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Developing a Teaching Portfolio

by Ralph Hitt, Irene Kokkala, John Nardo, Kathy Sisk, & Donna Waddell

The *Beginning a Teaching Portfolio* seminars have provided opportunities for faculty exploration of the process of developing a teaching portfolio and discussion of the rationale supporting its use. A teaching portfolio is most often defined as a collection of documents and materials suggesting the scope and quality of a professor's teaching performance. Its primary purpose is the improvement of classroom teaching. Although the components of teaching portfolios are not intended to be alike, seminar participants have agreed on five core items for inclusion. Specific questions, suggestions, or beliefs related to each of the five core components that have provided focus to our discussions are presented below:

This Issue of *The Teacher*

The fifth and final issue of *The Teacher* for the academic year 1998-99 provides a compendium of teaching-related activities in which faculty members have participated. Ralph Hitt and Irene Kokkala from the Department of Biology, John Nardo and Kathy Sisk from the Department of Mathematics & Computer Science, and Donna Waddell from the Department of Nursing offer a glimpse of the teaching portfolio seminars in **Developing a Teaching Portfolio**. A **RDPTL Initiatives Retrospective** presents a report on activities that promoted teaching and learning on the NGCSU campus. **Faculty Mentoring... from a Mentor's Perspective** by Thomas H. Fox, School of Natural and Health Sciences, and **...from a Mentee's Perspective** by John Nardo illustrate the benefits of their participation in the *Excellence in Teaching at NGCSU* mentoring program. Vicki McCard, Department of Language and Literature, describes the activities and accomplishments of the *Recognizing and Rewarding Teaching Excellence Discussion Forum* in **Recognizing & Rewarding Teaching Excellence Discussion Forum A Synopsis**. Other features include **To Ponder**, **Teaching-Related Conferences**, **Kudos**, and **A Preview of Upcoming Activities for Fall 1999**.

Teaching Philosophy

A teaching philosophy can be thought of as a brief description of your beliefs and values as they relate to your role and responsibility as a teacher in facilitating the student learning process.

Teaching Responsibilities

Teaching responsibilities may include course(s) taught, student advisement, independent studies, as well as grant activities that involve teaching and advisement to student organizations. In each case, determine the amount of time devoted and indicate the total number of students enrolled in your courses and contact hours per week. Include supporting evidence such as SOS's, peer evaluation, statements from colleagues based on a review of teaching materials, and student work.

Efforts to Improve Teaching

Substantiating the claim that a faculty member has made efforts to improve teaching could include:

- Attendance at faculty development seminars, workshops, and conferences
- Examples of changes made in courses or teaching strategies that emerged from

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RDPTL Initiatives Retrospective

by Judy O'Neal, 1998-99 RDPTL

My responsibility as NGCSU's 1998-99 Regents' Distinguished Professor for Teaching and Learning was to focus attention upon excellence in teaching, to promote the improvement of student learning through the enhancement of teaching effectiveness, and to work toward the formation of a faculty-oriented center for teaching and learning. The successful discharge of such a responsibility would have been impossible had it not been for the tremendous support exhibited by both the faculty and administration. The end of an academic year is an opportunity for us to reflect on how activities conducted under the auspices of the RDPTL program have impacted NGCSU.

1. Development, distribution, and compilation of NGCSU faculty survey of professional development interests and needs

At the beginning of Fall 1998 a survey of personal interests, needs, and expertise related to professional development from a list of 24 possible topic areas was sent via e-mail to all NGCSU faculty. Survey results formed the basis for the 1998-99 professional development offerings in the form of discussion groups, seminars, and workshops.

2. Creation of the *Excellence in Teaching at NGCSU* web page

http://www.ngc.peachnet.edu/Academic/Arts_Let/Math_CS/rdptl/index~1.htm is the Internet location of the *Excellence in Teaching at NGCSU* web page. Topics including the mission statement, goals, discussion lists and forums, workshops and seminars, mentoring program, teaching resources, *The Teacher* newsletter, *Teaching Excellence Faculty Retreat*, contact information, and current RDPTL are accessible via hyperlinks to additional pages. The *Excellence in Teaching at NGCSU* web page URL was submitted to over 75 web search engines including AltaVista, Infoseek, Lycos, Magellan, and

WebCrawler. To date, the site has been visited 1041 times.

