approach you take to teaching” (p.5). Once you have completed steps one through four, you need to write the portfolio proper, or executive summary, clearly describing in brief narrative passages what you believe about teaching and learning (and why you believe it), what you actually do as an instructor to realize those beliefs, and how effective your approach has proven. Summaries of the evidence collected in step four should be provided to support your claims, and exemplary documents might be selected and included in an appendix. Essentially, this is your argument and interpretation of what the evidence in your appendices means about your effectiveness as an educator.

#### **Step 6. Review and Revise**

Once you've finished writing, review the portfolio for clarity, internal consistency and persuasiveness. You might also consider asking a colleague or an educational developer to read the document and offer feedback. Knapper and Wilcox suggest three questions that might be used to guide the review and assessment of teaching portfolios:

1. Is the portfolio user friendly?
2. Does the portfolio present an accurate and honest portrait of your approach to teaching?
3. Is your approach to teaching a reasonable one?

#### **Step 7. Update**

As mentioned previously, a teaching portfolio is a living document that should be continually updated to reflect your development as an instructor. Consider returning to your portfolio yearly to make any necessary additions or revisions. For further discussion of these steps, see Knapper & Wilcox (2007). Alternate versions of the portfolio-writing process can be found in CAUT (2007) and O'Neal & Wright (1993).

# Components of a Teaching Portfolio

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Teaching portfolios can contain an abundant amount of evidence. Often, this evidence is organized in sections or appendices. The portfolio proper, or Executive Summary, provides your argument or interpretation of what all the evidence means and how it shows that you are an effective educator. The Canadian Association for University Teachers (CAUT) guide names potential indicators of teaching activity and effectiveness, ranging from descriptions of courses taught to feedback from students, alumni, and parents. Here, we list some of the most commonly included teaching portfolio components. Keep in mind that this is not an exhaustive collection, nor is each item mandatory.

## Executive Summary or Portfolio Proper

According to McMaster's SPS-B2 policy, the requirements for the Executive Summary (Part A) are quite detailed. McMaster's required components are indicated with an asterisk. The following sections also tend to appear in the portfolio proper of most portfolios, but be sure to check with your department, faculty, or institution for their required formats and components.

### **Description of Teaching Responsibilities and Experiences (Part A.i.)**

- For tenure, permanence, and promotion at McMaster, you will need to include a summary of your teaching responsibilities, mechanism of evaluation, and updates or adjustments that have been made since your appointment. Most departments will advise you of what to include, but a good starting place would be your letter of appointment.
- Teaching portfolios used for other purposes may include a summary of your teaching responsibilities and experience from current and past positions.
- If space permits, you may also include a summary of your **teaching experiences** that outlines briefly:
  - what courses you have taught (with dates, level, and number of students);
  - your teaching goals, ideas, or experiences that might be of benefit to the institution;
  - any innovations you have implemented in teaching or course design;
  - your involvement in graduate student or undergraduate thesis/project students; et cetera.
- This section is usually about one page long and appears in the portfolio proper (or Executive Summary). Thus, anything more than a brief summary should be included in your evidence section or appendix that includes your supporting documentation.

### **Description of Teaching Philosophy (Part A.ii.) \***

- Your philosophy statement should outline your beliefs about teaching and learning in a sound and honest way.
- All of the proceeding sections should reflect your teaching philosophy. Thus, all claims made here should be borne out or justified in the rest of the portfolio.
- Teaching goals can be included here, or as a separate section.
- The philosophy should be approximately one page, but no more than two pages.

***Guidance on writing a teaching philosophy can be found on pp. 10-12 of this guide and samples are available through consultation at the CLL.***

### **Description of Teaching Practice (Part A.iii.) \***

Here, you should describe and provide examples of how your teaching philosophy has been realized. You might include a:

- description of the ways you teach, along with some explanation of *why* you teach in those ways;
- description of how you have adapted your teaching in different situations;
- description of assessment strategies, along with an indication of how these align with your objectives and teaching methods;
- description of the ways you encourage learning outside of the classroom; et cetera.

