Teaching Portfolio Practice in Ireland

A Handbook

Editor: Ciara O'Farrell

Teaching Portfolio Practice in Ireland

A Handbook

Editor: Ciara O'Farrell

Acknowledgements

Copyright

Original Works
The separate and original works comprising this collection are subject to copyright by their individual authors. The aggregation of the works into the collection and all ancillary original works are copyright by the editors. All these original works are made available under the Creative Commons[1] licence identified as Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0.[2]

Informally, this means that you are free:

- to **share** — to copy, distribute, and display the work, and
- to **remix** — to make derivative works,

under the following conditions:

- **Attribution.** You must give the original author(s) credit.
- **Noncommercial.** You may not use this work for commercial purposes.
- **Share Alike**. If you alter, transform, or build upon this work, you may distribute the resulting work only under a license identical to this one.

Note:

- All other rights are reserved by the copyright holders.
- For any reuse or distribution, you must make clear to others the license terms of the work(s).
- Any of these conditions can be waived if you get permission from the copyright holder(s).
- Your fair dealing and other rights are in no way affected by the above.
- This is an *informal*, human-readable summary of the licence terms, which has no force in its own right. The legal terms of the licence are determined solely by the Legal Code (the full license)[3].

Third Party Copyright Works
Unless otherwise indicated, all usage of third party copyright works in this collection, by way of quotation or otherwise, is done in good faith under the "fair dealing" and/or "incidental inclusion" provisions of the Irish Copyright And Related Rights Act, 2000[4], sections 51 and 52. Any specific query in relation to such usage should be referred to the individual author(s).

----

1 http://creativecommons.org/
2 http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/
3 http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/legalcode
4 http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/ZZA28Y2000.html

Contents

Contents

Part Three: Common Themes and Way Forward

In 2005, the Higher Education Authority of Ireland awarded Trinity College Dublin funding to produce a publication on teaching portfolios in Ireland. This handbook is the result of that funding. A collection of essays on and case studies of the various characteristics and uses of teaching portfolios and teaching portfolio programmes, this handbook provides an overview of national practice in portfolio development and use in Ireland, and evidences outcomes in terms of learning and/or achievement.

The primary objective of this handbook is to support learning and teaching centres, universities and institutes of higher education that are considering introducing teaching portfolios to evaluate, reward, accredit or reflect on teaching. The book achieves this objective by exploring the varying roles of teaching portfolios in higher education in Ireland, the range of approaches to portfolio programmes taken by universities and institutions, the challenges met along the way, and the outcomes achieved. Linked to our primary objective is the desire to support academic staff members interested in reflecting on or researching their teaching by using a Teaching Portfolio, whether for their own personal use, for pedagogic reasons or for their professional development. This collection is thus aimed at those charged with developing teaching and learning in higher education, as well as lecturers and those involved in third-level teaching who maintain or are interesting in beginning a teaching portfolio. It documents and analyses the impact of portfolios both on individual and institutional learning.

Structure of the Book

This collection is divided into three sections. Section One sets the scene for portfolio programmes and gives an overview of some of the key features of portfolios, including the teaching philosophy statement, the various portfolio models available and the notion of reflective writing, which is a new departure for many academics. Section Two pulls together a series of case studies from universities and institutes of higher education across Ireland, which explore the many approaches to teaching portfolios, teaching portfolio programmes and the development of reflective inquiry. Section Three presents the findings from the analysis and synthesis of the case studies within the handbook, which together represent a portfolio of practices. It examines institutional similarities and differences, and the challenges and successes of providing a forum for exchanging academic inquiries into teaching using teaching portfolios. Relatedly, Section Three also explores the relationships between course structure, delivery, reported effectiveness and institutional contexts, and the diverse teaching portfolio development models. Finally, this section looks to the future to reveal emerging directions and to prompt new inquiries in this field.

How to Use This Book

Of course, how you use this book depends on your purpose in reading it. You may choose to read from beginning to end or to browse through the contents list before choosing a pathway. If you are an educational developer charged with setting up a

programme on teaching portfolios, you might be advised to read Section One for an overview of the various models available before looking more closely at those case studies that most relate to the purposes of your proposed teaching portfolio. If you are a third-level teacher interested in reflecting on and documenting your teaching, you might like to read those case studies that focus on reflection; similarly, if you are thinking of applying for promotion or a teaching excellence award, you may prefer to read those case studies that document programmes with these goals. If you have never written a teaching philosophy statement, or are wondering what reflective writing is, then Section One may be a good place to start. However you use this book, I hope it will become a springboard for action for you; and I hope it leads you to partake in the ever-growing forum for lively, respectful debate and discussion into teaching and student learning.

Section One: Setting the Scenes

In Chapter One, I provide an overview of teaching portfolios, their goals and objectives as expressed by the authors in this collection. I note that a common goal is that portfolios should be used as a vehicle to stimulate teachers to think critically about their teaching, and discuss such issues as reflective practice, the development of communities of practice, and the role of the portfolio process in fostering integration between teaching and research. This chapter also calls for the support of our institutions to promote the teaching portfolio process as a means of cultivating scholarly exchange, and to encourage whole communities of scholars to share and critique dialogues about teaching in order to lessen the gap between how we teach and what our students learn.

Chapter Two provides an overview of different models for and approaches to developing reflective portfolios of teaching practices; it also discusses the use of reflective portfolios to assist academics who need to provide evidence for continuing professional development (CPD), accreditation or promotion. In this chapter, Jean Huges and Ivan Moore provide a helpful guide to the differences between teaching portfolios, reflective journals and reflective portfolios. Situating the use of portfolios within the context of current trends in professional development, the authors elaborate a model of professional teaching practice in higher education. They are also mindful, however, of the role of the institution in this. Indeed, they argue that, in the area of learning and teaching, quality improvement depends on individual teachers becoming reflective professionals, and HE institutions both promoting and providing support for professional practice and development in their educators: 'The reflection and scholarship that form the key components of this model for professional practice require resources, time and support if they are to be undertaken seriously'.

In Chapter Three, Orison Carlile and Anne Jordan present the theories and principles that inform the practice of reflective writing in portfolios used in the development of higher education professionals. The authors define reflection as intentional and 'usually directed towards enhanced understanding of and continual improvement in learning and teaching practice'. This reflection is ideally guided by learning and teaching theory, as well as by the experiences of and feedback from peers and students:

When teachers turn their reflection into *reflective writing*, they commit themselves to paper or screen, drafting and crafting accounts of learning and teaching experiences and subsequent analysis of these. In other words, reflective writing is characterised by a narrative framework that transforms it from mere description into a personally and publicly meaningful account of messy and multifaceted experience.

This chapter explains the importance of such an activity in the context of contemporary higher education. It then offers an overview of key thinkers and theories in the area of reflection and reflective writing, and concludes with some guidelines for reflective writing and a methodology for its assessment aimed at academic developers and also academics who wish to know more about reflective practice.

Chapter Four, the final chapter in this section, examines the role of the teaching philosophy statement in teaching portfolios. The authors, Joseph Coughlan and Marian Fitzmaurice, state that drafting a statement helps teachers to understand why they teach the way they do and provides an opportunity to reflect on personal values, to make explicit the goals and beliefs that underpin practice, and to interact with the literature on learning and teaching in higher education. Despite the many definitions available in the literature, the authors note that there is a lack of research on how to develop teaching philosophy statements and on their effectiveness. The purpose of their chapter therefore is to guide university teachers (experienced teachers as well as novices) through the process of writing a teaching philosophy statement. It provides a structure as well as working questions to provoke and encourage this process, and these are underpinned by a consideration of why it is important to have a written teaching philosophy statement. This is followed by an overview of influential models, and included throughout are excerpts from teaching philosophies (their own and those of others) as exemplars to trigger teachers' personal reflection.

Section Two: Case Studies—A National Overview of Practice in Ireland

Section Two consists of a series of case studies from various universities and institutions of higher education in Ireland documenting and analysing their approach to teaching portfolios. Contributors were asked to consider the following questions when writing their case studies:

• What are the objectives of your portfolio development?
• How did it come about?
• What does it aim to do?
• How is the Portfolio constructed? What does it value? Why?
• What challenges did you meet and how did you overcome them?
• What were the outcomes of your portfolio development within your Institution?
• Has the introduction of portfolios had any unexpected outcomes (either for individual learners or more widely at local/departmental/institutional level)?
• Do you have any plans for future development?

Although the focus on these questions has encouraged common themes to develop, the vast differences in approaches to teaching portfolios, their uses and objectives have also become clear. Undoubtedly, this has led to a rich collection and those of us involved in running programmes will learn from each other's approaches, from the challenges we have faced and the successes we have achieved. At the same time, this diversity of approaches and experiences should also provide a useful toolkit for those universities and institutes who are yet to establish portfolio programmes, and who will look to this collection for guidance.

Chapter Five begins this section with a case study by Nona Lyons, editor of a seminal collection of articles on teaching portfolios, *With Portfolio in Hand: Validating the New teacher Professionalism* (1998). Here Lyon writes as the Visiting Research Scholar at the National University of Ireland Cork, although for the past six years she has worked with many colleges and universities in Ireland in the areas of reflective inquiry and reflective teaching portfolios. In this case study, she addresses the problems she sees facing today's college teachers, illustrating them in relation to University College Cork and how that institution's faculty have responded and begun to create a history of their own practice. She examines data from interviews with faculty and suggests a set of hypotheses to test several implications of ongoing inquiries into reflective portfolios, including the possibility of integrating research and teaching through sustained portfolio inquiry.

Chapters Six and Seven focus on portfolios for reflection. In Chapter Six Jean Hughes charts the introduction of teaching portfolios in Dublin City University (DCU). In it she describes some pre-portfolio research, describes the eventual approach chosen, and analyses the challenges and outcomes of the two programmes run to date. In an honest account, Hughes describes how the programme has had to overcome difficulties in timing, in structure, and in the choice of portfolio model. The case study also describes the positive outcomes that are emerging, such as a peer-mentoring process and a reflective network that is extending beyond academics to create a university-wide community of practice.

In Chapter Seven, Orla Hanratty and Ciara O'Farrell also describe a programme for the creation of reflective teaching portfolios for professional development, this time at Trinity College Dublin where the programme has been run and modified numerous times since 2004. This case study describes the programme's theoretical grounding and how this theory is implemented in practice. The authors outline the day-to-day running of the programme, its emphasis on critical reflection, mentoring and peer review, and the challenges of encouraging a forum where honest and respectful intellectual pedagogic debate and lively reflective dialogue can occur.

Chapter Eight examines the development of teaching portfolios as NUI Galway. In this case study, Timothy Murphy and Iain MacLaren emphasise the portfolio as the central tool in the development of a reflective approach to teaching, but they also highlight its ability to develop a focus on teaching among staff who perceive themselves primarily as academic researchers. NUI Galway requires portfolios for promotion applications, teaching excellence awards and postgraduate qualifications in third-level teaching, but the authors argue that without attention to several practical and theoretical issues, such schemes are in danger of becoming an

administrative obligation. This case study focuses on a pilot study of a pragmatic portfolio model developed to help staff readily document their experience and highlight their approaches to learning and teaching.

Chapters Nine and Ten also focus on teaching portfolio programmes that form part of a professional development programme. In Chapter Nine, Geraldine O'Neill describes academic staff engagement with teaching portfolios in University College Dublin's Graduate Diploma in University Teaching and Learning. In this case study, the author describes how the programme aims to develop self-directed, lifelong learners and to promote reflection on their teaching and student learning. The teaching portfolio is the chief assessment method and the author describes this process as well as delineating its construction and objectives. UCD's Teaching and Learning Centre also supports academic staff in creating portfolios for promotion applications, and this case study documents the challenges of and the tension between these different portfolio purposes.

In Chapter Ten, Roisin Donnelly and Marian Fitzmaurice document the role the teaching portfolio plays in the Postgraduate Certificate in Third Level Learning and Teaching at Dublin Institute of Technology. Here the authors outline the objectives and structures of portfolio development. They also explain how their teaching portfolios are used for both summative and formative purposes. The portfolio is summative in that each module of the Certificate is formally assessed through the design and development of an individual teaching portfolio; it is formative in its emphasis academic staff chronicling their growth as learners and enhancing their understanding of practice.

In Chapter Eleven, Nyiel Kuol and Sarah Moore describe the use of student feedback in preparing and presenting teaching portfolios at the University of Limerick. In particular, this case study explores the reflective strategies used by a group of higher education teachers who were nominated for UL teaching excellence awards. In this case study, the authors note that very little structured research exists on using student feedback as part of the portfolio construction process, and they advocate more challenging and structured ways of interpreting student feedback for this purpose. They also raise some interesting questions about whether teaching portfolios should contain both teaching failures and successes, and suggest that more guidance and encouragement is needed before teachers adopt a diagnostic or improvement-orientated approach to their teaching.

Our final two chapters in this section return to University College Cork. Chapter Twelve expands on some of the themes we see percolating through many of the other case studies. This case study offers us three perspectives. Marian McCarthy explores the role of mentoring in a university context, an important aspect of some programmes in portfolio development. She describes some of the themes that have emerged from her experience in mentoring, and charts the journey of a small teaching support group that eventually found its niche within the support structure of teaching portfolio seminars. Bettie Higgs charts the process involved in setting up an award for Teaching Excellence in UCC and its accompanying programme. She also writes of her experience in developing a reflective portfolio as part of an accredited course with the Open University in the UK, and documents the role

portfolio-building programmes have played in UCC within the context of creating and maintaining a scholarship of learning and teaching. Áine Hyland's perspective heads up this chapter with an honest and cogent account of the political challenges she met in introducing a range of initiatives to support learning and teaching; of the unnecessary tension that exists between research and teaching; and of the necessity of recognising, valuing and rewarding excellence in teaching and learning. She sounds a challenge to university 'change agents' to be 'eternally vigilant' in promoting and foregrounding learning and teaching so that the experience of the learner is optimised.

Finally, in Chapter Thirteen Carmel Halton and Nona Lyons study the use of a portfolios as a means of reflective inquiry, and document how the portfolio has become a mandatory aspect of professional development in a Masters of Social Science (MSocSc) programme at University College Cork. In this case study, the authors describe how the reflective portfolio is used to document the research process in this Masters degree (where experienced social work practitioners investigate real problems of practice arising within the context of their employing agencies), while simultaneously engaging in a reflective documentation and interrogation of each step of the process. They point to the development of a culture of reflective inquiry, and argue that the portfolio aspect of the programme is especially significant because it allows both the research and the reflective process to be documented, and helps participants make connections between research and practice.

Section Three: Common Themes and Way Forward
In Chapter 14, Jacqueline Potter reflects on the case studies within the handbook to consider the features of the diverse practices in place across the Irish higher education sector. This chapter explores the common features of teaching portfolios and portfolio programmes that support learning and development of third level educators and examines institutional similarities and differences, and the challenges and successes of providing a forum for exchanging academic inquiries into teaching. Finally, this section looks to the future to reveal emerging directions and to prompt new inquiries in this field.

Ciara O'Farrell
May 2007

Part One: Setting the Scene

Introduction: 'Mind the Gap': Teaching Portfolios as Forums for Academic Inquiry

Ciara O'Farrell
Trinity College Dublin
cofarre@tcd.ie

Almost 150 years ago, Harvard's President Charles W. Eliot made an important point in his inaugural address: 'The lecturer pumps laboriously into sieves. The water may be wholesome, but it runs through. A mind must work to grow' (quoted in Bok 2006, p. 123). This point still has significant relevance today. Although there is overwhelming support among academics for critical thinking as a primary goal of undergraduate education, lecturing is still the main instructional approach adopted by a majority of teachers. And despite the fact that most empirical research confirms that students retain little of what they hear, many lecturers still appear to view learners as empty vessels waiting to be filled. In such cases, little or no attempt is made to encourage students to engage in active learning, discussion or problem-solving, despite research showing that such strategies can improve students' critical thinking (Huba & Freed 2000, p. 219). So why the gap between what we want our students to learn and how we teach them? And how can we expect to fill this gap without critically evaluating our teaching?