3. Development and implementation of a Faculty Mentoring Program for new and adjunct faculty

The NGCSU Faculty Mentoring Program was designed to: (1) promote teaching excellence among new and adjunct faculty, and (2) to assist new and adjunct faculty to achieve their full potential through collaboration with a network of experienced, successful faculty members. Eight faculty mentors participated in a training session and volunteered their time to provide confidential assistance to four new faculty members in areas such as classroom observation, implementing varied teaching and assessment strategies, preparing for pre-tenure review, documentation of teaching effectiveness, and development of faculty evaluation goals. Faculty members who had not participated in the pre-tenure review process and who were interested in participating in the NGCSU Faculty Mentoring Program were invited via e-mail and a memo to visit the *Excellence in Teaching at NGCSU* web page and to select the Mentoring Program hyperlink.

4. Production of *The Teacher*, a faculty newsletter focusing on teaching

The Teacher, the *Excellence in Teaching at NGCSU* newsletter, was designed to serve as a catalyst for focusing attention on teaching as a scholarly activity and as a venue for publication of teaching-related research. Issues were published in October, November, January, March, and May. The five issues are available in print form as well as on-line at the *Excellence in Teaching at NGCSU* website.

5. Organization of seminars and workshops addressing identified faculty interests and needs

Forty faculty development seminars and workshops addressing 13 areas of faculty-identified interest were organized and conducted this year. Session topics included NGCSU Faculty Mentoring Program Training, Web-Based Course Development, Using the Web as an Instructional Tool, Technology-Based Applications, Teaching Strategies, Introduction to Teaching Portfolios, Preparing for Pre-Tenure Review, Preparing for Post-Tenure Review, Addressing Varied Learning Styles, Peer Review, Faculty Evaluation, Classroom Assessment Techniques, and Promoting Active Learning. Thirty-three faculty members from throughout the academic disciplines served as presenters. Certificates of appreciation were prepared and given to each presenter, and certificates of attendance were given to each participant.

6. Organization and facilitation of the first *Teaching Excellence at NGCSU Faculty Retreat*

February 12-13, 1999, marked the first *Teaching Excellence at NGCSU Faculty Retreat* held at Gold Creek Resort and Conference Center. The featured speaker for the opening luncheon was Dr. James L. Muyskens, Board of Regents Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Approximately 45 faculty, department heads, deans, Vice President and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, President, and Vice Chancellor then joined together as a community of learners. The keynote speaker was Dr. Rita Dunn, Director of the Center for the Study of Learning and Teaching Styles, St. John's University.

One of the most meaningful outcomes of the faculty retreat was an opportunity for cross-disciplinary discussions related to teaching and learning. An outgrowth of this re-

RDPTL Initiatives Update cont.

treat was the establishment of a faculty Bulletin Board for Teaching and Learning on WebCT. The URL address is http://168.30.200.23:8900/SCRIPT/teach/scripts/serve_home.pl.

7. Establishment of faculty discussion groups

Nine discussion forums addressing how to recognize and reward teaching excellence were held. Small working groups prepared five recommendations for recognizing and rewarding teaching excellence and presented them for reaction and feedback to the NGCSU faculty via *The Teacher*. Three of the five recommendations were realized during the 1998-99 academic year:

- Off-campus faculty retreat designed to celebrate excellence in teaching and to stimulate dialogue about teaching and learning
- Teaching recognitions awards program
- Outstanding teaching award monetary grants of \$1000 for the purchase of materials, supplies, software, etc. relating directly to teaching

The remaining two recommendations were tabled for reconsideration during the 1999-2000 academic year:

- Initiating faculty development leaves of absence at NGCSU
- Promoting teaching excellence as a scholarly activity for faculty evaluation, promotion, and tenure purposes

Discussion forum participants served as the planning team for the first *Teaching Excellence at NGCSU Faculty Retreat*, identified focus areas and judging criteria for the *Recognizing Excellence in Teaching at NGCSU* awards program, and developed nomination criteria for the teaching award monetary grants.

8. Preparation and presentation of the Ad Hoc Teaching and Learning

Center Proposal Committee report to NGCSU's faculty senate

During August 1998 a six-member Ad Hoc Teaching and Learning Center Proposal Committee was appointed. The task of the committee was twofold: (1) to make recommendations to the Faculty Senate for instituting a Teaching and Learning Center on the NGCSU campus that would add continuity to the University's mission, guarantee accessibility to materials for faculty development, and foster mentoring among faculty and (2) to include goals for the program and specific programmatic and physical requirements for meeting the goals including faculty staffing, release time (teaching load), annual budget, and physical space.