Important: This section **must be consistent** with your teaching philosophy. It is usually about one page, but not more than two pages. At some institutions, it is included as part of the philosophy statement.

### **Contributions to Teaching (Part A.iv.) \***

There are many things you can include to demonstrate how you are contributing to teaching, including course developments and innovations, teaching scholarship, professional development, or educational leadership. The following sub-sections outline possibilities of evidence that you might include in your portfolio. Remember that as part of the executive summary, you should be including a one to two page summary description of your contributions and refer to the specific pieces of evidence in your appendices or supporting documentation sections.

#### ***Course development and innovations***

*To demonstrate your involvement in developing courses and innovations, you might include in your description a summary of some of the following:*

- Innovative or novel courses
- Course materials, handbooks, study guides, or learning objects
- Interesting or innovative assignments
- Forms of assessments (e.g exams you have written)

### **Teaching Scholarship**

*To demonstrate your scholarly approach to teaching, you might consider mentioning:*

- Published articles and research you conducted related to **teaching and learning**
- Presentations you've made at teaching and learning conferences
- Grants you've obtained for teaching-related activities and research on teaching and learning
- Evidence of how you stay current with educational literature and apply it to your own teaching and course design

### **Service Related to Teaching**

*To demonstrate your commitment to teaching, you might include a summary that outlines how you serve your department, faculty, or institution on matters relating to teaching.*

- Getting involved in curriculum or teaching committees
- Participating in program reviews
- Serving as a referee for teaching awards
- Acting as a consultant or mentor on teaching related matters (both inside and outside the university).

### **Educational Leadership**

*To demonstrate your contribution to teaching, you might include a summary of what you have done to lead teaching initiatives in your department, faculty, or institution.*

- Serving as a teaching mentor for faculty, graduate students
- Facilitating workshops, events on teaching & learning
- Coordinating a series, conference, etc. on teaching & learning

### **Teaching Development (Professional Development)**

*You might include a summary of the initiatives you have taken to improve teaching and learning or to further develop yourself as a teacher.*

- Attending teaching workshops, mini-courses, Graduate Student Day, etc. (could include materials to document your participation where possible).
- Participating in conferences and symposia related to teaching (e.g. Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Conference).
- Participating in/attending sessions at a conference that relate to teaching in your discipline.
- Membership on teaching discussion lists.
- Participating in teaching Communities of Practice
- Having educational developers or peers observe your teaching.
- Applying for grants for teaching.
- Soliciting mid-course feedback that you use to improve teaching.
- Future teaching goals might also be described in this section.

**A description of an effective method for collecting feedback from students is included in Appendix A.**

## **Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness (Part A.v.)**

### **Student Evaluation Scores \***

*Include summative results on the effectiveness question from students' end-of-tem evaluations. (Eg. Overall, what is your opinion of the effectiveness of the instructor as a teacher?)*

- Display these as summary table or histogram.
- Include historical data, dating back five years, if possible.
- It is also helpful to set your ratings in context of all the teaching done in a department.
- You may address particular anomalies with reference to an appendix, particularly if you have evidence to suggest why your rating significantly changed from one year to another.
- These should be displayed as a summary in a way that QUICKLY and CLEARLY gives the relevant information.

### **Teaching Awards & Recognition**

- Some teaching awards and other forms of recognition also provide evidence that indicates teaching effectiveness. You may include reference to them here if you have not already done so in a previous section.

***Sample student evaluation sections from portfolios are available through consultation at the CLL and further details are provided on page 13.***



## Supporting Documentation

Many suggestions were made in the preceding section that you could now use in the supporting documentation sections or appendices of your portfolio. You would strengthen your portfolio if you are able to provide artifacts and evidence of contributions you have made to teaching. There are additional pieces of evidence relating to the impact of your teaching that you can include to justify and support your teaching philosophy, teaching practice.

### **Peer Feedback**

- Evaluations from professors you have worked with.
- Evaluations from educational developers who have observed your teaching.