The articles and case studies about teaching portfolios and portfolio programmes presented in this book show a keen awareness of this gap. Indeed, it is through the authors' explorations of the objectives, challenges and successes of the various programmes that we can not only point to future directions for the development of teaching portfolios within Irish institutions of higher education, but also identify possible routes to bridging the gap. Throughout this collection, you will read many different approaches to and purposes of teaching portfolios. Some institutions and universities place a firm emphasis on using portfolios as a form of reflective practice; others situate them in their postgraduate programmes in learning and teaching; still others have them in place to assess candidates for teaching awards or promotional applications; and some use teaching portfolios for more than one of these purposes. One common objective emerges, however: teaching portfolios should be used to stimulate teachers to think critically about their teaching. So, as a teacher, whether one compiles a teaching portfolio for extrinsic or intrinsic reasons, taking those first steps towards reflecting systematically, deliberately and critically on one's teaching should provide the opportunity to enhance student learning through an improvement in teaching practice. Perhaps this is best summarised by the participant in the Dublin Institute of Technology programme who noted, 'I now think about the learning rather than the teaching'.

The Importance of Critical Reflectivity

In their book *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education*, Brockbank and McGill (1998) describe the teacher who wants her learners to become critical and self-directed and who is frustrated by the results, yet 'unaware of the dependency she engenders in students by passive teaching methods, mysterious assessment strategies

and lack of feedback' (p. 28). When educationalists justify their practice, the authors argue, there can sometimes be a discrepancy between the theoretical models they espouse and what they do in practice. So in this example, the teacher may not realise that her theory in use (teacher control) denies her students the very autonomy she espouses (Brockbank & McGill 1998, p. 28).

The terms 'espoused theory' and 'theory-in-use' as defined by Argyris and Schon (1974) distinguish what people say they will do and genuinely believe in (espouse), and what they actually do in a given situation (in use). Because theory-in-use is often tacit, it requires an unravelling to unpack and confront its hidden assumptions. Reflection is crucial to this process. As many of the essays in this collection point out, however, it is a specific *critical reflectivity* that is required, as opposed to than a rudimentary 'mulling over'. This is usually best achieved in a social process where transformational or critical learning can take place. When critical reflection into one's teaching is conducted in an environment that encourages a systematic dialogue, educationalists not only have the opportunity to unearth their embedded theories in use, but to discover strategies to implement their espoused theories.

In their case study, 'Theory and Practice in the Development of Teaching Portfolios at NUI Galway', Murphy and MacLaren point to McLean and Bullard (2000) who argue that portfolios:

> produced in contexts in which critical reflective practice, authenticity, and serious engagement with ideas about the learning/teaching relationship are promoted may have the potential both to stimulate teachers to articulate and improve their practice and to be a contribution to understanding the nature of the formation of professional university teachers.

Indeed, Murphy and MacLaren contend that there is 'potential in extending this concept of the linkages between reflection and meta-cognition to empower academic staff as dynamic change agents in the reshaping of teaching practice, the development of curriculum and in nurturing innovation and reform in student learning and assessment'.

In a similar vein, Kuol and Moore quote Seldin (2000), who advocates that faculty who engage in the preparation of a teaching portfolio not only develop an ability to reflect on and analyse their own teaching, but are also more likely to discuss teaching with their colleagues, to experiment with new teaching strategies, and to engage more in the development of enhanced teaching materials. Certainly, the majority of teaching portfolio programmes run in Irish universities and institutions of higher education and discussed in this collection attest to this. These programmes offer educationalists the opportunity to examine their underlying philosophies, assess the usefulness of these philosophies in the context in which they work, and consider alternative approaches based on different philosophies or different combinations of philosophies (Brockbank & McGill 1998, p. 31).

A 'Teaching Commons': Benefits and Challenges

In her essay 'Educating for Inquiry and Exchange through a Reflective Portfolio Process', Lyons quotes Mary Huber and Pat Hutchings of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching who argue for a *teaching commons*, a place of exchange for university faculty to share their teaching experiences. Indeed, many of the chapters in this collection refer to the importance of this type of forum and attribute much of the success of their teaching portfolio programmes to it. Hughes and Moore claim that the 'use and development of portfolios can be enhanced through supported group work'; McCarthy notes how she focused her initial sessions on a mix of the 'pedagogic and the pastoral'; and Murphy and MacLaren observe how their programme supports participants in developing their teaching philosophy statements either through individual consultancies or thorough a series of informal seminars entitled 'Conversations in Teaching and Learning'. Halton and Lyons have structured their Masters in Social Science by portfolio to incorporate 'reflective inquiry through a peer inquiry group process'; O'Neill notes how the UCD programme requires participants to respond online to the critical reflections of two others in their group; Donnelly and Fitzmaurice 'encourage dialogue and the development of supportive relationships so that learning is facilitated by and with peers'; and Hanratty and O'Farrell argue that the Trinity College Dublin programme provides a forum where 'respectful intellectual pedagogic debate and lively reflective dialogue can take place among peers as the basis for socially constructed learning' because 'as scholar-teachers we need to interact with each other, not just with our students'.

Individual insight should not be underestimated, but reflection can benefit from shared analysis. And it seems that many of our programmes deliberately reject the traditional image of the lonely scholar, preferring instead to encourage communal scholarship and professional dialogue with peers. Brockbank and McGill distinguish internal dialogue (within individuals) from dialogue between individuals and with others (1998, p. 58). They also note that '[b]eing able to undertake reflection alone is necessary but not sufficient. The tendency to self-deceive, collude and be unaware is ever present' (Brockbank & McGill 1998, p. 5). In other words, there is always a risk that reflection can become self-confirming (Harvey & Knight 1996, p. 160). Moreover, Hanratty and O'Farrell point to a kind of group collusion that can also arise from academics not wanting to be seen to be 'judging' their peers, which means the facilitator must be watchful for any overriding tendency for collegial approval. When it comes to portfolios, Hughes and Moore rightly argue for a framework for reflective writing that prevents portfolios from becoming descriptive diaries; Hanratty and O'Farrell also refer to the challenge of facilitating participants to maintain a level of high critical reflection in group *dialogue*, not just in their *written* reflections. Another potential pitfall is 'didactic' talk (Belenky et al. 1986), where group members report experiences but participants do not really attempt to arrive jointly at some new understanding. This is opposed to 'real talk', which 'reaches deep into the experience of each participant; it also draws on the analytical abilities of each' (Belenky et al. 1986, p. 144).

It is thus not enough simply to group participants together and hope that the social process will result in learning. Indeed, the conditions required for this level of

dialogue are many: 'self, being, becoming, action, interaction, knowing, understanding, risk, exploration, emotion, interpretation, judging, insight, courage, exposure, daring, authenticity, collaboration and dialogue' (Barnett 1997, p. 108). As one participant in a portfolio programme noted, 'The reflective process left me feeling uncomfortable. At times nothing made sense. I had no answers and I found that space difficult. But as time went on I became more comfortable with not knowing'. Dialogue that encourages reflection is about letting go of the identity invested in us as the authoritative subject expert; it is about embracing the unknown before making connections between individuals, departments and schools, and also between knowledge, self-understanding and practice.

The Role of Teaching and Learning Inquiry

Perhaps not surprisingly, some of the chapters in this collection refer specifically to the emergence of 'communities of practice' (Wenger 1998) from the portfolio programmes. Donnelly and Fitzmaurice observe the 'discourse' that has developed around important issues in teaching and learning—'the developing critical community of learners endeavouring to articulate and become more competent in their professional roles'. Hughes characterises the Dublin City University community as 'a network of reflective peers', and says that the portfolio programme there affords them the context and opportunity to discuss learning and teaching issues. In fact, some of the participants in the courses at DCU have come from other support services within the University, indicating a 'fledgling network … extending beyond academics to create a university-wide community of practice'.

Although it is commendable that such communities reflect actively on their teaching practice, Murphy and MacLaren note that the goals of such communities should also be to 'challenge preconceptions about the nature of teaching in higher education, and in the long term, to develop an interest in a critical and scholarly approach to this level of their academic practice'. I would argue that this latter goal is crucial in the short term also and that portfolio programmes need to be instigated as forums for academic inquiry. The role of teaching as a form of expanded scholarship has been elucidated by Boyer (1990); our need for critical and independent thinkers in higher education to critique and formulate new knowledge must have its source in our educators. As Lyons argues, in the absence of an ongoing exchange of the pedagogies needed to teach inquiry, how can students, despite years in the classroom, be realistically expected to develop adequate critical thinking and inquiry skills? Her small sampling shows two important findings. First, faculty who attended the portfolio programme link inquiries into teaching into their research. Second, through the inquiry process, they are developing a meta-cognitive awareness of their own thinking and ways of knowing.

Shulman may have argued in his 1987 essay that teaching, unlike most professions, is 'devoid of a history of practice', but Lyons contests that the very process of engaging in inquiry into teaching and student learning, and sharing that knowledge with others, begins to create a history of practice; indeed, this collection builds on this. Lyons quotes Boyer who suggested we give the term 'scholarship' a broader, more capacious meaning: 'stepping back from one's investigation, looking for connections, building bridges between theory and practice, and communicating

one's knowledge effectively to students' (Boyer 1990, p. 16). As Bok (2006) suggests, however, even when teachers care about their teaching, there is no compulsion to go beyond normal conscientiousness in fulfilling their classroom duties: 'There is no compelling necessity to re-examine familiar forms of instruction and experiment with new pedagogic methods in an effort to help their students accomplish more' (p. 32). Because there is little agreement among researchers as to what learning actually is, let alone how to measure the extent to which it has taken place, and because in higher education there is surprisingly little attempt to theorise the nature of learning, the consequences of inaction to help students learn are normally invisible. And it is precisely because of this invisibility that colleges can get away with focusing on more tangible results and neglect learning and teaching issues.

Integrating Teaching and Research

It may well be difficult to define what systematic reflective thinking is and therefore difficult to assess the effects of reflective practice on teaching practice and student learning (Rogers 2002, p. 842). This does not make research on teaching practice less valuable. Indeed, we must strive to make the reflective process explicit, to evidence results of teaching and implications for research and practice.

Áine Hyland points out that 'teaching can provide an ongoing forum in debate and discussion about research'. As the medical doctor currently enrolled in the Masters' programme in Teaching and Learning at University College Cork notes, teaching and research must be intimately linked—as a doctor he must also be an educator. Hughes and Moore also argue that portfolios can have the additional benefit of helping teachers 'to diffuse the tension between research and teaching that so often characterises the experience of contemporary academics'. And Lyons hypothesises that the portfolio inquiry process can foster a new integration between teaching and research. Research, she notes, is embedded in the teaching process as new techniques are tried out, tested and assessed—although she accepts that more research needs to be undertaken into the benefits of reflective inquiry. At University College Cork, a new Masters of Social Science (MSocSc) by portfolio has been in place since 2004. In their case study, Halton and Lyons show how the MSocSc 'gives experienced social work practitioners opportunities to investigate by research real problems of their practices arising within the context of their employing agencies', thus making connections between research and practice from the outset of the programme. As the authors note, the programme 'cast reflective inquiry as a mandate of professional development', and the portfolio both supported and required a reflective approach: 'The portfolio aspect of the programme is deemed of special significance because it uniquely allows for the documentation of both the research and reflective processes of the programme'. Interestingly, participants in this programme note realisations such as 'research and practice are not the separate activities I always thought they were', and the importance of 'connecting my voice as a practitioner to my emerging voice as a researcher of practice'.

Certainly, programmes such as the MSocSc go some way to realising a comprehensive portfolio scheme that embraces research as well teaching, bridging the gap and 'developing synergies across the full range of academic purposes' (Murphy & MacLaren). If we are to achieve this synergy, this ambition that portfolios

should somehow connect all academic endeavours, we must have the support of our institutions. Sadly, as academic developers, it is futile to encourage our teaching colleagues to value their teaching and to exchange the pedagogies needed to teach inquiry if the contextual reality in which they work lays down a different path for them. It is this reality that leads Murphy and MacLaren to ponder, 'Where stands a lecturer whose primary commitment is to teaching excellence?' In those universities that pride themselves on being 'research-led', the answer is unfortunately likely to be, 'not very far up the ranks'. It is *research* that has emerged as a privileged term, the binary 'other' to *teaching* (Boud & Lee 1999, emphasis mine). As Hyland rightly points out, 'appointments and promotions have traditionally been made on the basis of research standing and output. Although lip service is paid to teaching and community service—the other two pillars of an academic's life—these elements are not always seen to be of equal value in the appointments and promotion stakes'. Murphy and MacLaren also make the point that academic developers, in their endeavours to raise the status of teaching-related activities, can alienate academic faculty who want to prioritise research in their own subject discipline, and thus potentially strengthen the research–teaching divide. They suggest using portfolios to encourage and promote the idea of an academic practice that spans teaching, research, community and wider scholarly activity.

Supporting Academic Professional Development: Realities, Challenges, Opportunities

To achieve a more holistic academic practice, we must first be aware of the contextual reality in which academic/educational developers work. Hughes and Moore argue in this collection that 'in the area of learning and teaching, quality improvement depends on two things: individual teachers must become reflective learners, and HE institutions must promote and provide support for professional practice and development in their educators'. They also contend that the reflection and scholarship that form the key components of professional practice 'require resources, time and support if they are to be undertaken seriously'. Yet there are many real barriers to this, such as:

• government policy to double PhD numbers by 2010
• the emphasis on growing Ireland's fourth level
• the focus on developing graduate schools
• the large sources of funding to be derived from certain research activities
• an emphasis on research promoted by senior university managers
• permanent positions being dependent on research output
• the development of specialist research centres and institutes by universities
• the provision of funding to attract leaders in the field to relocate to Ireland.

Undoubtedly, some universities and institutions of higher education do encourage and support academic staff in the scholarship and practice of effective teaching. But this is often a long and challenging process, and as O'Neill points out in her case study, one that requires a 'bottom-up culture'. Without a champion in a position of authority, the road can be a long one. Hyland tells us that when she became Vice-President and a member of the executive team of University College Cork, she decided that a significant part of her role would be to develop opportunities for

'recognising, valuing and rewarding excellence in teaching and learning'. The UCC five-year strategic plan states:

> There should be parity of esteem between teaching and research, which should be formalised and validated by recognising effective and innovative teaching and learning practices by giving them the same status as research. Research into the teaching and learning process should itself be recognised and rewarded in the same way as all other forms of scholarship (UCC 2000, p. 13).

As Hyland convincingly argues, however, university change agents must be 'eternally vigilant' to ensure that all aspects of learning and teaching are not only supported and enhanced, but encouraged and prioritised.

And what of us? What are the challenges we have to rise to as academic/educational developers, as lecturers, as teachers? 'Teaching', writes Pat Hutchins (2006) of the Carnegie Forum for the Advancement of Teaching, 'like any craft or art advances when people find like-minded colleagues to work with, review their efforts, and push them to the next stages of thinking'. In this collection, we see the importance of teaching portfolio programmes providing a space for vigorous, candid conversations about teaching and learning to take place. We need to consider how to create, maintain and grow the space to support this. And we need to cultivate the dialogical process that leads to the creation of new understandings and knowledge, and that is motivated by this collegial, energetic discourse.

It will take time for this to be successful, for the dialogical process to unfold and common understandings to collectively develop; indeed, it will take time and resources to develop new structures to support all this. The process may also involve developing new academic identities that are 'forged, rehearsed and remade in local sites of practice' (Lee & Boud 2003, p. 188). It will involve continued critical questioning of our programmes, our structures, our teaching. And it will certainly require us to embrace the self-questioning that is at the heart of academic competence, because teaching that is not accompanied by inquiry, reflection and a passion for subject matter becomes 'stripped of its critical and moral purpose' (Rowland 1988, p. 2).