A mission statement and goals for the *Excellence in Teaching Center at NGCSU* were developed. Programmatic components included recommendations for staffing, qualifications, responsibilities, teaching load, budget projections, and funding source possibilities. Facilities components included space requirements and square footage. In addition, a three-year implementation plan was developed. As a result of a unanimous decision by the faculty senate to support the concept of a Teaching and Learning Center on the NGCSU campus, the President pledged his support and recommended that \$170,000 for the establishment of a Teaching and Learning Center be included in NGCSU's FY2000 budget.

9. Establishment of the *Recognizing Excellence in Teaching at NGCSU* awards program

The *Recognizing Excellence in Teaching at NGCSU* awards program was established to recognize faculty who are dedicated and committed to teaching and learning. Nominations were sought from students, faculty, staff, and alumni through *The Teacher* newsletter, *The Digest*, the NGCSU *Founda-*

tion News, the *Dahlonega Nugget*, and e-mail. One outstanding teacher in the areas of innovation, relating to students, technology utilization, promoting active learning, bringing scholarship into the classroom, incorporating writing, incorporating oral presentations, developing critical thinking, and retired teacher was selected for recognition.

Winners in each area will be honored during Fall 1999 and their names will be placed on a multi-year plaque provided by the NGCSU Foundation. In addition, winners will be asked to share their expertise and experiences with their colleagues by presenting an RDPTL *Excellence in Teaching at NGCSU* faculty workshop or seminar during the 1999-2000 academic year.

10. Establishment of \$1000 *Recognizing Teaching Excellence at NGCSU* grants

Ten monetary awards of up to \$1000 tied to the purchase of materials, supplies, software, etc. and directly related to teaching were awarded to NGCSU faculty. Department heads and Deans were asked to identify the most outstanding teachers in their departments or schools who clearly demonstrated teaching excellence as judged by their rating on the teaching portion of NGCSU's Annual Faculty Evaluation Instrument. Faculty were then invited to submit a grant application that included requested items and costs, course(s) to be enhanced, and a rationale. A committee chaired by the 1998-99 RDPTL and appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs reviewed the applications and determined the recipients.

11. Mobilization of a cadre of faculty developing teaching portfolios

NGCSU's Dean's Council met with the 1998-99 RDPTL to explore interest in and feasibility of formalizing the use of teaching portfolios as a component of the teaching

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Faculty Mentoring...

...from a Mentor's Perspective

by Thomas H. Fox, Dean, School of Health & Natural Sciences

Near the beginning of the Fall Semester, 1998 I began serving as a mentor in the *Excellence in Teaching at NGCSU* Mentoring Program. I met with my mentee on several occasions during the Fall Semester and a few times near the beginning of Spring Semester, 1999. My mentee is an accomplished teacher whose innovative approaches, enthusiasm and attention to student learning caused me to feel that little, if any, assistance in that area was needed.

Most of the issues my mentee wished to discuss with me and for which my advice was sought centered around personal issues, which I will not discuss, and around faculty evaluation procedures and expectations of faculty in the three areas of our tripartite mission. Specifically, there was concern over:

- 1) gender issues
- 2) the faculty evaluation process
- 3) questions of what were official (University or BOR) policies and what were departmental policies
- 4) dealing with the department head and confusion over who that actually was
- 5) expectations of faculty roles and how those relate to evaluation and reward

From this experience I conclude that the mentorship program is valuable. I hope I helped my mentee. I certainly learned from this experience. One of the things I learned is how valuable my mentee is to her department and to North Georgia.

...from a Mentee's Perspective

by John C. Nardo, Department of Mathematics & Computer Science

When given the opportunity to join the new faculty mentoring program, I had no doubt that I wanted to participate. I looked at the list of prospective mentors and saw several people that I wanted to get to know better. First and foremost, I wanted to establish a professional relationship with someone from outside my department. Secondly, I wanted someone who could help keep me on track toward tenure through balancing teaching, service, and research. Over this academic year, I have gained much more than I originally expected.

After our initial meeting to decide if we were a good "fit," my mentor and I decided to meet two or three times a month for lunch; it was nice to have an informal setting for our discussions. We shared our academic backgrounds and what had led us to North Georgia. Meeting another of the many people on this campus who simply love to teach and enjoy interacting with students was exciting. Over these lunch meetings, we discussed different teaching approaches, alternative assessment techniques, problems with students in my courses, ideas for interdisciplinary publishing, and balancing scholarship and service.