### **Student Feedback**

- Student comments can be included, but be careful. Use these more like quotes to provide evidence, and be aware that they are not permitted in some portfolio guidelines. At McMaster, anonymous student comments cannot be included in the Executive Summary or the Departmental Evaluation Report of the overall dossier as these are often unreliable and unverifiable (see p. 2 of SPS B2).
- Quotes from unsolicited letters and emails from students can be included in the teaching portfolio. Be sure to include the full document in an appendix.
- Nominations for teaching awards run by students (i.e. GSA TA Awards).

### **Student Work**

- Sample student writing from assignments (with permission from students).
- Indicators of student learning (e.g. samples of work 'before' and 'after' the introduction of a teaching strategy, student standings on national tests, etc.)

### **What items or artefacts could you collect to support your philosophy, teaching practice, and contributions to teaching?**

*If you stated that you have developed a particularly innovative course, including the course syllabus, student feedback, a sample project that students completed, and/or letters of commendation from the department might provide the support for the claim you have made.*

# Writing a Teaching Philosophy

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Here are a few questions to get you started writing a teaching philosophy. Your philosophy can be as short as a few paragraphs or up to two pages in length. Read over the following questions and consider which, if any, of them might trigger your thinking about teaching and learning.

## A few general points:

1. How do you want to be represented to the reader? Reflective, scholarly, practical, caring, efficient?
2. Avoid 'motherhood' statements (e.g. "All students have great potential, and my job is to nurture them in the garden of the academy."). These will ring false unless supported by evidence.
3. What is the goal of the portfolio? The portfolio is usually used to make a decision. How you write your philosophy depends upon what decision is being made. This does not mean being deceptive or dishonest. It simply means selecting that part of your teaching you want to represent and emphasize. (You can conceive of your portfolio as an argument, with some similarities to writing a scholarly paper – support your arguments with evidence. In a paper you would not only supply raw data and expect the reader to do all the analysis on their own.)
  - **For a faculty position** – you will want to represent yourself as competent and 'typical'; if you are applying for a teaching position, however, you may want to show more than competence.
  - **For tenure, permanence and promotion** – you will want to represent yourself as competent and show the development of your teaching over time.
  - **For a teaching award** – it is not enough to be competent. You need to represent yourself as unique and expert; you must stand out from the others.

## The Questions:

1. When are you particularly satisfied with your teaching? *Think of a specific occasion.*
2. Describe a critical incident in your development as a teacher (e.g. a *situation that helped you form your opinions as a student, as a teacher, or in some other situation.*)
3. How do you know you are any good as a teacher?
4. What do you do as an instructor in and out of the class? (Write this down). Now think about why you do it. (Write this down). *Extract from your writing a few*

*general points/principles regarding what you believe about teaching and learning.*

5. What do you believe about students?
6. Under what circumstances do students learn best?
7. What do you do that makes you effective in your dealing with students?
8. What do you do to create conditions that optimize student learning and growth?

### **Developing a Teaching Philosophy through Reflection**

Some further questions, adapted from Stephen Brookfield's *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*

9. What would I like my students to say about me when I'm out of the room?
10. The last time I saw really great teaching was when...
11. Think back. Choose an event that caused you the greatest distress in your life as a teacher, or that made you say, "This is what makes my life as a teacher difficult."
12. Think back. Choose an event that made you say, "This is what teaching is really about" or "This is a great day in my life as a teacher."

Look back at your answers. Extract a few general principles regarding what you believe about teaching and learning.

### **Once Your Philosophy is Written**

- Strip out any "motherhood" statements (feel-good, general statements without any evidence). They will ring false.
- Check to see that the teaching philosophy is consistent with your portfolio and your course design. For example, if you explain that students are very important to you, and yet there are no words from students in your portfolio, it doesn't ring true. The same could be said if you claim to promote active learning, but only use traditional lectures and multiple-choice. Make sure that your philosophy and the rest of your portfolio are consistent.
- Support your statements briefly with evidence. Think of this as a way of convincing the reader that your philosophy is authentic.