It is thus not enough simply to encourage individuals who express an interest in reflecting on student learning through teaching portfolios; we need to encourage whole communities of scholars to share and critique, to enrich the dialogues that already exist, and to encourage a 'healthy cross-fertilization of practices' (Hutchins 2006). We need to introduce ideas about teaching and learning into different conversations; develop a discourse community; and be open to infusion by inquiry, by literature, and by peer review. Finally, we need to encourage 'the field' to develop itself. Through all this, we will begin to see that gap diminish between how we teach and what our students learn.

References

Barnett, R. 1997, *Higher Education: A Critical Business*, SRHE & Open University Press, Buckingham.

Belenky, M.F., Clinchy, B.M, Goldberger, N.R. & Narule, J.M. 1986, *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice and Mind*, Basic Books, New York.

Bok, D. 2006, *Our Underachieving Colleges*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Boyer, E. 1990, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Princeton NJ.

Boud, D. & Lee, A. 1999, 'Promoting research development through writing groups', *Proceedings of the Australian Association for Research in Education Annual Conference*, Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE), Melbourne. Available from <http://www.aare.edu.au/99pap/lee99719.htm> [9 May 2007].

Boud, D. & Lee, A. 2003, 'Writing groups, change and academic inquiry: Research development as local practice', *Studies in Higher Education*, vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 187–200.

Brockbank, A. & McGill, I. 1998, *Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education*, SRHE & Open University Press, Buckingham.

Harvey L. & Knight, P. 1996, *Transforming Higher Education*, SRHE & Open University Press, Buckingham.

Huba, M. & Freed, J. 2000, *Learner-Centered Assessment on College Campuses: Shifting the Focus from Teaching to Learning*, Allyn & Bacon, Needham Heights MA.

Hutchins, P. 2006, 'Building a better conversation about learning', Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Available from <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/perspectives/sub.asp?key=245&subkey=582> [9 May 2007].

McLean, M. & Bullard, J.E. 2000, 'Becoming a university teacher: Evidence from teaching portfolios (how academics learn to teach)', *Teacher Development*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 79–101.

Rogers, C. 2002, 'Defining reflection: Another look at John Dewey and reflective thinking', *Teachers College Record*, vol. 104, no. 4, pp. 842–866.

Rowland, S. 1998, 'Turning academics into teachers', *Teaching in Higher Education*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 133–139.

Seldin, P. 2000, 'Teaching portfolios: A positive appraisal', *Academe*, vol. 86, no. 1, pp. 37–44.

Shulman, L. 1987, 'Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform', *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 57, no. 1, pp. 1–22.

Wenger, E. 1998, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*, Cambridge University Press.

University College Cork 2000, *Agenda for Excellence* [UCC Strategic Development Plan 2000-2005], University College Cork. Available from <http://www.ucc.ie/services/opa/stratplan/StrategicPlan-Long.pdf> [9 May 2007].

Reflective Portfolios for Professional Development

Jean Hughes [a] and Ivan Moore [b]
[a] Dublin City University, [b] Manchester University
Jean Hughes
Jean.hughes@dcu.ie
Ivan Moore
Ivan.moore@manchester.ac.uk

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of different models for and approaches to developing reflective portfolios of teaching practice. The chapter situates the use of portfolios within the context of current trends in professional development, with particular attention to institutional factors that impact on portfolio use and development. It elaborates a model of professional teaching practice in higher education and argues that portfolios can be used to facilitate this kind of practice; they may also have the additional benefit of helping teachers to diffuse the tension between research and teaching that so often characterises the experience of contemporary academics. The chapter provides a helpful guide to the differences between teaching portfolios, reflective journals and reflective portfolios, noting that the last of these is likely to be of general use to most academics. It is therefore the type that underpins the three models presented in the chapter. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how reflective portfolios may be used to assist academics who need to provide evidence for continuing professional development (CPD), accreditation or promotion.

Developing a Professional Teaching Culture

Teaching staff in Irish higher education (HE) institutions are not required to have any formal training or qualifications in teaching, other than a degree, Masters or PhD in the discipline in which they teach. In recent years, however, increasing attention has been given to professional development in teaching and learning for university teachers. According to Seldin (1991), the quality of teaching has become a crucial concern at colleges and universities, with a new focus on the role of the instructor. As in the UK, the United States and Australia, this area has received increased attention in Ireland, evidenced by reviews carried out by both the Irish Universities Quality Board (IUQB) and the European Universities Association (EUA). An IUQB project focusing on the development of a best-practice approach to the organisation of teaching and learning activities and involving all seven Irish universities is currently in progress.

In the area of learning and teaching, quality improvement depends on two things: individual teachers must become reflective professionals, and HE institutions must promote and provide support for professional practice and development in their educators. But what does this mean?

The Importance of Professional Reflection

Most professionals, and perhaps teachers in particular, possess and apply significant knowledge, which is acquired through experience and learning. It underpins much of what we do and how we act as professionals but is not readily identifiable or accessible. Polayni (1983) calls this 'tacit knowledge'. Professional reflection is important because it makes our tacit, automatic knowledge and methods more explicit, allowing us to build on good practice and develop a professional 'repertoire' for future problem-solving. 'Reflective practice is the process of learning and developing through examining our own practice, opening our practice to scrutiny by others and studying texts from a wider sphere' (Bolton 2001, p. 4).

Schön (1983) distinguishes between reflection-in-action and reflection on-action. The former refers to the process of making conscious decisions about and adjustments to practice during practice itself; these adjustments are usually based on feedback. The latter refers to critical reflection that takes place after practice, leading to new theories and thus to improved practice the next time the action is undertaken. Reflection-on-action needs to be carefully managed, because individuals may be overly critical, focus only on negative aspects or problems, or see mistakes as failures rather than opportunities for change. Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) argue that, used appropriately, reflection-on-action means that experience never becomes a liability, because it involves professional and constructive—rather than negative or destructive—self-scrutiny.

A Model for Professional Teaching Practice

Teachers generally come to HE with personal theories of 'how to teach', which may be more or less tacit. In Figure 1 below, we propose a model that puts this theory at the centre of professional teaching practice, and ties it firmly to reflection. As suggested in Figure 1, teachers' personal theories may be based—implicitly or explicitly—on scholarship or previous CPD, or they may be—and often are—based on teachers' previous experience (good or bad) as learners in HE. Their theories are shaped in relation to different kinds of teaching—for example, postgraduate, undergraduate, part time or full time. Theories also evolve in different teaching environments such as lectures, tutorials, seminars and practical classes.

Their theories of teaching lead teachers to plan and carry out teaching with various student learning outcomes. If teaching practice is to be genuinely professional, however, it must involve reflection on those outcomes. Reflection may be prompted by the results of student assessments, student evaluations and feedback based on peer observation of teaching. As Figure 1 suggests, professional practice should also incorporate an attempt to make sense of reflection by undertaking further CPD or scholarship, leading to a more explicit and refined theory of student learning, which in turn leads to developed and enhanced teaching practice.

Figure 1: Professional Teaching Practice Model (based on Moore 2004)
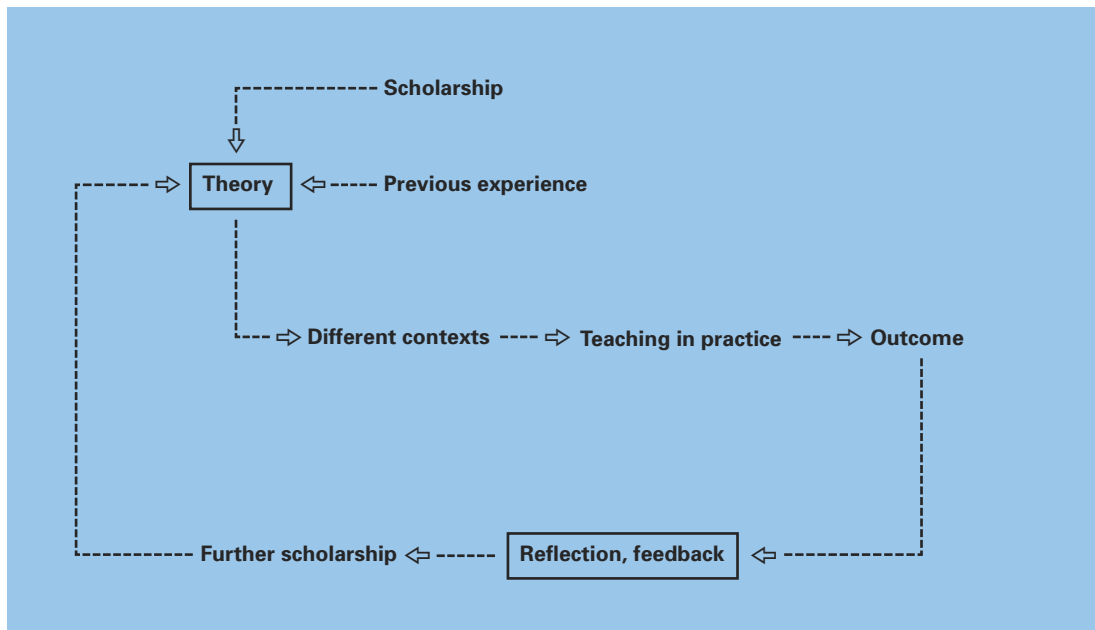
The reflection and scholarship that form the key components of this model for professional practice require resources, time and support if they are to be undertaken seriously. Academics are, however, under increased pressure to improve their research output. Moreover, several recent developments appear to prioritise research over teaching and learning: government policy to double PhD numbers by 2010; the emphasis on growing Ireland's 'fourth level'; the focus on developing graduate schools; and the large sources of funding to be derived from research. As a result, most academics experience some tension between the demands of their teaching and research roles, particularly when evidence is required of teaching effectiveness. Indeed, anecdotal evidence suggests that it is easier to 'evidence' research practice than teaching and learning. These factors inevitably complicate—and possibly even undermine—institutional attempts to support professional development in teaching.

Trends in Professional Teaching Development

Despite the cultural and institutional difficulties that currently attend professional development in teaching, Irish universities have taken some steps towards more comprehensive and considered support for teaching and learning activities. MacLaren (2005) identifies three main trends in support for and promotion of professional teaching development: accreditation, teaching portfolios and reflective journals. These are discussed below, as is a fourth trend: reflective portfolios, which combine features of teaching portfolios and reflective journals. All of these trends have the potential to support academics in both the development and documentation of their teaching practices, but universities are at different stages and demonstrate different levels of maturity and practice in each of these areas.

Accreditation

'Accreditation' is shorthand for the promotion of accredited programmes in learning and teaching. Participants can usually begin with a postgraduate certificate or diploma, and many programmes provide a route to a masters degree in teaching and learning in higher education. In some countries, universities now mandate certificate-level programmes as a probation criterion for inexperienced lecturers. In the UK, the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) accredit such programmes, so that the certificate or diploma provides evidence in support of application for professional membership of the HE Academy. It is anticipated that this trend in encouraging professional accreditation will continue, perhaps to the point where it will become a mandatory requirement to teach in HE.

Teaching Portfolios

There are several situations in which academics must provide evidence of quality and skill in teaching. These include applications for promotion (Seldin 1991), membership of professional bodies such as the HE Academy and, of course and increasingly, lecturing posts in the first place. Teaching portfolios support these activities by allowing academics to:

- document teaching practice
- provide evidence of quality and a professional approach to development
- provide evidence in support of an alternative route to accreditation (rather than undertaking formal qualifications in teaching and learning), professional membership or postgraduate qualification.

Teaching portfolios are usually produced for a specific purpose, such as one of those noted above; they are produced after a period of teaching; they are essentially evidence based; and they often follow an institutionally designed framework (such as the HE Academy's Professional Standards Framework). Indeed, the HEA has a portfolio-based application process specifically for Irish applicants. In some cases, teaching portfolios may be used for quality assurance purposes.

Reflective Journals

The development and use of reflective journals have been heavily influenced by Schön's (1983) notion of the 'reflective practitioner' and Boyer's (1990) ground-breaking work on the four domains of scholarship. Reflective journals are:

- maintained on an ongoing basis; they are never completed
- usually produced during a period of teaching (reflection-in-action)
- personal
- often structured by the individual maintaining the journal (although it may be that they follow an outline or template).

Although a journal is essentially a written record, with perhaps some visual support material, it is often the case that other materials (artefacts, teaching resources, mementos and so on) are included, referenced in or attached to the journal.

Reflective journals are gaining popularity as a means of helping teachers reflect on their practice; examine their approach to teaching and the effect of their teaching on student learning; and identify opportunities to develop their teaching. To this end, they are associated less with quality assurance then with quality enhancement.

Reflective Portfolios

Thus far this chapter has distinguished between teaching portfolios and reflective journals. There is also a third type of document used to support professional development in teaching—the reflective portfolio. The three terms—teaching portfolio, reflective journal and reflective portfolio—are often used interchangeably, but there are important differences between them. The discussion above summarises the differences between the first two: a teaching portfolio provides evidence of teaching experience and expertise for a particular purpose (promotion, accreditation or qualification) whereas a reflective journal supports the continuous development of teaching practice.

A reflective portfolio, on the other hand, foregrounds the importance of reflective writing, but usually also includes other media, such as artefacts used in teaching, flipcharts, presentation materials and feedback from students or teaching evaluation. Brockbank and Magill (in Light & Cox 2001) describe the reflective portfolio as:

> a compilation of learning intentions, accounts of learning activities, learning outcomes, records of reflective dialogues. It includes evidence from a variety of sources including your private learning journal/diary/log, and most important of all, a reflective document detailing your learning process (p. 34).

By their nature, these portfolios are very personal documents. They do not conform to templates, and attempts to standardise them would probably be to their detriment. In many respects, reflective portfolios—their appearance, the media used to store them and their content—will vary according to individual needs. At Dublin City University (DCU), we conducted a small piece of research in advance of the introduction of portfolios (Hughes 2006), which suggested that we should provide a portfolio template, but ensure that it allows for individual customisation and tailoring.

These considerations inform the models and approaches suggested below, all of which are designed to support individual teachers in examining chosen aspects of their practice, prompting them to ask pertinent questions, resolve outstanding difficulties and identify useful improvements. Teachers are encouraged to adopt Schön's (1983) framing and reframing approach, attending to the peculiarities of each new situation, reflecting-in-action and reflecting-on-action, and building their own professional repertoires to turn 'insight into improved action' (Ghaye & Ghaye 1998, p. 11).

Reflective Portfolios for Professional Development

Recognising the variable nature of teaching practice and reflection, we have developed the following three portfolio models, which are themselves varied and flexible:

- critical incident
- continuous professional development framework (CPD)
- Boyer's scholarships.

We present the models with accompanying templates and two alternative approaches to the use of each model: the cellular approach and the case study approach.

Critical Incident

This model is primarily for those individuals whose main goal is to examine, reflect on and improve their own practice by examining particular events, referred to as 'critical incidents'. 'Critical incidents are vivid happenings that for some reason people remember as being significant' (Brookfield 1995, p. 114). They change what happens after them. This model provides people interested in critical incidents with a framework to structure their reflection.

Cellular approach

The cellular approach to the Critical Incident model involves providing reflective comments for each cell of a matrix (Table 1).

Table 1: Critical Incident Model: Cellular Approach

Critical Incident	What was happening?	How did you feel?	What did you do?		What was the result/your learning?
			At the time?	Afterwards?	
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

The main aim of this approach is to focus on small-scale incidents and to examine each in its own right. We suggest identifying up to six critical incidents and selecting a balance of good and bad experiences. It might be useful to thread several incidents. That is, begin with a critical incident (say, something that happened in a tutorial class), describe it and reflect on what was done either then or later. Then address the next class and reflect on how an approach was developed or changed and what effect it had on the students.