Looking back, this mentoring program has been tremendously beneficial for me: I have only had positive experiences. The professional relationship I was looking for in a mentor has blossomed into much more – a true friendship. I have no doubt that this friendship will continue for many years to come.

Teaching-Related Conferences

Syllabus 99 Education Technology Conference, July 24-30, 1999, Santa Clara Convention Center, Santa Clara, CA. On-line registration is available at www.syllabus.com.

16th Annual University of Prince Edward Island Faculty Development Summer Institute on Active Learning & Teaching, August 2-6, 1999, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada. Additional information is available at www.upei.ca/~estensio/FDS199.htm.

AAHE's 1999 Annual Conference on Assessment, *Assessment as Evidence of Learning: Serving Student and Society*, June 13-16, 1999, Denver, CO. Additional information is available at www.aahe.org/assessment/1999/99menu.htm.

Collaboration for the Advancement of College Teaching and Learning 1999 Faculty Development Conference, *How Learning Happens: Making Connections, Constructing Knowledge, Building Communities*, November 19-20, 1999, Bloomington, MN. Additional information is available at www.collab.org.

Recognizing and Rewarding Teaching Excellence Discussion Forum:

A Synopsis

by Vicki McCard, Department of Language & Literature

As the name suggests, this discussion forum dedicated its time and energy to devising ways to recognize and reward excellence in teaching. We wanted to identify deserving faculty based solely on outstanding teaching, without taking into consideration the areas of service and professional development because, we reasoned, the superior classroom teacher might not have time to turn in a stellar performance in the other two areas. Additionally, we wanted to realize this goal without asking candidates to prepare lengthy, time-consuming applications that would take them away from the very activity for which we hoped to reward them. We divided into small working groups and subsequently agreed to pursue five initiatives (see *RDPTL Retrospective*) whereby teaching excellence could potentially be recognized and rewarded.

The first initiative to come to fruition was the faculty retreat, which took place at Gold Creek Resort and Conference Center on February 12th and 13th. Although department chairs were asked to nominate outstanding teachers, this event was open to all faculty and administrators. Participants attended lectures and participated in discussion groups dedicated to the topic of different learning and teaching styles; and what may arguably have been lacking in the plenary address was more than compensated for by the break in routine, the spirit of collegiality, and the good food that were enjoyed by all.

The teaching recognition awards program was the second initiative to be implemented. The forum agreed upon criteria to be judged and categories of excellence in nine areas, including promoting active learning, relating to students, utilizing technology, developing critical thinking, and incorporating writing into the curriculum. Calls for nominations were issued

on campus e-mail, *the Digest* and *The Dahlonega Nugget*. Several faculty members and a considerable number of students responded. A selection committee has evaluated the applications and the results will be announced at the fall faculty meeting. The winners' names will be immortalized on a commemorative plaque to be displayed in the Student Center.

The third initiative that this discussion forum was able to realize was the outstanding teaching award monetary grants of up to \$1000 tied to the purchase of teaching materials. Department chairs and deans were asked to identify superior teachers in their departments and encourage them to apply for these awards. Once again, a selection committee will evaluate the (very brief) applications, and determine winners based on each candidate's rationale for the requested items.

As we reach the end of the 1998-1999 academic year, the participants in the Recognizing and Rewarding Teaching Excellence Discussion Forum can look upon our accomplishments with a sense of satisfaction. Thanks to the leadership of Judy O'Neal and the support of President Day and the administration, our primary objectives have been achieved. We have created three new avenues whereby excellence in teaching is being recognized and rewarded, and this was done without requiring the submission of reams of paper work and supporting documentation. We look forward to pursuing faculty development leaves of absence and the support of teaching excellence as a scholarly activity for evaluation and promotion purposes, among other initiatives, when we reconvene in the fall with new participants, and renewed enthusiasm, under the direction of the 1999-2000 Regents' Distinguished Professor for Teaching and Learning.

To Ponder...

by Judy O'Neal, 1998-99 RDPTL

The American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) through its Teaching Initiatives projects offers assistance to campuses interested in improving teaching and learning through the creation of a campus culture in which teaching and learning are the subject of thoughtful discussion, debate, and inquiry. AAHE's newest Teaching Initiatives project is the Carnegie Teaching Academy Campus Program. All research, two-year, liberal arts, and comprehensive institutions have the opportunity through this program to deepen and broaden the scholarship of teaching. The Campus Program is based on the premise that many campuses have been intrigued by new ideas about teaching as scholarly work; new practices that typify those ideas, including ongoing, substantive discussions about teaching and learning; faculty investigations of their teaching practices; new ways of assessing the effects of new pedagogies; alternative forms for documenting teaching; and new rubrics and tools for gathering and reviewing evidence about teaching.