## **Further Guidelines**

(Based on discussions from Teaching Philosophy workshops held at McMaster)

### ***What characteristics should a Teaching Philosophy AVOID?***

- Platitudes – showing only lip service and jargon with no evidence to back up your claims.
- Debates – debates in a philosophy sound as if you are trying to convince yourself (this debate should have taken place while constructing the philosophy, but not be included in the philosophy).
- Spelling, grammatical mistakes.
- Sounding too mechanical, dry or old.
- Patronizing or teaching the reader.
- Much over a page is too long and makes it hard to read.
- Grandstanding: "In one of my many books...."

### ***What characteristics should a Teaching Philosophy POSSESS or INCLUDE?***

- Honesty – it should be sound and accurate.
- Acknowledgement of imperfection – it should indicate that you know you are human and fallible, but are continuing to develop.
- Clarity – it should be easy for the reader to see what you believe; they should not have to sift through unnecessary information.
- Evidence – it should include evidence to show that you do what you say you believe (e.g. describing an approach you use, showing how you apply this.)
- A personal tone – use "my" and "I" to show that you are talking about yourself rather than a theoretically perfect teacher. Keep it hands-on.
- Stories and anecdotes to show your human side.
- Markers of development – show that you are continually striving to improve your teaching. You realize that you can learn from your own experience, that you don't just expect students to learn.
- Organization – so that it is easy to follow. For example, have the first sentence in each paragraph indicate what the content of the paragraph will be.
- Brevity – keep it to about one page. If it is longer, then use very good layout to help readers find what they need to know.
- Use of boldface, boxes, subtitles or short key words located on the left hand side to help guide the reader who only has time to skim.
- Expansion on the fundamentals.
- A short narrative of a real event that helps to help illustrate the point you are trying to make.

***Several sample teaching philosophy statements are available through consultation at the CLL.***

# Including Student Evaluations in Portfolios

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Results from student evaluations of teaching constitute one of the most common types of evidence that are required in a teaching portfolio. The following is a set of general guidelines for including this information in the most useful manner possible.

1. Presented student evaluations should show the results from the global question, "How effective was the teacher overall", because this is the most useful summative information.
2. Do NOT include the raw data.
3. Summarize the data in a way that is clear and easy to read. For example, use tables, charts, graphs, etc. (McMaster now suggests a histogram)
4. Make it easy for the reader to get the answers that they need.
5. Include headings or labels for your tables, charts, columns or graphs.
6. Show the units (e.g. percentages, averages).
7. Report the questions that were asked clearly, and include the range of possible answers (e.g.. 1-4).
8. Indicate where the information comes from (e.g. university standard evaluation or self-made form?)
9. Don't include comments as a list, because they do not give much information (it's unclear whether you are including all comments or just those that make you look good, and if you include an off-the wall bad one, it can affect the way the rest of your portfolio is viewed).
10. If you include comments, use them as quotations within the text of the portfolio to support a statement that you make, or to explain why you changed some aspect of a course. Be aware of policies about including/excluding student comments, which may differ depending on the context for which the portfolio is being prepared.
11. Provide contextual information wherever possible (e.g. departmental averages and medians for a given term or for a given course).
12. Make sure that the message that you want the reader to take away is clear. Do not assume that a reader will draw the same conclusions as you from looking at your data.

***Samples of student evaluation (as presented in portfolios)  
are available through consultation at the CLL.***

# Practical Considerations & Other Tips

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## **General Considerations:**

1. Always consider the purpose and the audience of the portfolio. Who is reading and why? What are they looking for?
2. Ask yourself whether the first thing readers see in your portfolio will encourage them to continue reading.
3. Provide the reader with the message that you want him/her to take away.
4. Remember to check for internal consistency. The various components of your portfolio should build on and support one another.
5. Make a case for weaker points in the portfolio (e.g. disappointing student evaluation scores), without being defensive or dishonest. If possible, find positive ways to address these elements (e.g. what are your future goals/plans based on this feedback?)
6. Consider consulting an established 'skills list.' This might help you to identify additional strengths and abilities of relevance to your teaching.
7. Consult and draw from a list of 'action verbs,' which are especially helpful to use when describing accomplishments.