Case study approach

In this approach to the Critical Incident model, a broader perspective is taken. A whole programme, module or longer-term experience forms the basis for reflection. The teacher writes a reflective account of the experience—that is, not just a factual description, but one that involves consideration of all the headings in the matrix (Table 2). Writers should try to reflect on why they acted as they did and on the effect they had on student learning. If possible, provide evaluative evidence of these effects.

Table 2: Critical Incident Model: Case Study Approach

Case Study	What was happening?	How did you feel?	Why did you do what you did?	What was the result/your learning?

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Framework

This model adapts the HE Academy framework for professional standards, which identifies six areas of activity, six areas of core knowledge and five professional values (Higher Education Academy 2006).

The six areas of activity are:

- design and planning of learning activities and/or programmes of study
- teaching and/or supporting student learning
- assessment and giving feedback to learners
- developing effective environments and student support and guidance
- integration of scholarship, research and professional activities with teaching and supporting learning
- evaluation of practice and continuing professional development.

The six areas of core knowledge are:

- subject material
- appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme
- student learning, in general and in the subject
- use of appropriate learning technologies
- methods for evaluating teaching effectiveness
- implications of quality assurance and enhancement for professional practice.

The five professional values are:

- respect for individual learners
- commitment to incorporating the process and outcomes of relevant research, scholarship and/or professional practice
- commitment to the development of learning communities
- commitment to encouraging participation in higher education, acknowledging diversity and promoting equality of opportunity
- commitment to continuing professional development and evaluation of own practice.

Cellular approach

The matrix (Table 2) focuses on the areas listed above but also adds a focus on outcomes and learning. The framework provides a structured way of documenting and recording an individual's practice. For example, individuals might move from reflecting on improving their assessment approaches in response to a critical incident to examining what it says about their assessment approaches in general (areas of activity); how these fit into the disciplinary context (core knowledge); and how their professional values are reflected in how they approached the relevant incident. Questions such as the following may help individuals in developing appropriate self-knowledge:

- Why did I do it that way?
- What does that indicate about my approaches/values?
- What did I learn?

To complete the approach, individuals should document the outcomes they see (improved learning, better engagement and so on) and what they have learned from the experience. Reflecting on several incidents using the framework builds a comprehensive professional development record.

You will probably need to select two examples of each area of activity to provide a sufficiently rich reflective account, and there should be sufficient coverage of the breadth of teaching and learning so that teaching methodologies, assessment and examination approaches and pedagogic research are all taken into account.

Case study approach

For each area of activity (Table 2), identify an extended engagement with students. Describe this engagement, focusing on the professional values and core knowledge that you brought to bear on the experience. Focus on reflective writing, not evidence. Also try to think in terms of short-term and long-term outcomes and learning.

Table 2: CPD Model: Cellular and Case Study Approaches

Area of activity	Professional values					Core knowledge						Outcomes	Learning
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6		
1													
2													
3													
4													
5													
6													

Boyer's Scholarships

Ernest Boyer's seminal work *Scholarship Reconsidered* (1990) argues that the academic's role incorporates four 'scholarships':

- discovery—engaging in what we know as research, that is, the search for knowledge for its own sake
- integration—making informed connections across the disciplines to understand the broad context of one's work
- application—bridging the gap between the worlds inside and outside the academy, framing this within the context of disciplinary understanding
- teaching—bridging the distance between intrapersonal and interpersonal understanding in a way that is fully informed by the scholarships of discovery, integration and application (Boyer 1990).

According to Boyer, 'we must move beyond the tired old "teaching versus research debate" and give the familiar and honorable term "scholarship" a broader, more capacious meaning' (1990, p. 16). As part of this agenda, he positions teaching as an integral rather than an isolated part of an academic's work.

Although there are many debates about Boyer's work, it nevertheless provides a useful model for investigating teaching practice, particularly in a scholarly way. To use this approach, one must view teaching 'problems' in the same way as research problems—as the starting points for inquiry, rather than as 'bad' teaching that needs

to be fixed (Bass 1998, cited by Hutchings & Schulman 1999). With this in mind, we propose the third model for portfolio development. This model combines reflective investigation into teaching practice with the four scholarships, thereby enabling a more structured reflective model that may also provide opportunities for publishing.

Cellular approach

In this approach (Table 3), teachers think about their practice in terms of Boyer's four scholarships. Taking several discrete critical incidents (we suggest six), teachers should reflect on the process of developing their practice or making decisions and taking action in terms of these scholarships. We suggest that when looking at either critical incidents or case studies, teachers should examine:

- existing research in the area and/or how they could structure the incident as a research problem (discovery)
- relevant issues in other disciplines (have similar issues/incidents occurred, been addressed or resolved, or are there 'generic' pedagogic approaches that could be brought to bear?) (integration)
- external factors that either contribute to, or could be addressed through, this incident (for example, many incidents arise because of large class sizes, wider participation, lower student attendance, greater student diversity and so on, whereas external factors such as employment, social and citizenship issues can be influenced through learning and teaching) (application)
- how the incident can be used to inform new, adapted or updated pedagogic approaches (teaching).

We have added an evaluation stage to the four scholarships to ensure closure of the reflective loop. Evaluation makes the link back to discovery and should provide the means to inform the next iteration of the scholarships by prompting further investigation. Boyer's scholarships, used reflectively in a portfolio context, could quite easily be the basis for action research and facilitate publication of teaching practice.

Case study approach

As in the two previous models, a range of extended engagements should be identified and a reflective account written using Boyer's scholarships as a guide.

Table 3: Boyer's Scholarships Model: Cellular and Case Study Approaches

Boyer's scholarships	Incidents					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Discovery						
Integration						
Application						
Teaching						
Evaluation						

Another Alternative?

Teachers may also wish to determine their own framework for reflective writing, and this should be supported in the interests of flexibility and individuality. The structure of such portfolios will depend on individual teachers' goals and purposes. Without some structure or guidelines, however, it is unlikely that such portfolios will be more than reflective, descriptive diaries. As a result, they may not be useful tools for change or improvement. Teachers who wish to maintain a completely customised portfolio should therefore consider whether and how their approach incorporates the following elements:

• reflection
• development
• evaluation/evidence
• scholarship
• professional practice.

Linking the Models

Although all the models discussed above are linked to professional practice, it may appear that they are nevertheless independent and suited to varying individual needs (for promotion, qualification, development and so on). At any point in time, however, an individual might have multiple needs or interests, which will inevitably change over time. These models were developed with this consideration in mind, and it is intended that movement between the models should be relatively easy. For example, an individual might begin with a cellular reflective journal and over time incidents might develop into case studies and case studies might then begin to reflect the individual's professional values. At this point, enough reflective material might be available to switch to the CPD framework model, with the aim of applying for professional body membership. Similarly, an opportunity for promotion might arise and existing materials can be easily adapted to suit a more structured portfolio framework.

Supporting Portfolio Development through Group Learning

The use and development of portfolios can be enhanced through supported group work. At DCU, for example, the authors run a portfolio development course organised around four facilitated group sessions, with participants organised into action learning sets—that is, a small group of learners (three to four people) whose focus is on learning through and about their common practice. Facilitators provide some input into these sessions, helping participants to focus on reflection and evaluation, rather than description. They encourage the use of evidence of the impact of teachers' actions and decisions on student learning, and help participants to make connections between research into student learning (that is, the scholarly literature) and their reflective writing by asking questions such as:

• Were your actions and decisions based on any accepted theory?
• Can you explain the outcomes of your actions in terms of any accepted theory (or do they challenge theories)?

Most of the time in the sessions is given to breakout tasks where the groups discuss specific issues, first as individuals and in the group. For example, a breakout task might involve each person, in turn, describing:

- what they have added to their journal since the previous session
- what they have learned from the writing and reflective experience
- what they would like the group to help them with.

When small groups identify issues that require follow up or that are likely to be of interest to the whole group, these issues are discussed in the next session. For example, a group might request formal input on educational theories, student learning or some other conceptual or theoretical area. Each session ends with a meta-reflection during which participants reflect on the process of maintaining the portfolio and how it is shaping their reflection on, learning about and understanding of their own practice.

Conclusion

In their teaching roles alone, academics experience many competing pressures, and the different models above have been developed with these pressures in mind. For improvement of practice, professional body membership or applying for promotion, these models provide a framework within which to reflect on, gather evidence of and document practice. If presented in the context of a structured course, these models not only facilitate professional reflection both in and on practice; they also contribute to the development of a community of practice focused on reflective learning. This in turn is likely to feed back into university culture, helping to overcome institutional inertia and transform the university itself into a learning organisation.

References

Bolton, G. 2001, *Reflective Practice: Writing and Professional Development*, Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd, London.

Boyer, E. 1990, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Princeton NJ.

Brookfield, S. 1995, *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Ghaye, A. & Ghaye, K. 1998, *Teaching and Learning through Critical Reflective Practice*, David Fulton, London.

Higher Education Academy 2006, *The UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education*, HEA, York. Available from <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/regandaccr/StandardsFramework(1).pdf> [8 December 2006].

Hughes, J. 2006, 'Pre-portfolio evaluation', paper presented to the All Ireland Society for Higher Education (AISHE) Conference, NUI Maynooth, 31 August–1 September 2006.

Hutchings, P. & Schulman, L. 1999, 'The scholarship of teaching: New elaborations, new developments', Change, vol. 31, no. 5, pp. 10–15.

Light, G. & Cox, R. 2001, *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: The Reflective Professional*, Sage Publications, London.

Moore, I. 2004, *Evaluating a Materials Course*, UK Centre for Materials Education, University of Liverpool. Available from: <http://www.materials.ac.uk/guides/evaluating.asp> [9 December 2006].

MacLaren, I. 2005, 'New trends in academic staff development: Reflective journals, teaching portfolios, accreditation and professional development', in *Emerging Issues in the Practice of University Learning and Teaching*, eds G. O'Neill, S. Moore & B. McMullin, All Ireland Society for Higher Education (AISHE), Dublin, pp. 111–116.

Polayni, M. 1983, *The Tacit Dimension*, Anchor Books, New York.

Schön, D. 1983, *The Reflective Practitioner*, Jossey Books, San Francisco.

Seldin, P. 1991, *The Teaching Portfolio*, Anker Publishing Company, USA.

Chapter 3

Reflective Writing: Principles and Practice

Orison Carlile and Anne Jordan
Waterford Institute of Technology
Orison Carlile
ocarlile@wit.ie
Anne Jordan
ajordan@wit.ie

Introduction

This article presents the theories and principles that inform the practice of reflective writing in portfolios used in the development of higher education professionals. There are many definitions of reflection and reflective writing available. Put simply, *reflection* involves individual teachers in thinking about and critically analysing their learning and teaching experiences. Reflection of this kind is intentional and usually directed towards enhanced understanding of and continual improvement in learning and teaching practice. Such reflection is often guided by learning and teaching theory, as well as by the experiences of and feedback from peers and students. When teachers turn their reflection into reflective writing, they commit themselves to paper or screen, drafting and crafting accounts of learning and teaching experiences and subsequent analysis of these. In other words, reflective writing is characterised by a narrative framework that transforms it from mere description into a personally and publicly meaningful account of messy and multifaceted experience.

This chapter explains why such an activity might be important in the context of contemporary higher education. This is followed by an overview of key thinkers and theories in the area of reflection and reflective writing. The chapter concludes with some guidelines for reflective writing and a methodology for its assessment. These are likely to be useful both to academic developers and also to academics who wish to know more about reflective practice.

Why Reflective Writing?

Reflection and reflective writing have become important, even necessary, in higher education for several reasons, which are outlined below.

Adaptive Response to Change

Reflective writing is an adaptive strategy that can be used to respond to contemporary changes in the culture, conditions and practice of third-level education. Reflective practice and writing facilitate the formation of a set of concepts—a type of 'mental furniture' (Carlile 2005)—that can be moved around and rearranged to suit the appropriate context.

Professional Expertise

High-status professions such as medicine and law claim clearly articulated bodies of knowledge and expertise. As Eraut (1994) argues, such claims underpin their intellectual and cultural status. Reflective writing helps higher education practitioners to articulate their professional expertise as the basis for claiming a comparable area of theory, knowledge and practice.

Academic Discourse, Critical Thinking and Continuing Professional Development

Reflective writing is central to academic discourse and gives rise to several tangible products used in education and training. For example, it can be used:

- in teaching portfolios as evidence of the learning outcomes achieved by an individual and therefore as an assessment tool
- as a personal record of experience and learning and may serve as a meta-cognitive tool
- for continuing professional development purposes as an individual assessment and diagnostic tool
- as a key component of critical thinking, to encourage the clarification of concepts and to indicate the stage of critical thinking at which the student has arrived.

In all these areas, writing acts as a form of thinking and can become a medium through which experience is represented and meaning is acquired for the writer and others.

Reflective writing is important as an intentional act, which suggests that it is both explicit and conscious. From this perspective, it is directed at an end or a goal. It is not simply reactive, but proactive and designed to be manifested in behaviour.

Deep Learning

From a constructivist perspective, the process of reflective writing facilitates deep learning because it makes connections between facets of experience—between cognition and emotion, between past and present experience and between old and new knowledge. It often takes the form of a narrative, through which an individual can attempt to make sense of thoughts and experiences that might otherwise seem unfathomable. Such narratives give writers space to express lack of understanding while still maintaining coherence. For these reasons, the act of writing is inherently associated with learning in higher education. Through the process of reflective writing, learners comes to discover the most favourable conditions—physical and psychological—under which their learning best occurs. Reflective writing also enriches experience and makes it meaningful.

Construction and Dissemination of Shared Meaning

The act of writing transfers private thoughts from the purely subjective into a public domain of shared language and discourse. Knowledge is not an independent entity; it is always created and situated within a particular context by 'communities of practice'—groups of practitioners who share meanings and understandings. In the specific setting of higher education, reflective writing allows for the construction and dissemination of such shared meaning.

Self-empowerment

The act of writing and the use of 'I' also demands ownership of learning, which can ultimately act as a form of self-empowerment. This ownership of learning will lead to a stance and a style leading to the articulation and expression of personal values. As Moon (1999) claims, practice in reflective writing develops personal power and a 'voice' through which this power is communicated.

Reflective Theory

This section surveys the ideas of several thinkers, all of whom suggest reflective methodologies in which reflective writing has an important role.

John Dewey

For John Dewey, reflection involves 'turning a subject over in the mind and giving it serious and consecutive consideration … in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends' (Dewey 1933, pp. 3, 9). Reflection is a rational process in which an individual begins in a state of perplexity and proceeds through a process of exploration to arrive at a hypothesis that can be verified through experience or imagination. Dewey's writing shows that reflection need not be a purely intuitive activity, but may be undertaken in a systematic fashion. Because reflection can be difficult to implement as a purely cerebral activity, writing provides a vehicle for carrying out Dewey's systematic approach.

Dewey may be criticised for his claim that reflection always starts with a process of disequilibrium, which can be solved in a purely scientific or technical manner. Purely scientific modes of thinking do not mirror the unstructured fashion in which people respond to experience that may not be always amenable to straightforward systematic analysis. Such experiences and responses are often 'messy', unpredictable and inchoate.

Donald Schön

Responding to indeterminate, unpredictable experience is a characteristic of the professional, according to Donald Schön, the leading modern proponent of reflective practice. Professionals exhibit a particular artistry or intelligence in making sense of such experience, as they engage in what Schön calls a 'world making activity' (Schön 1987, p. 36).