There are three levels of participation in the program. Part One of the Campus Conversations process involves groups of campus stakeholders in drafting a definition of the "scholarship of teaching" and the implications of the definition for that campus. Part Two of the process is studying and acting on one issue related to the scholarship of teaching that was identified during Part One. After completion of the two-part Campus Conversations process, campuses meeting the goals of the process will be selected to participate in a community of campuses to address central issues. In the final year of the project, a limited number of campuses will be chosen to become Affiliates of the Carnegie Teaching Academy. These campus affiliates will be eligible for small grants and national recognition.

Developing a Teaching Portfolio cont.

reviewing SOS's or other course evaluation data. A course evaluation summary data form might contain:

- Demographics of students including student strengths and weaknesses, and grade distribution
 - Changes made during the semester including rationale and outcome
 - Recommendations for future changes
 - Activities that promoted critical thinking
- Peer evaluation - Select a person to do your review or ask to sit in on someone's class for the purpose of learning
 - Reading to maintain currency of content
 - Attendance at professional conferences
 - Conducting impact evaluation of changes

Samples of Syllabi and Student Work

- Should syllabi be included for every course that an instructor has taught during the time period?
- Should there be a syllabus for only one course and does this course represent the instructor's main focus for course improvement?
- Should there be a "before" and "after" syllabus to reflect changes made in a course along with reflec-

tions about what worked and what did not work?

- How much student work should be included?
- Student work samples might be projects, reports, research papers, etc.
- Should examples of class activities be included?
- Should sample tests be included and should they be accompanied by a summary of student successes and failures?

Teaching Goals

- Ways to improve future teaching
- Select one course or portion of a course to augment
- Define the reasons for the needed improvement
- Include positive and negative experiences that helped you focus on the goals
- Document the changes and timeframe to achieve specific goals

A cadre of eighteen faculty members have joined together to work toward the preparation of personal teaching portfolios. Creating a 6-8 page document plus gathering supporting evidence is not such a daunting task when you have the support of peers and you know that this endeavor is completely *voluntary*. We encourage you to join us in this self-reflective learning process.

Kudos

Sincere appreciation for conducting an *Excellence in Teaching at NGCSU* seminar on April 5, 1999, goes to Irene Kokkala, Department of Biology - Web Use and Evaluation.

RDPTL Initiatives Update cont.

portion of the Annual Faculty Evaluation Instrument. As a Evaluation Instrument. As a result, two introductory and two follow-up seminars on developing teaching portfolios were conducted with eighteen faculty members participating in the process of developing personal teaching portfolios.

12. Promotion of the formalization of the peer review of teaching process

The department heads met with the 1998-1999 RDPTL to discuss the peer review of teaching process. Four department heads volunteered to work with this year's and next year's RDPTL during early Fall 1999 and to make recommendations for formalizing the process prior to its possible use as a component of the teaching portion of the Annual Faculty Evaluation Instrument in January, 2000.

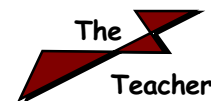
A Preview of Upcoming Activities for Fall 1999

During Fall, 1999 recipients of the *Recognizing Excellence in Teaching at NGCSU* awards program will share their expertise and experiences in creating classroom environments that promote their specific award area. Faculty seminars in the following areas have been planned:

- ◆ Bringing Scholarship into the Classroom
- ◆ Developing Critical Thinking
- ◆ Incorporating Oral Presentations
- ◆ Incorporating Writing
- ◆ Innovation
- ◆ Promoting Active Learning
- ◆ Relating to Students
- ◆ Technology Utilization

Topics for other planned faculty development seminars include teaching portfolios, peer review of teaching, and addressing varied learning and teaching styles. Your ideas for other seminars or professional development activities that will enhance your effectiveness in the classroom are sought. Please send any suggestions to joneal@ngcsu.edu.

The *Excellence in Teaching at NGCSU* Faculty Mentoring Program will expand its reach during 1999-2000 with the addition of seven new faculty mentors. A mentoring training session conducted during Spring Semester, 1999 will allow mentoring team formations to occur during Summer 1999, prior to the arrival of new faculty to the NGCSU campus.



The Excellence in Teaching at NGCSU Newsletter

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