***Sample Lists of Skills and of Action Verbs can be found in Appendices B & C, respectively.***

## **Overall Presentation:**

1. Make sure that your layout is clear.
2. Keep the body of the portfolio short (5-10 pages for job applications). Additional pages should be clearly marked as appendices.
3. Include a table of contents.
4. You can use dividers to demarcate sections clearly.
5. Use headings for the different sections.
6. You can use colour to guide the reader (e.g. different sections make use of different colours.)
7. Use a consistent typeface to improve the presentation, and to guide the reader to areas that are most important. If you are using a different font for headings, make sure you are consistent.
8. Make sure that the font is large enough for easy reading.
9. Use changes in font, boxes etc. to highlight particularly important information.
10. You can use graphics to highlight or demonstrate things.
11. Use white space well to make the presentation clearer.
12. Consider putting the portfolio in something that is professional looking (i.e. binder, portfolio).

Remember that your readers are likely scanning MANY portfolios, so do what you can to make it easier to read and find the information that they need and to remember the portfolio.

# Teaching Portfolios for Tenure, Permanence & Promotion Packages at McMaster

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Like many institutions, McMaster has specific requirements for teaching portfolios that are to be included in tenure, permanence and promotion dossiers. These are outlined in **SPS B2: Teaching Portfolios**. The **Structure of Teaching Portfolios** outlines five sections that **must** be included in teaching portfolios to be submitted to your department as you are preparing for tenure, permanence, or promotion at McMaster. Candidates for tenure/permanence and promotion should review this policy carefully, and make sure that their teaching portfolios are tailored to both the policy's requirements and the department's preferences.

**SPS B12: Preparation of Dossiers for Tenure and/or Promotion** will also be of interest. This document outlines the requirements and expectations for the *entire* tenure/permanence or promotion dossier, and describes how the department will use your teaching portfolio to prepare the Teaching Evaluation Report that is included in the overall dossier.

The full policy statements are available from the McMaster website at:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/faculty/Assessment/index.html>

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# Appendix A – Soliciting Mid-Semester Student Feedback

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As noted above, soliciting and acting upon mid-semester feedback from students is one way in which you might document your efforts to improve teaching and learning. This appendix describes a method by which McMaster instructors might gather such mid-term data: CLL's course refinement process. If you are interested in participating in a course refinement, or would like information about other methods of collecting student feedback, feel free to contact us.

## **Refining a Course**

A course refinement is a means of collecting useful, personalized feedback about a course (or courses) you teach. In this low risk, highly popular approach, an educational consultant from the CLL will meet with you to discuss what kind of feedback you'd like to solicit, collect that data from your students, and ultimately share the results with you. This information helps you make decisions about mid-course adjustments, and can lead to a more satisfying experience for you and your students.

### **The Course Refinement Process**

1. An instructor indicates that they would like a particular course reviewed. We discuss the goals of the course and anticipate the problems students may experience.
2. We attend the class and ask the students, by means of small groups, to arrive at a consensus on three questions.
  - a) What is working?
  - b) What is not working?
  - c) What specific changes would improve the effectiveness of the course?Additional/alternate questions can also be posed if necessary.
3. We convey the information to the instructor.
4. The instructor responds to the students by:
  - a) explaining why certain changes cannot be made; and/or
  - b) stating plans and then acting on suggested changes.

### **Advantages of this Approach**

- Vague student comments can be probed to provide more useful information to the instructor (e.g., the textbook is useless vs. the textbook explanations are too complicated).
- Students' discussions tend to filter out individual comments, leading to a clearer group consensus.
- Within a class, students often disagree with each other about key elements of the course. The refining a course approach makes this variation of opinion public and helps to correct notions such as "everyone hates the textbook."
- Unlike end of term evaluations, this process allows instructors to respond to student feedback while the course is still ongoing. Since their feedback might therefore affect them in an immediate way, students often provide more serious and substantial commentary than is common in summative evaluations.



# Appendix B – Skills List

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This skills list may be useful for identifying:

- a) skills you wish to identify in your curriculum vitae or teaching portfolio, or
- b) skills you plan to help students develop.