In the mid-20th century, a 'technical rational' approach to teaching emanating from the United States claimed that there is a definite body of knowledge and a specific set of techniques for the effective achievement of educational goals (Tyler 1949). According to Schön, however, it cannot be assumed that there is just one authoritative way of knowing. To make meaning of complex experience, Schön states that professionals need to reflect on their own principles and practices (Schön 1983). In higher education, this implies a rejection of the positivistic, 'technical rational' model. Reflection that focuses on the particularities of individual learning and teaching experience and goals can help teachers to adapt general models and guidelines to their own circumstances with the aim of improving understanding and practice.

According to Schön, much of the knowledge possessed by professionals and experts is tacit. That is, the performance of action becomes so smooth and integrated that the performer is unaware of the stages or skills involved. Schön suggests a methodology for reflection, which begins with this 'knowledge in action', 'unpacking' the tacit knowledge and making it explicit. There are two types of reflection—'on' and 'in' action. *Reflection-in-action* is concurrent with action and often involves making tacit assumptions or behaviours explicit so that they can be examined, demystified and shared. The resulting knowledge can then be passed on to novices. *Reflection-on-action* is a retrospective examination of events from a particular perspective. It has the intention of clarifying and learning from experience.

Dialogue may become part of the process of reflection. An interlocutor such as a novice may act as a mediator in the elucidation of meaning by asking questions and by discussion. In the absence of such a mediator, a blank page can take on this function, prompting reflective writing.

The act of writing is important as a mechanism for undertaking reflection. In writing, one 'puts into words' the unstructured thoughts and ideas that form the material for reflection. Once the reflections have been written down, they are available for review by the reflector and wider community.

David Kolb

Reflection does not take place in a vacuum; there is always a 'schema' that organises thinking. Traditionally this schema moves from theory to practice. David Kolb's well-known 'learning cycle' (Kolb 1984; Kolb & Fry 1975; see Figure 1 below) represents a schema that, by contrast, suggests that theory need not precede practice. It is non-linear, a cycle that can begin at any of its nodes, but in which 'concrete experience' is an obvious starting point. Experience is followed by observation and reflection, leading to the formulation of abstract concepts or general rules, which are tested by experimentation, modifying the next experiential cycle.

Figure 1: Kolb's Learning Cycle

Concrete experience

Active experiment

Reflective observation

Abstract Conceptualisation
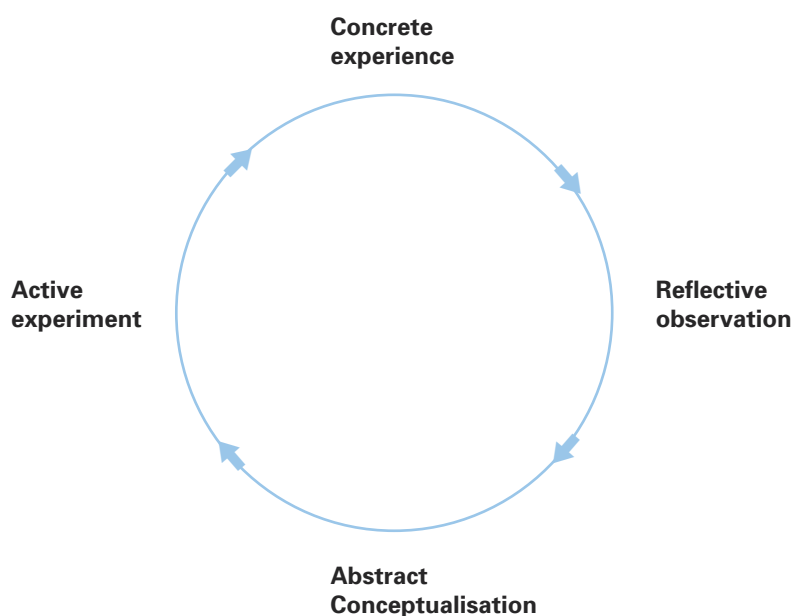
According to Kolb, in order to learn, an individual 'grasps' experience physically or emotionally through *apprehension*, or though purely cerebral methods of *comprehension*. Experience is then 'transformed' through experimentation, which Kolb calls *extension*, or through thinking, which he calls *intension*, so that it becomes knowledge. The 'grasping' and 'transforming' depends on the person's existing mindset, which is affected by context and existing norms and assumptions. The two ways of 'grasping' and 'transforming' provide four possible routes from experience to personal knowledge, as shown in Figure 2 below. These routes are not mutually exclusive; several could be travelled simultaneously.

Figure 2: Kolb's Routes from Experience to Knowledge

	Grasping	Transforming	
1. Experience	2a. Feeling Concrete experience *Apprehension*	3a. Action Experimentation *Extension*	4. Knowledge
	2b. Thought Abstract experience *Comprehension*	3b. Thought Reflective observation *Intension*	

In Kolb's theory, the four possible routes develop into different learning styles, which he labels as follows.

Accommodation: 1 → 2a → 3a → 4
Accommodators adapt to immediate circumstances and solve problems by trial and error without worrying too much about analysis. A weakness is a tendency towards impatience.

Assimilation: 1 → 2b → 3b → 4
Assimilators excel at interpreting and making sense of events by means of theoretical or conceptual frameworks. A possible weakness is a tendency to remain at an abstract and inactive level.

Convergence: 1 → 2b → 3a → 4
Convergers are good at putting ideas into practice and taking decisions logically. A possible weakness is a preference for technical solutions when the issue is in fact a personal one.

Divergence: 1 → 2a → 3b → 4
Divergers have an ability to view situations from different angles and generate many ideas. A possible weakness is the danger of not staying on track because of thought-provoking side issues (Carlile 2005).

Kolb's cycle offers a heuristic by which reflective writing may be structured. The writer can address each of the four stages of the cycle in a systematic fashion. Writers with a preference for one aspect of the cycle could be encouraged to address the other aspects. For example, writers whose preference is for the description of concrete experience could be encouraged to move into writing that is reflective, theoretical and forward-looking.

People may complete the Kolb cycle retaining their existing norms and assumptions. In this case, they are involved in *single-loop learning*, as shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Single-loop Learning

Identify a problem or situation

Analyse in accordance with norms and assumptions

Implement appropriate solution
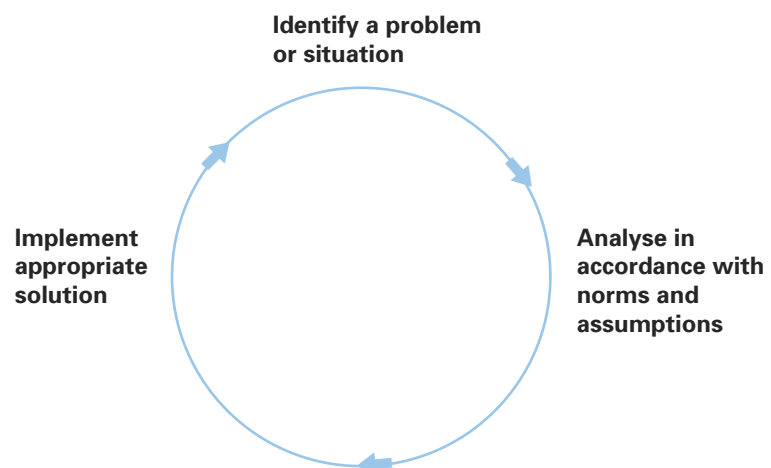
On the other hand, the validity of existing norms and assumptions may be questioned, and may require confirmation or modification. Reflective writing has an important role to play here, because it helps people to articulate their existing assumptions. Once in tangible form, these assumptions can be more easily manipulated, challenged and transformed. The act of writing represents a conscious movement into a second loop, and facilitates *double-loop learning* (see Figure 4 below). The distinction between single-loop and double-loop learning was first drawn by Ashby (1952) but developed and popularised by Argyris and Schön (1974).

Figure 4: Double-loop Learning

Identify a problem or situation

Analyse in accordance with norms and assumptions

Implement appropriate solution

Consider the appropriateness of assumptions and revise if necessary
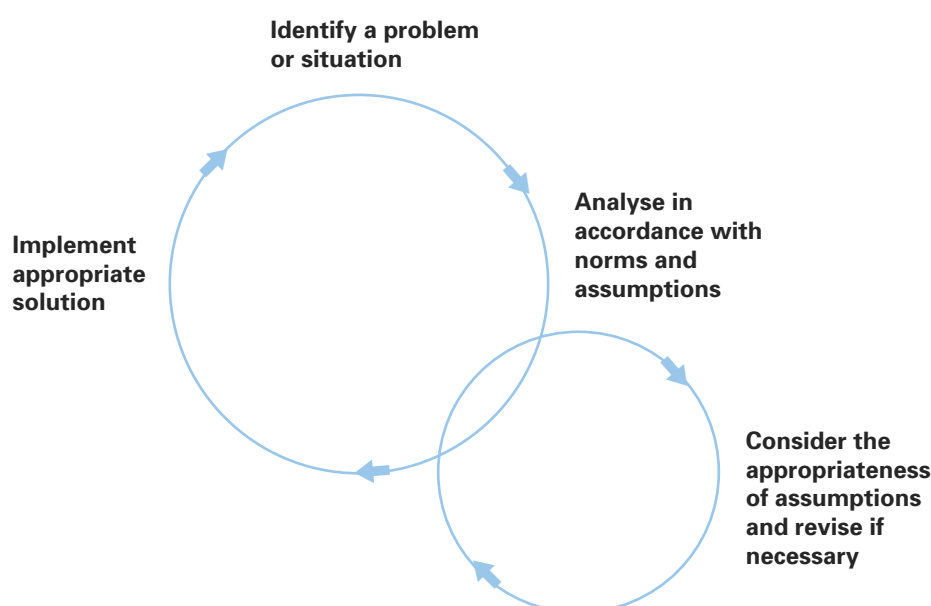
Implicit in the theories of Kolb and Schön is the concept of reflecting in order to improve future practice. The second loop envisages the possibility of change through a re-examination of existing assumptions. Once interrogated in reflective writing, these assumptions may be confirmed or challenged, pointing the way towards improved practice. Reflection therefore can be *on* practice, *in* practice and *for* practice.

Teaching Reflection

Reflection may begin mundanely, and focus on only one aspect of experience, such as a descriptive account of a classroom incident. At its highest level, however, reflection will consider experience from many perspectives—the emotional, the rational, the theoretical, the experiential, the moral. For this reason, reflection may be disturbing, but can lead to a heightened consciousness of the situation that can include a sense of personal responsibility and a commitment to action.

Many people find reflective writing difficult. To overcome anxiety and other blocks to reflection and reflective writing, it may be necessary to present reflection as straightforward process, even initially through a type of formula or model. Here we present a model that we hope will be useful to teachers and practitioners of reflection. It draws on theories of meta-cognition and reflection, combined with experience.

Meta-cognitive Theory

When teaching reflective skills, it is first important to raise people's awareness of themselves as learners and thinkers—that is, to encourage them to become aware of their own thinking and learning processes. This is because meta-cognition has been identified as a key aspect of 'deep' learning, as successful learners become conscious of their own learning (Marton & Saljo 1984). Deep learning is important in order to make material meaningful and so facilitate the transfer of learning into long-term memory.

Personal learning styles or preferences in learning may be better understood by means of learning style inventories such as that of Honey and Mumford (1992), which is based on the Kolb cycle and categorises people according to four learning styles. Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences might also be useful in helping people to understand how they learn. He suggests that there are eight different 'intelligences' and that people have varying levels of strength and development across the range. Multiple Intelligences profiles can be established so that people may be aware of their own strengths in different areas (Jordan 2003).

An individual's awareness of personal learning styles and patterns of reflective thinking may open the possibility of different learning styles and alternative perspectives. This awareness may lead to a reiteration and revision of views, as in the theory of double-loop learning, where existing norms and assumptions are challenged—a characteristic of good reflective writing.

Reflective Theory

The seminal theories of reflection discussed earlier have an explicit place in our model for teaching and practising reflection, because they provide learners with theoretical spectacles through which to observe experience. Brookfield (1995), for example, claims that theory is important because it gives us another way to 'name' our experience:

> Theory can help us 'name' our practice by illuminating the general elements of what we think are idiosyncratic experiences. It can provide multiple perspectives on familiar situations. Studying theory can help us realize that what we thought were signs of our personal failings as teachers can actually be interpreted as the inevitable consequences of certain economic, social, and political processes. This stops us falling victim to the belief that we are responsible for everything that happens in the classroom (Brookfield 1995, p. 36).

Reflective Experience

Meta-cognitive theory applies to the person, and reflective theory applies to experience. The next step in teaching reflective skills is combining theory and experience. This has the effect of deepening understanding of the theory by the provision of experiential exemplars. Experience deepens understanding of the theory while the theory enriches experience. In turn, reflection engenders a sensitivity to, and a restructuring of, experience.

Teaching Reflective Writing

Many, if not most, teaching portfolios require some samples of reflective writing. Many postgraduate certificates and other programmes in higher education learning and teaching also emphasise the importance of reflective writing, often using reflective teaching portfolios as a central aspect of assessment strategy. Academics coming to these reflective writing activities for the first time are likely to need clear guidelines.

We suggest that you begin teaching reflective writing by asking students to write down their initial impressions of an experience. This needs to be as close in time as possible to the event to obtain the actual impression and not a later rationalisation in the light of other events. At a later stage, students can be asked to reconsider the initial impression with their considered reflections. The difference between the two records can provoke an understanding of the reflective processes involved. The 'lived forward' initial impression can be compared with the 'understood backwards' later reflection. As Kierkegaard points out, 'Life can only be understood backwards; but must be lived forwards' (Kierkegaard, ed 1990) p. REF).

Figure 5 offers a model for reflection that breaks these steps down into more detail. It could be used as the basis for an entry in a reflective journal or teaching portfolio. Some individuals might feel that writing to a formula such as this can feel inauthentic, but it can result in genuine reflection if done in good faith.

Figure 5: A Model for Reflection

1. Describe the actual event as if you were a video camera

- Then comment on your personal behaviour.
- Comment on your feelings.
- Comment on your reaction.
- Comment on the context.
- Comment on what you think other people felt and thought.
- Suggest evidence for your this 'mind-reading'

2. Feed in additional information

- Other things you 'know'.
- Previous experience.
- History of the situation.
- Hunches or intuitions you may have.
- New things you have discovered.
- Ethical considerations. Social factors.
- Formal theory.

3. Reflect

- Relate the events to other events and to theory.
- Reinterpret from different viewpoints.
- Link theory and practice.
- Theorise yourself.
- Wear different theoretical spectacles.
- Consider the possibility that you may be wrong.

4. Rethink everything again in the light of later experience.

- Revise ideas. Or confirm them.
- How have your views changed?
- How right were you first time?

5. So what?

- Did you learn something?
- Have you discovered anything?
- Is more reflection necessary?
- Have you framed a new question?

Double-back as far and as frequently as you wish and reinterpret.

Reflective Writing Strategies

It is often easiest to begin reflective writing with a critical incident, unresolved issue or problem that demands a response. Although it may not be dispelled by reflection, perplexity will be consciously accepted. According to Baxter Magolda (1992), consciousness of perplexity can represent a high level of epistemological awareness and is often an indicator of reflective writing of a high standard. Nevertheless, beginners sometimes worry that they will suffer from 'reflector's block'—that is, they will not know what to write about. As well as the 'micro' framework for reflection illustrated in Figure 5 above, it is helpful to have a 'macro' framework for each piece of reflective writing. Such frameworks might include:

- expectations: reflections in advance of an event
- impressions: instant thoughts in the moment
- critical incident: reflections that respond to a particularly revealing external event
- learning moment: reflections on a moment of enlightenment, understanding or insight
- problems: reflections that assist in the process of naming difficulties
- regular entries: consistent, methodical journal writing
- double reflection: reconsideration of a previous reflection
- second-order reflection: reflective overview of a sequence of earlier reflections
- meta-reflection: reflections on the process of reflection
- final evaluation: reflections when part of a programme is completed
- group reflection: reflections by a group on a shared experience or case study.

Case Studies

People often find that sharing and comparing reflections with others is an important and useful aspect of developing reflective capability. For personal and practical reasons, however, this can sometimes be very difficult. For example, sensitivity and vulnerability can be significant obstacles to sharing: 'I am afraid to tell you who I am, because, if I tell you who I am, you may not like who I am, and it's all that I have' (Powell 1969, p. 12). Shared reflection therefore needs a very high degree of trust. In addition, it can be practically difficult to compare reflections that relate to different people, different contexts and different events.

The use of case studies offers a means of addressing these personal and practical problems. Case studies of 'critical incidents' in higher education such as those in Schwartz and Webb (1993) allow people to share the experiences of others, and they also promote class debate and group reflection. There is no personal risk so people can contribute freely and everyone in the group has the same shared experience, so reflective approaches can be compared. The teacher too can compare and assess the reflections of group members.

Assessing Reflective Writing

The assessment of reflective writing needs to be constructively aligned with the intentions of the programme within which it occurs. If not, beginning reflectors may doubt its importance, seeing it as an unnecessary additional burden. In order to

promote engagement with reflective writing, it may be necessary to make it mandatory so that people experience its benefits and can then choose to use it thereafter. Of course, facilitators can guarantee the uptake of reflective writing by making it part of a programme's summative assessment.

Methodology

Like any effective assessment task or strategy, reflective writing must be assessed using clear criteria that relate to the learning outcomes of the programme in which the reflective writing task is being used. Table 1 below suggests a basic set of criteria that can be used both to guide reflective writing and to assess its outcome. As the Table illustrates, we suggest that both the product of reflective writing—for example, a teaching portfolio or journal—and the process that leads to it are assessed.

Table 1: Basic Criteria for Assessing Reflective Writing

Product		Process	
Quantity	**Quality**	**Relevance**	**Depth**
• Length • Presentation • Regularity	• Quality of expression • Clarity • Thoroughness	• Understanding • Application to course Relationship to course • Relationship to purpose • Evidence of progress	• Critical thinking • Honesty • Cognitive skill • Generalising experience • Synthesis • Analysis • Evaluation

A typology derived from Moon (1999) that can be used in the teaching of reflective writing is shown in Table 2 below. These categories can serve both as a guidelines for writing and as criteria in its assessment.

Table 2: Assessing the Depth of Reflective Writing (based on Moon 1999)

	Description	Consideration from a single (personal) viewpoint	Consideration and evaluation of multiple viewpoints	Multiple historical and socio-political contexts
Descriptive writing	✓			
Descriptive reflection	✓	✓		
Dialogic reflection	✓	✓	✓	
Critical reflection	✓	✓	✓	✓

The typology shown in Table 2 links with the identification of the stages of student epistemological awareness provided in the work of Baxter Magolda (1992). From empirical research findings, she proposes four distinct and increasingly sophisticated stages in relation to the acquisition of knowledge. These stages progress from a view of knowledge as absolute and incontestable to a view of it as contextual and open to evaluation from the student's own critical position. The four stages are summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Assessing the Development of Students' Epistemological Understanding

Stage	Knowledge	Learning	Teaching	Assessment
Absolute knowing	Absolutely correct answers exist	Absorption of knowledge from experts	Transferring the knowledge	Checking if the knowledge has been acquired
Transitional stage	There are doubts about certainty	A need to understand	Facilitating understanding	Checking for understanding
Independent knowing	Knowledge is uncertain; everyone has a valid opinion	Development of own opinion	Supporting independent views	Valid expression of a view
Contextual knowing	Constructed and judged on the basis of evidence	Critical examination of the quality of claims in context	Partnership in developing appropriate knowledge	Judgement of knowledge claims in context

Table 1 offers initial guidelines for assessment; Table 2 focuses on the nature of the writing; and Table 3 focuses on the conceptual development of the writer. Together, they offer a comprehensive set of assessment criteria.

Conclusion

The role of teaching as a form of expanded scholarship has been elucidated by Boyer (1990). One implication is the need for critical and independent thinkers in higher education who will engage in the formulation and critique of new knowledge. Reflection and reflective writing offers a means by which such thinkers can be developed. Reflective writing is not a natural process, however; a reflective mindset needs to be nurtured. Students require guidance and formulas and structured practice. The process may begin mundanely and focus on only one aspect of learning or experience. At its highest level, however, it will consider experience from multiple perspectives. Writing involves both physical and mental activity, becoming a medium through which experience is represented and meaning acquired for the

writer and others. It acts as a form of thinking rather than simply its record. This is why the reflective journal is an essential element of the reflective process and why writing can lead to important personal and professional resolutions. Reflection can be disturbing, but it can lead to a greater awareness of personal responsibility and professionalism in higher education.

References

Argyris, C. & Schön, D. 1974, *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Ashby, W. 1952, *Design for a Brain*, Wiley, New York.

Baxter Magolda, M.B. 1992, 'Students' epistemologies and academic experiences: Implications for pedagogy', *Review of Higher Education*, vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 265–287.

Boyer, E. 1990, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Princeton NJ.

Brookfield, S. 1995, *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Carlile, O. 2005, 'Rearranging the mental furniture: Reflective practice and the teacher', in *Scientific Proceedings of Riga Technical College*, pp. 32 – 40, Izdevnieciba Letera, Riga, Latvia, 2005

Dewey, J. 1933, How We Think: *A Restatement of The Relation of Reflective Thinking in the Educative Process*, D.C. Heath, New York.

Eraut, M. 1994, *Developing Professional Knowledge and Competence*, Falmer Press, London.

Honey, P. & Mumford, A. 1992, *The Learning Styles Questionnaire*, Peter Honey Company, Maidenhead.

Jordan, A. 2003, *FinVoc MI Resource Book for Teachers: FinVoc Pilot Project on Multiple Intelligence*, EU FinVoc, Waterford.

Kierkegaard, S. (tran/ed) Rohde, Peter P. 1990, *The Diary of Soren Kierkegaard,* Citadel Press, New York

Kolb, D. 1984, Experiential Learning: *Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs NJ.

Kolb, D. & Fry, R. 1975, 'Towards an applied theory of experiential learning', in *Theories of Group Processes*, ed. C. Cooper, John Wiley & Sons, London.

Marton, F. & Saljo, R. 1984, 'Approaches to learning', in *The Experience of Learning*, eds F. Marton, D. Hounsell & N. Entwistle, Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh.

Moon, J. 1999, *Learning Journals: A Handbook for Academics, Students and Professional Development*, Kogan Page, London.

Powell, J. 1969, *Why Am I Afraid To Tell You Who I am?* Argus Communication, Niles IL.

Schön, D. 1983, *The Reflective Practitioner*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Schön, D. 1987, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Schwartz, P. & Webb, G. 1993, *Case Studies on Teaching in Higher Education*, Kogan Page, London.

Tyler, R. 1949, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*, University of Chicago Press.

Teaching Philosophy Statements: A Guide

Marian Fitzmaurice and Joseph Coughlan
Dublin Institute of Technology
Marian Fitzmaurice
marian.fitzmaurice@dit.ie
Joseph Coughlan
Joseph.Coughlan@dit.ie

Introduction

Teaching philosophy statements can be defined in various ways but, put simply, they are written statements of why teachers do what they do—their beliefs and theories about teaching, about students and about learning, all of which underpin what and how they teach.

Despite the many definitions available in the literature, there is actually a lack of research on how teaching philosophy statements are developed and their effectiveness (Schönwetter et al. 2002). This is perhaps unsurprising, given that contemporary discussions of teaching improvement often focus most strongly on teaching competency and effectiveness. That is, good teaching is sometimes seen as a matter of developing effective teaching methods and the use of discussion, video, role play, debate and technology, among other strategies, is a priority. But good teaching involves much more than the effective deployment of classroom-based teaching strategies. Prosser and Trigwell (1997) argue that the focus should in fact be on lecturers' conceptions of the nature of teaching and learning. Of course, effective teaching strategies are important, but good teaching is shaped by many other things, including a focus on student learning, a teacher's enthusiasm for his or her discipline, recognition of the importance of critical reflection and a commitment to teaching as a scholarly activity, equal in importance to traditional research.

A teacher's individual understanding of and perspective on these aspects of effective teaching can be articulated in a teaching philosophy statement. It is our view that teaching philosophies are central to how practising academics teach. They reflect personal beliefs about teaching and learning, disciplinary cultures and institutional practice. Drafting a statement is an opportunity for reflection on personal values, goals and behaviour, as well as interaction with the literature on learning and teaching in higher education.

The purpose of this chapter is to guide teachers—experienced teachers as well as novices—through the process of writing a teaching philosophy statement. The chapter provides a structure and a list of workable questions that can provoke and encourage this process. Rather than being prescriptive, this chapter is structured so that readers can work through the development of their own teaching philosophies. The first section considers why it is important to have a written teaching philosophy statement. The next section provides an overview of influential models, highlighting their most important components as the basis for a new model designed with the varying needs of contemporary academics in mind. Included throughout are

excerpts from teaching philosophies (our own and those of others) as exemplars to trigger teachers' personal reflection.

The Importance of Teaching Philosophy Statements

Many academics begin their teaching careers in higher education too worried about content and method to appreciate the importance of having an explicit learning and teaching philosophy. Nevertheless, over time most educators develop personal teaching philosophies. Such philosophies are always shaped in relation to individual learning experiences and teaching practices. To articulate them explicitly requires a process of reflection (Loughran 1996), which can be both interesting and challenging but is also necessary to genuine academic development. This activity demonstrates publicly an academic's commitment to such development.

Teaching philosophy also underpins the relationships academics create with their students—but not always explicitly. For example, the way teachers teach is often shaped by the way they prefer to learn themselves, but there may be discrepancies between their styles and the learning needs of their students (Charkins, O'Toole & Wetzel 1985). By writing explicit teaching philosophies, teachers can understand why they teach the way they do and the goals and beliefs that underpin their practice. This allows them to become fully aware of and to address any discrepancies with their students' learning needs. In this way, written teaching philosophy statements help teachers accommodate students' diverse learning needs.

Teaching philosophy statements are also increasingly important at a time when the work of the academic in higher education is being defined in terms of a set of competencies. In the face of this pressure, we must maintain a concept of higher education teaching that goes beyond classroom competency and emphasises teaching both as a pedagogical and moral activity. Rowland (1998) expresses concerns about academic development that focuses only on adding teaching skills to the academic's repertoire. In his view, teaching that is not accompanied by inquiry, reflection and a passion for subject matter—in other words, teaching that is not underpinned by a philosophy—becomes 'stripped of its critical and moral purpose' (Rowland 1998, p. 2). Grasha (2002) agrees, suggesting that 'without an explicit philosophy of teaching our teaching styles are intellectually hollow' (p. 92). Knowing about teaching methodologies and learning theories is not enough; lecturers must be encouraged to examine their beliefs and attitudes 'so that they can expand, hold up a critical light, and adjust their own ideological lens in ways that make the classroom more inclusive, exploratory, and transformative' (Bartolome 2004, p. 14).

Drafting a Teaching Philosophy Statement

Although the benefits of teaching philosophy statements are extolled in the literature (Chism 1998; Schönwetter et al. 2002), there is little agreement or guidance on how to write them (Schönwetter et al. 2002). Table 1 shows three of the many available models.

Table 1: Comparison of Models for Teaching Philosophy Statements

Chism (1998)	Goodyear and Allchin (1998, quoted in Faculty & TA Development 2005)	Schönwetter et al. (2002)
1. Conceptualisation of learning 2. Conceptualisation of teaching 3. Goals for students 4. Implementation of the philosophy 5. Professional growth plan	1. Integration of responsibilities 2. Expertise 3. Relationships 4. Learning environment 5. Methods, strategies and innovation 6. Outcomes	1. Definition of teaching 2. Definition of learning 3. View of the learner 4. Goals and expectations of the student–teacher relationship 5. Discussion of teaching methods and discussion of evaluation

In choosing between these models, individuals should select the framework that best reflects their own thinking and experience. As a guide, we suggest that teaching philosophy statements should be short (about 500 to 800 words), single pieces of work that incorporate the following four sections:

1. conceptualisation of teaching and learning
2. integration of responsibilities
3. relationships
4. teaching and assessment methods.

We recognise that these sections are not mutually exclusive; in fact, overlap between them is often to be encouraged. To illustrate them, we include below extracts from a range of teaching philosophy statements. The extracts are by teachers from different disciplines and with different experiences, not privileging any one voice, and certainly not our own. The extracts were gathered during research conducted with teachers engaged in a postgraduate certificate in learning and teaching in higher education at the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) over a five-year period ending in 2006. The aim of the research was to use teaching philosophy statements to determine and explore the themes that academics themselves identify as important in their own teaching and in good teaching more generally. We hope these examples demonstrate that teaching philosophy statements are highly personal, so their content, structure (and length) is ultimately at the individual teacher's discretion.

Section 1: Conceptualisation of Teaching and Learning

In this section, teachers put into words how they feel about teaching generally and, furthermore, what they believe and how they feel about the teaching and learning that occurs in their classrooms. Teachers can begin the process of uncovering their beliefs and feelings about teaching by analysing their teaching approaches using a

tool such as the Grasha-Reichman Teaching Style Inventory . This inventory is a short questionnaire (40 questions) that identifies teaching styles in relation to different student groups. It scores teachers on five teaching roles—expert, formal authority, personal model, facilitator or delegator (see Grasha 2002). An alternative is the Approaches to Teaching Inventory devised by Prosser and Trigwell (1999, pp. 176–179). This has been designed to explore the way that academics go about their teaching in a particular subject or context.

For the purpose of developing a teaching philosophy statement, teachers should view their inventory results as less important than using the questions to become more aware of how they operate in their classrooms. In addition, the inventories can, and should, be filled out for different groups, prompting teachers to consider whether they accommodate the diversity of learners currently entering higher education. Teachers might ask themselves whether their classroom roles and activities change depending on the group being taught. Finally, in completing the inventories and reflecting on their results, teachers should remember that we are all products of our own educational histories. Our own experiences as learners inform our teaching approaches and our understanding of what teaching and learning is. Teachers reflecting on this part of a teaching philosophy statement might like to ask themselves questions such as:

- How do my students learn in my subject?
- How does this differ from the way that I learn? Is this different from my own experience as a learner in this area?
- What approach to teaching will best support their learning? Is this different from what I currently do?
- What do I consider my role in the classroom?

Here are some examples of how teachers have used this section of the teaching philosophy statement to articulate their beliefs about learning and teaching. The examples are drawn from our research on teaching philosophy statements.

Guiding students away from the familiar and getting them to question the unfamiliar: encouraging independent thinking, critical thinking, and creative problem solving: respecting all inputs, ensuring that all students have a voice and a contributing in the process of learning.

One other aspect of my teaching that I would like to acknowledge is the challenge of providing 'open space' for learners within a teaching situation described by Palmer (1998)…It takes considerably more preparation and effort for me to make a learning space but I have always found it rewarding.

I feel that I am there to help students to think for themselves and to give them the building blocks they will need in order to come to their own opinion.

I want to provide an atmosphere where my students can grow in their abilities to think critically, problem solve, synthesise information, and express their ideas both in written and verbal forms.

These statements tend to conceive of teaching as facilitation; there is also a clear concern with encouraging students to question and develop a critical stance. This may well be appropriate in the current climate. Barnett (2000), for example, argues that the university is operating a period characterised by 'supercomplexity' and that teaching in this context requires a corresponding pedagogy: 'a pedagogical transaction in which the student has the pedagogical space to develop her own voice' (Barnett 2000, p. 160). That said, we do not wish to endorse a particular approach to teaching but are mindful of the advice of Prosser and Trigwell (1999), who suggest that there is no one or right way to teach.