Analyzing situations or data  
Anticipating problems  
Assembling equipment  
Attending to detail  
Calculating numbers or risks  
Clerical Work  
Coaching, guiding or tutoring  
Communicating in writing  
Communicating verbally  
Compiling data of facts  
Computer skills  
Constructing objects or buildings  
Creating Ideas  
Dealing with difficult people  
Delegating tasks or responsibilities  
Designing products or systems  
Diagnosing problems  
Doing precision work  
Empathizing with others  
Evaluating data  
Evaluating performances, programs, processes  
Following instructions  
Handling complaints  
Handling pressure  
Implementing decisions  
Influencing  
Keeping records  
Learning  
Leading People  
Listening  
Making decisions  
Managing people  
Measuring  
Motivating people  
Observing  
Observing safety regulations

Ordering equipment/supplies  
Operating equipment  
Organizing data  
Organizing people  
Planning and organizing time  
Planning and organizing work routine  
Processing forms  
Project management  
Promoting ideas  
Proofing for accuracy  
Providing information  
Reacting quickly to changes in work situation  
Remembering  
Repairing equipment  
Research information  
Scheduling  
Solving problems  
Speaking in public  
Supporting others  
Testing  
Troubleshooting  
Writing reports  
Word processing  
Working as part of a team  
Working irregular hours or shifts  
Working well with people  
Working with machines  
Working with numbers  
Working with people

Add your own:

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# Appendix C – List of Action Verbs

The underlined words are especially good for pointing out accomplishments.

## **Management**

Administered  
Analyzed  
Assigned  
Attained  
Chaired  
Consolidated  
Contracted  
Coordinated  
Delegated  
Developed  
Directed  
Evaluated  
Executed  
Improved  
Increased  
Organized  
Oversaw  
Planned  
Prioritized  
Produced  
Recommended  
Reviewed  
Scheduled  
Strengthened  
Supervised

## **Communication**

Addressed  
Arbitrated  
Arranged  
Authored  
Collaborated  
Convinced  
Corresponded  
Developed  
Directed  
Drafted  
Edited  
Enlisted  
Formulated  
Influenced  
Interpreted  
Lectured  
Mediated  
Moderated  
Negotiated

Persuaded  
Promoted  
Publicized  
Reconciled  
Recruited  
Spoke  
Translated  
Wrote

## **Research**

Clarified  
Collected  
Critiqued  
Diagnosed  
Evaluated  
Examined  
Extracted  
Identified  
Inspected  
Interpreted  
Interviewed  
Investigated  
Organized  
Reviewed  
Summarized  
Surveyed  
Systematized

## **Technical**

Assembled  
Built  
Calculated  
Computed  
Designed  
Devised  
Engineered  
Fabricated  
Maintained  
Operated  
Overhauled  
Programmed  
Remodeled  
Repaired  
Solved  
Upgraded  
**Teaching**  
Adapted

Advised  
Clarified  
Coached  
Communicated  
Coordinated  
Demystified  
Developed  
Enabled  
Encouraged  
Evaluated  
Explained  
Facilitated  
Guided  
Informed  
Instructed  
Persuaded  
Set goals  
Stimulated  
Trained

## **Creative**

Conceptualized  
Created  
Customized  
Designed  
Developed  
Directed  
Established  
Fashioned  
Founded  
Illustrated  
Initiated  
Instituted  
Integrated  
Introduced  
Invented  
Originated  
Performed  
Planned  
Revitalized

## **Helping**

Assessed  
Assisted  
Clarified  
Coached  
Counseled

Diagnosed  
Educated  
Expedited  
Facilitated  
Guided  
Motivated  
Referred  
Represented

## **Detail**

Approved  
Arranged  
Classified  
Collected  
Compiled  
Executed  
Generated  
Implemented  
Inspected  
Monitored  
Organized  
Prepared  
Processed  
Recorded  
Retrieved  
Screened  
Specified  
Systematized  
Tabulated  
Validated

## **More Verbs for Accomplishment**

Achieved  
Expanded  
Improved  
Pioneered  
Reduced  
Resolved  
Restored  
Spearheaded  
Transformed