Section 2: Integration of Responsibilities

Goodyear and Allchin (1998, quoted in Faculty & TA Development 2005) suggest that a teaching philosophy statement should include commentary on how the teacher's work reflects the three responsibilities of third-level institutions—teaching, learning and public service. This is because teaching philosophies—implicit or explicit—reflect 'disciplinary cultures, institutional structures and cultures, and stakeholder expectations as well' (Schönwetter et al. 2002, p. 83). That is, the institutions in which teachers work will inevitably influence—positively or negatively—how they teach and how they are able to balance teaching with research and service to the community. When reflecting on how they integrate their three major responsibilities, teachers could ask:

- What is the mission of my institution/faculty/department? Am I in agreement with the mission of the organisation or do I feel that it doesn't reflect my practice as an educator?
- If no mission exists, what do I think it should be?
- What activities of mine (teaching, research, mentoring, tutoring, practitioner) contribute to these missions?

The following example demonstrates how a teaching philosophy statement might comment on the integration of teaching and service:

I feel that this [organisation's mission in the wider community] is important and should be an aspect of my teaching. I use not-for-profit and government examples in my teaching as much as possible and also try to get students to think about the influence of their actions as corporate citizens on the different groups of people that comprise society.

Reflection on context also gives statements a grounding in teachers' own disciplines and can help establish the nexus between teaching and research, as seen in the example below:

I have tried to develop materials that will be interesting to the students and help them to develop insights into engineering and connect those to real-life experiences. This enables a more fertile place for innovation.

Teachers can use the latest trends not only in pedagogy but also in their own disciplines to contribute to the further development of a philosophy of teaching.

Section 3: Relationships

Goodyear and Allchin (1998, quoted in Faculty & TA Development 2005) suggest that a healthy relationship between learner and teacher is 'essential to successful teaching'. Therefore, teachers should include some reflection on this issue in their teaching philosophy statements. This relationship will be influenced by several factors, including the teacher's dual role as teacher and as learner and the life experiences of both teacher and students. Skelton (2005) draws attention to the importance of teachers' personal qualities, such as commitment, enthusiasm, energy, approachability, the interest they show in students as people, and their ability to relate to and empathise with students, a point further developed by Ramsden (2003). The sharing of learning and life experiences can shape classroom relationships in powerful ways, facilitating not only the growth of shared knowledge but also personal development.

Teachers reflecting on this part of a teaching philosophy statement might like to ask questions such as:

- How do I get to know students?
- How do I help students get to know each other?
- How do I build rapport with my students?
- How do the teaching techniques I use support and enhance the teacher–student relationship?
- How accessible am I to my students?

In the statements we analysed in our research, the relational dimension of teaching emerges as important.

Teaching requires gaining the trust and respect of the learners and engaging them when interacting with them and also providing a safe, supportive atmosphere for learning.

I think the best teachers are those who make an effort to establish a rapport with the group, show a genuine interest in the development of their students and are encouraging, fair and give praise.

I try to build a rapport with students as I think it is important to establish a supportive learning environment.

I try to build an informal classroom atmosphere where questions are welcomed and interruptions to ask points of information and clarification are common. I also believe that it is important not just to do this inside the classroom but also to do it outside the classroom.

The ability to connect with students and to connect them with the subject depends not only on methods but on the teacher–student relationship (Palmer 1998). The examples above bear witness to this and to teachers' commitment to build rapport with students. For the participants in our research, being a good teacher means getting to know students and gaining their trust and respect—good teaching in this sense cannot be reduced to technique. Finally, it is interesting to note the language

used in these examples. The language is tentative and, indeed, it is evident that the teachers themselves are not sure whether they are achieving the aims that they are setting themselves. This highlights an important feature of teaching philosophy statements: they should reflect not only what teachers do and where they come from but also what they hope to do.

Section 4: Teaching and Assessment Methods

Schönwetter et al. (2002) suggest that a teaching philosophy statement should include commentary on the teaching methods the teacher uses and also on how they assess student learning. Teachers might also wish to reflect not only on their current methods, but also methods they choose not to use. As we have noted above, it is important for teachers to extend their thinking about learning and teaching beyond methodology. One way to do this is by considering the relationship between their methodology and their conceptualisation of learning and teaching.

Questions to prompt reflection on these issues might include:

- What teaching methods and strategies do I currently use? Why?
- What methods do I not currently use? Why not?
- Do I combine traditional classroom-based teaching methods with educational technology? Why or why not?
- How do my teaching methods support the learning outcomes I intend for my students?
- What is the relationship between these methods and my conceptualisation of teaching?
- What assessment methods do I currently use? Why?
- What assessment methods do I not currently use? Why not?
- How do my assessment methods support the learning outcomes I intend for my students?
- Have I actively developed assessment strategies or have I inherited them from previous teachers in my course?
- How could I improve the teaching and assessment methods I currently use?

Below are some examples of how teachers might respond to such prompts.

So my philosophy is to use as many different methods of catching a student's interest as possible – I try to be creative in my teaching methods, including the use of discussions, group-work, problem-solving, self-testing questionnaires, demonstrations and audio-visual aids.

I firmly believe that assessment should provide some sort of formative experience so I go out of my way to write feedback sheets for every piece of assessment commenting on the good points but also on what could be improved for the next piece of assessment.

Teaching is about being creative, clear and challenging with the delivery of the subject matter. Teaching is about identifying the appropriate methodologies and strategies to facilitate and achieve learning and understanding.

My interest in student-centred learning has grown through discussions with colleagues and tutors, as well as literature based on examples. I believe that focusing on the different ways that a student is learning strengthens my abilities as a teacher and helps me to understand my role in the classroom better.

Readers will note that, in these examples, teachers perceive themselves as having a responsibility to create effective learning environments and they seek to achieve this through the use of appropriate methodologies. These teachers believe that developing good materials, designing for learning, and sensitively facilitating student engagement are crucial teaching tasks (Knight 2002). Effective learning is stimulated in an environment where students work on tasks or learning activities that promote understanding, rather than activities that encourage learners only to seek or receive information.

Conclusion

The four sections suggested above are likely to provide a useful and flexible template for most academics. As teachers work on their teaching philosophy statements, they should remember that one of the most important aspects of such statements is critical reflection. A critically reflective approach to practice should help teachers develop greater self-awareness and understanding of learning and teaching issues as they are lived. We found many examples of developing critical awareness, engagement with the literature, and thoughtful attempts to improve the quality of the student learning experience, some examples are which are included below.

I recognise the importance of taking time to reflect on what I am doing and the value of discussing ideas with colleagues within the college and beyond it. For this reason, I am attempting to keep a journal for reflection.

I want to look at my efforts in order to improve my teaching as deep down I always knew there was something I could improve on—not that I was a bad teacher, rather I knew I was capable of being a better teacher.

The process of producing this element of my portfolio is of great personal importance. Being able to reflect on my own beliefs and find connections with current educational theory has helped me to become more aware of what I believe my own purpose is within the teaching and learning paradigm and what I am aspiring to do within my practice.

These academic voices speak powerfully to a practice that is responsible and caring. Our research shows evidence of lecturers developing not only the professional skills and competencies of teaching, but also explaining and justifying what they do, and giving instances of their coming-to-know. In the examples, a view of professionalism emerges that acknowledges the complex and difficult nature of teaching in higher education and the importance of values, professional morality and a determination to improve practice through reflection. These examples support the call for professional academic development to provide opportunities for teachers to reflect on their teaching philosophy, with the aim of fostering a conception of professionalism that goes beyond competencies to emphasise responsibility and care.

References

Barnett, R. 2000, 'Supercomplexity and the curriculum', *Studies in Higher Education*, vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 255–265.

Bartolome, L.I. 2004, 'Critical pedagogy and teacher education: Radicalizing prospective teachers', *Teacher Education Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 97–122. Available from:
<http://www.teqjournal.org/backvols/2004/31_1/bartoleme.pmd.pdf>
[27 March 2007].

Charkins, R.J., O'Toole, D. & Wetzel, J.N. 1985, 'Linking teacher and student learning styles with student achievement and attitudes', *Journal of Economic Education*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 111–120.

Chism, N.V.N. 1998, 'Developing a philosophy of teaching statement', *Class Action*, vol. 1, no. 8, pp. 1–2.

Faculty & TA Development 2005, *Developing a Teaching Portfolio: Guidance on Writing a Philosophy of Teaching Statement*, The Ohio State University. Available from: <http://ftad.osu.edu/portfolio/philosophy/Phil_guidance.html>
[13 December 2006].

Grasha, A. 2002, Teaching with Style: *A Practical Guide to Enhancing Learning by Understanding Teaching and Learning Styles*, Alliance, San Bernardino CA.

Knight, P.T. 2002, *Being a Teacher in Higher Education*, SRHE & Open University Press, Buckingham.

Loughran, J. 1996, *Developing Reflective Practice*, Falmer Press, London.

Palmer, P. 1998, The Courage to Teach, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Prosser, M. & Trigwell, K. 1999. *Understanding Learning and Teaching: The Experience in Higher Education*, SRHE & Open University Press, Buckingham.

Ramsden, P. 2003, *Learning to Teach in Higher Education*, 2nd edn, RoutledgeFalmer, London.

Rowland, S. 1998, 'Turning academics into teachers', *Teaching in Higher Education*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 133–139.

Schönwetter, D.J., Sokal, L., Friesen, M. & Taylor, K.L. 2002, 'Teaching philosophies reconsidered: A conceptual model for the development and evaluation of teaching philosophy statements', *The International Journal for Academic Development*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 83–97.

Skelton, A. 2005, *Understanding Teaching Excellence in Higher Education: Towards a Critical Approach*, Routledge, London.

----
[1] See <http://www.iats.com/publications/TSI.html>

Part Two: Case Studies
A National Overview of Practice in Ireland

Educating for Inquiry and Exchange through a Reflective Portfolio Process: Making Teaching a University-wide Scholarly Imperative

Nona Lyons
University College Cork
nonalyons@hotmail.com

Introduction

One striking discovery in the recent critiques of higher education in the USA and Europe is the charge that although most undergraduate students make gains during their college years, they accomplish far less than they should. Derek Bok, interim president of Harvard University, writing in *Our Underachieving Colleges* (2006), finds college students lack critical thinking skills and the ability to make sound judgments beyond a naive epistemology:

> Many seniors graduate without being able to write well enough to satisfy their employers. Many cannot reason clearly or perform competently in analyzing complex, nontechnical problems, even though faculties rank critical thinking as the primary goal of a college education (Bok 2006, p. 8).

Equally surprising is the fact that most colleges neglect to collect data at graduation on what exactly their students learn and know how to do, in contrast to simply counting the number of courses students have taken. Although some professors are aware of the problems of student learning and do try new methods of teaching, their concerns are not always shared by faculty as a whole:

> Throughout undergraduate education a great wall separates the world of research from the world of practice—even though the practitioners involved are professors, trained in research, who would seem ideally prepared to take full advantage of whatever findings from empirical research have to offer (Bok 2006, p. 9).

Complicating this situation is the difficult and complex challenge of uncovering what it takes to engage in inquiry and how to teach its skills. Developmental psychologist Deanna Kuhn (2005), in her ground-breaking book, *Education for Thinking*, documents the sobering difficulty for both children and adults of doing inquiry, from identifying a question, to constructing an investigation, to distinguishing evidence from assertion, and to connecting research with findings, not just documenting what was done. Kuhn argues that students must have not only the skills but also the opportunity to engage in increasingly complex forms of inquiry and to grow in epistemological understanding of the nature of knowledge, especially the meta-cognitive task of knowing how they know.

Highly pertinent to these concerns are the observations of Mary Huber and Pat Hutchings of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching who, since the 1990s, have been working to advance a scholarship of teaching at university level. They argue for the need for what they call a 'teaching commons', a place of exchange for university faculty to share their teaching experiences. They find that:

> teaching is a private activity for most faculty taking place behind doors that are both metaphorically and physically closed to colleagues. Not surprisingly, teachers have developed few habits or conventions for exploring what they do in the classroom and how it affects their students, or for sharing what they know with colleagues who might build upon it. In contrast to most professions, teaching, as Lee Shulman argued in a 1987 essay, is 'devoid of a history of practice' (Huber & Hutchings 2006, p. 26, emphasis added).

Thus, three problems emerge for today's college teachers:

- the failure of college students to do well, especially in developing critical thinking and inquiry skills, in spite of years spent in the classroom
- the challenge of knowing how to teach students inquiry and its skills
- the absence an ongoing exchange among college teachers of the pedagogies needed to achieve these goals.

The UCC Experience

This chapter addresses these issues as it considers the case of University College Cork (UCC) and how its faculty responded to the opportunity to engage in inquiries into teaching and student learning and to share that knowledge with their colleagues, thus creating a history of their own practice. The chapter examines *three building blocks for engagement and inquiry:*

- the introduction of a conceptual framework—that is, the idea of a scholarship of teaching and learning, to frame inquiries into teaching as a scholarly activity
- the initiation of a series of portfolio seminars to serve as a scaffold for faculty to meet regularly to exchange teaching practices and their inquiries into student learning
- the development of a meta-cognitive reflective review through a portfolio development process. The purpose was to encourage and engage faculty in documenting and making public their investigations into teaching and student learning and to identify what was learned from the process.

These building blocks were first tried out six years ago in spring 2001 at UCC, when I was asked to introduce the staff to a reflective portfolio process by Vice-President, Áine Hyland. A portfolio was to be the required method of documentation that faculty members would prepare to participate in a newly announced competition at UCC for an award for excellence in teaching (Lyons 1998; Lyons, Hyland & Ryan 2002).

This chapter describes the challenges associated with these three procedures, and it identifies some results of these exchanges and inquiries, both institutional and

individual. Drawing on data from interviews with faculty, research findings are presented, along with brief vignettes into what faculty say they have learned from the portfolio process. Although a focus on the institutionalisation of change is important and briefly sketched here—and is elaborated in other chapters in this book—a different yet critical development is highlighted. This is the work of faculty themselves in relation to the three elements that facilitated exchange and the emergence of new hypotheses about potential results of portfolio inquiry and exchange.

Three Procedures of Reflective Inquiry and Exchange and Their Challenges

Procedure 1: A Conceptual Framework for a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

A conceptual framework defines the values of a programme and its intellectual tasks and challenges. At UCC, the idea of a scholarship of teaching as first championed by Ernest Boyer, the president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, provided that conceptual framework.

When in 1990 Ernest Boyer published his prescient book, *Scholarship Reconsidered*, he launched a challenge to the closed doors of teachers in academia and to the wall between teaching and research. Although Boyer rightly saw that it was time to bury the old teaching versus research controversy and create new forms of scholarship at universities, he also knew what was at stake—the reward system and the acts of professors it most highly prized. In the existing model, these were research acts, the scholarship of discovery. Boyer wanted to do something more. He asked:

> Is it possible to define the work of faculty in ways that reflect more realistically the full range of academic and civic mandates? ... to give the familiar and honorable term 'scholarship' a broader, more capacious meaning, one that brings legitimacy to the full scope of academic work? Surely, scholarship means engaging in original research. But the work of the scholar also means stepping back from one's investigation, looking for connections, building bridges between theory and practice, and communicating one's knowledge effectively to students. Specifically, we conclude that the work of the professoriate might be thought of as having four separate, yet overlapping functions. These are: the scholarship of discovery; the scholarship of integration; the scholarship of *application*; and, the scholarship of *teaching* (Boyer 1990, p. 16, emphasis added).

For Boyer, the work of the professor becomes consequential through teaching, 'only as it is understood by others. Yet, today, teaching is often viewed as a routine function, tacked on, something almost anyone can do. When defined as *scholarship*, however, teaching both educates and entices future scholars. Indeed, as Aristotle said, "Teaching is the highest form of understanding"' (Boyer 1990, p. 23).

In the years since Boyer's injunction, academics have taken up his challenge, no where more profitably than in exploring the idea of a scholarship of teaching. A rich

history of scholarly work has been published by the American Association of Higher Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as well as by individuals across Europe, America and the world (Hutchings 1998; Becker & Andrews 2004). In my work with faculty at UCC, I share Huber and Hutchings' belief about:

> the power that comes with viewing teaching as challenging intellectual work. The scholarship of teaching and learning invites faculty from all disciplines and fields to identify and explore interesting questions in their own teaching—and especially, in their students' learning—and to share what they discover with colleagues who can build on their insights (Huber & Hutchings 2006, p. 25; see also Shulman 1993).

I believe this is the power that enticed faculty at UCC in the spring of 2001 to respond so positively to the invitation to participate in a series of seminars on the portfolio creation process and to the idea of sharing their own inquiries into puzzles of teaching and learning. The portfolio seminars were in support of the newly announced competition for awards for excellence in teaching at UCC, and that was a draw card, for these awards were to be determined by a teaching portfolio. At the very first seminar, four people volunteered when asked to come the following week prepared to share one of their experiences of teaching, something they felt might become a potential entry for a portfolio of their own. Impressively, at that seminar, two members from the medical faculty reported on a teaching experience of theirs that failed. When those present heard that these teachers had already tried out their unit and been roundly told by their students that it was a failure, faculty caught their breath. Why had the teachers used the unit again, another year? What were the teachers clinging to? Trying to convey? Why was that so important? Seldom had the people present engaged in such conversations. As one member said, not in all his thirteen years at UCC had he ever participated in a discussion about teaching, to say nothing of a discussion of failure.

Procedure 2: Weekly Portfolio Seminars to Facilitate Exchange

Participants were so eager to have a forum for exchange that the seminars were continued during the following autumn. It also helped that the UCC competition for the teaching excellence awards was to be completed and teaching portfolios to be submitted in March 2002. But the attendees of the seminars were not only those preparing applications for the awards. In fact, academics from across the university attended, motivated by the desire to share and examine common teaching experiences and dilemmas. What slowly dawned on them all was that someone in economics, or law, or food services engineering could have a teaching approach or a story they would find compelling, even challenging to their own practice.

For instance, a biochemist told how he had through his own research revised a course on proteins that had taken him over ten years to develop. He held his audience in rapt attention as he went on to describe the mysteries of protein-unfolding problems that might be clues to the cure of several diseases, such as BSE, or Alzheimer's. Here, it was the intellectual power of the subject that caught and held his audience. Similarly, faculty members responded to the doctor who

developed a programme for training medical personnel in resuscitating newborn infants and used a research model to document his work in creating a teaching portfolio entry. He held everyone's attention as his audience realised the teaching problem he faced. Because the procedures medical personnel were trained in were infrequently required, except in emergencies, there was always a need for retraining over time.

This diversity of issues about teaching and student learning had never been so easily available for interrogation in such an open forum. It also helped that the sessions were held in the high domed Council Room, the ancient place of university governance meetings. Now, at lunch time, discussions about teaching went on over a light lunch made available to participants. These sessions were open to all. The first round of the competition for teaching excellence yielded five awards. Twenty-three teachers had submitted portfolios, however. And from 2001 to 2004, at least 300 faculty members participated, indicating the much broader reach of the portfolio seminars (Lyons, Hyland, & Ryan 2002).

Boyer reminds us that:

> good teaching means that faculty, as scholars, are also learners … While well-prepared lectures surely have a place, teaching, at its best, means not only transmitting knowledge, but transforming and extending it as well. Through reading, through classroom discussion and surely through comments and questions posed by students, professors themselves will be pushed in creative new directions (Boyer 1990, p. 26).

The teaching commons created by these portfolio seminars nurtured the exchanges of UCC faculty and their unique ways of approaching the scholarship of teaching and the investigations of their own teaching.

Procedure 3: The Reflective Portfolio Inquiry Process
Of all of the procedures for inquiry and exchange developed at UCC, none was and is more challenging than creating a reflective portfolio. It is an explicit meta-cognitive task; it demands a reflective review of what any teaching act is attempting to do and what it achieves. It requires that teachers ask: What have students learned, and what do they now know how to do? How do we know? By what evidence?

The portfolio, long a familiar creation of artists, writers, photographers, and even financial planners, was transformed into something new when adopted for teaching and its inquiries. Now not only is it a mode of documenting teaching practices; it has also become a means of inquiry, of investigation into teaching itself, a way of presenting evidence, the data of student learning. It initially gained prominence in teacher education circles; then, in the pursuit of a scholarship of teaching, it became a method of choice at the American Association of Higher Education to document the inquiries teacher practitioners were making into teaching as a scholarly activity. The teaching portfolio has also become popular in colleges and universities, allowing

faculty to document all aspects of their teaching tasks. These investigations have created new innovations of the portfolio itself.

For example, when teacher William Cerbin, a psychologist at the University of Wisconsin at La Crosse, began working on a teaching portfolio as part of a scholarship of teaching project, he found himself taking a new focus not on his teaching as a whole but on a single course and, in the process, he invented the course portfolio:

> Being a social scientist, I began to think of each course … as a kind of laboratory—not a truly controlled experiment, of course, but as a setting in which you start out with goals for student learning, then you adopt teaching practices that you think will accomplish these, and along the way you can watch and see if your practices are helping to accomplish your goals, collecting evidence about effects and impact.
>
> In this sense, each course is a kind of discrete entity … So the course portfolio was a natural way to go … I'm not sure I saw this immediately, but one thing I now see is that the course portfolio is really like a scholarly manuscript … a draft, of ongoing inquiry (quoted in Hutchings 1998, p. 33).

It was this design of a course as consisting itself of a design—that is, a plan, a syllabus, an enactment in teaching of what students are asked to do with results in student learning—that became an important conceptual framework for putting together a course portfolio and even a teaching portfolio. The course portfolio highlights the results, what exactly students get out of the course, what they have learned and now know how to do.

Defining Reflective Engagement

The critical element of developing a portfolio is the reflective element, one that has recently come under fire and created controversy. I briefly review this history and some of its controversies.

Most researchers date interest in reflective thinking to the publication of Donald Schön's classic 1983 book, *The Reflective Practitioner*. Schön, a mentor to counsellors, engineers, architects, therapists and urban planners, believed that the then model for knowing placed emphasis on what he called technical rationality, the application of scientific principles to problems of practice. This in turn leads practitioners to think of practice as the application of knowledge to decisions, plugging in answers. In contrast, Schön believed that often our knowing is in the spontaneous, intuitive performance of everyday life. We are knowledgeable in a special way—our knowing is in our action. We have access to that knowing through reflection-in-action and reflection after the fact, reflection-on-action.

Because Schön drew largely on the work of philosopher John Dewey, his book brought about a revival of interest in Dewey's work on reflective thinking or, as he called it, reflective inquiry (Dewey 1998 (1933)). Thus Schön and Dewey helped to foster a revival of interest in reflective thinking. Nowhere was that stronger than in teacher education, although it quickly spread to other professions, notably nursing,

social work and medicine. From the 1980s through to the new century, there was an increased call for educating practitioners as reflective thinkers. But increasing numbers of critics of reflection have emerged over the past several years. Carol Rodgers puts it succinctly:

> For the last 10 to 15 years numerous boards and foundations as well as states and local school districts have identified reflection/inquiry as a standard towards which all teachers and students must strive. Although the cry for accomplishment in systematic reflective thinking is clear, it is more difficult to distinguish what systematic reflective thinking is (Rodgers 2002, p. 842, emphasis added; see also Ghaye 2000; Zeichner & Wray 2001).

Rodgers goes on to identify four problems associated with reflection's lack of definition:

> It is unclear how systematic reflection is different from other types of thought; it is difficult to assess a skill that is vaguely defined; without a clear picture … it has lost its ability to be seen and therefore has begun to lose its value. And finally, it is difficult to research the effects of reflective teaching and professional development on teachers' practice and students' learning (Rodgers 2002, p. 842).

Rodgers work stimulated a reconsideration of Dewey's definition of reflection and his contribution to our understanding of reflective inquiry.

Dewey insists that reflective thinking is not 'just mulling things over', a common, popular definition. Rather, it is the 'kind of thinking that consists in turning a subject over in the mind and giving it serious and consecutive consideration' (Dewey 1998 (1933), pp. 3–16). In addition, Dewey distinguished reflective inquiry from several other mental processes: from stream of consciousness, uncontrolled coursing of ideas through our heads; from mental pictures of something not present; and from belief, simply an assertion about some matter of fact or principle or law. For Dewey, reflective thinking has a purpose: 'it must lead somewhere and implies belief in evidence' (Dewey 1998 (1933), p. 9).

Reflective thinking usually has its origins in some kind of puzzle or doubt:

> In distinction from other operations to which we apply the name of thought, it involves: (1) a state of doubt, hesitation, perplexity, mental difficulty in which thinking originates; and, (2) an act of searching, hunting, inquiring, to find material that will resolves the doubt, settle and dispose of the perplexity (Dewey 1998 (1933), p. 12).

To be genuinely thoughtful, Dewey averred, 'we must be willing to sustain and protract that state of doubt which is the stimulus to thorough inquiry, so as not to accept an idea or make positive assertion of a belief until justifying reasons have been found' (Dewey 1998 (1933), p. 16).

This is the challenge and the work of reflective inquiry. And as psychologist Deanna

Kuhn has well documented, it is also what is so difficult to learn and to teach. The reflective portfolio process has the advantage of making the process explicit, in its demand for evidence of teaching results and identification of research implications. Reflective inquiry is a systematic, thoughtful investigation in the service of discovering evidence to resolve the doubt and to dissolve the perplexity and the puzzles of teaching and learning. But what are its results? Here we look at results UCC faculty indicate from their inquiries.

Results of UCC Faculty Inquiries into Teaching and Student Learning

To illustrate the reflective inquiries of UCC faculty, I present data from two studies. The first study involved interviews with 20 UCC faculty who participated in the first round of competition for teaching excellence awards. The second study is still in progress, and I present its data in the form of three vignettes from faculty who have for the last three years been pursuing inquiries of their own through a reflective portfolio process in new formats that have evolved at UCC. These formats are important formal institutional programmes for study introduced and developed under the leadership of Áine Hyland (2004) with the considerable contributions of Marian McCarthy, Bettie Higgs and others. They include a Certificate in Teaching and Learning in 2004; a Diploma in Teaching and Learning in 2005; and a Masters in Teaching and Learning currently underway for 2006–07. All of these programmes—which are detailed elsewhere in this book—emphasise:

- the study of the theory and practices of teaching and learning with a particular emphasis on Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (1983)
- teaching for understanding
- assessing student learning to uncover what they know.

All three programmes require portfolio entries describing teachers' inquiries into their teaching and student leaning.

Study 1: Results

Results from the first study of UCC faculty provide a context for the second study. This first study revealed some of the power of reflective inquiry. It took place in 2002–03 through interviews with 20 of the 23 faculty who applied by portfolio for the first teaching excellence awards in 2002. Faculty were asked to respond to the following questions:

1. Looking back over the portfolio process, what stands out for you?
2. What would you say you learned from the process?

Nineteen of the respondents said that reflective engagement through the portfolio process created a new 'consciousness' of their own teaching practice (Lyons 2002; see also Lyons, Hyland & Ryan 2002). For seventeen out of 20 respondents, this new conscious awareness triggered a set of four related actions:

1. It led them to articulate their teaching goals and practices more explicitly, both for themselves and their students.
2. They then began to ask: What exactly do students learn and know from my teaching and how do I know?

3. They identified changes they would consider in their practice.
4. They actually changed their practice.

I argue that these elements point to a new meta-cognitive awareness of what these teachers know and how they know it. But when faculty take an additional step and continue in their own learning about teaching and learning, what kinds of results and understandings do they acknowledge?

Study 2: Three Vignettes

The three vignettes presented here provide brief glimpses into how faculty responded to deeper engagement in teaching and learning; what they were looking for through continuing engagement in a reflective portfolio process; and what they say they have learned. The vignettes come from interviews conducted in 2006 with participants in the new programmes noted above (Lyons 2006). During the study, participants were asked:

• What were you trying to achieve and understand by continuing to engage in the portfolio process in the new programmes?
• What did you learn?
• What stood out for you in the process?

Responses varied in relation to peoples' disciplines, their prior knowledge and their current professional goals. But two findings from the small sample stand out:

• Faculty are linking inquiries into teaching to their research, suggesting a new integration of research and teaching.
• Faculty are further developing a meta-cognitive awareness of the links they are making in their own thinking, as well as an understanding of their ways of knowing through the inquiry process.

These findings clearly need further testing. We look here at three faculty members and their three perspectives on the relation between teaching and research.

Vignette 1: Fostering reflective inquiry in students

This teacher of finance for some ten years described how she became a self-chosen mentor to a group of 20 students in a Bachelor of Science in Finance programme. She had designed a new third-year placement programme, which gave advanced students a six-month work experience in a local financial organisation. The faculty mentor had created the programme with a deliberate inquiry goal: to initiate an investigation into how to foster reflection in the UCC finance students. The teacher had in fact created the programme as an inquiry into her own question: Could students be encouraged to engage in reflection on their own?

She describes her first concerns:

My initial reflection on the programme was that it was good but not as good as it could be. ... My overarching learning objective for the course module was that students would practice active reflection on both prior theoretical knowledge and on the experiential

learning they would achieve in the work environment ... Reflective learning fosters in students a capacity for critical thinking and facilitates continuous learning. The corollary of this is that there can be no real development, deep learning, if experience is not accompanied by a process of inquiry into that experience … I encourage and facilitate learners in the process of conducting a dialogue with themselves, through the medium of compiling a weekly learning log ... By asking 'how do the things I am doing connect?', learners themselves become active participants in learning (Lyons 2006).

Towards that goal, the teacher asked students to keep learning logs during the six-month programme and to communicate with her at least once a week, e-mailing learning log entries and questions and comments about their placement.

The origin of the programme for the teacher was a deep-seated respect for students and a desire to integrate students more fully into her teaching: 'How could I bring students more into the mainstream of learning … I wanted to gain more insight into that. And I saw the opportunity to look at that' (Lyons 2006). When asked what she had learned from this project, she responded:

I was reassured of the benefits of reflection. I believe that students have a latent capacity to reflect if we can engage them in the process. I mentored them by interacting with e-mails each week. I could see what puzzled them, how they resolved it. I believe over time they—not all, about half—got to learn how to do it (Lyons 2006).

She is now left with a new puzzle: why did the other half of the students not grasp reflection? This new research question illuminates how a teaching programme can operate as a research investigation.

Vignette 2: Making meta-cognitive inquiry routine in medical teaching
This medical doctor had created a teaching portfolio and won an UCC award for Excellence in Teaching in 2002. But he continued his studies in the new UCC Teaching and Learning programme, achieving a Certificate and then a Diploma and creating portfolio entries for these programmes. Presently he is enrolled in the Masters programme. He acknowledges that one of the many important roles a doctor must perform is that of educator, and he describes how teaching and research are intimately linked for him. In this vignette, he points out that a pilot programme can be a way to provide evidence to justify a new medical procedure or education programme. Towards that goal, he likes to do research that is connected to his teaching.

Inspired by a methodology introduced by Howard Gardner's work, this medical educator has adopted a teaching technique that trains medical personnel working with premature infants to create still videos when they enter the environment of the infant. For example:

I get my students to ask and record what they see. What is going on here? Who is in the picture? How would the parent put the situation? What story is the parent creating? The nurse? The doctor? What is going on outside the room? The goal is to help those involved to see that there is more than one story, to empower them with ways of knowing how to uncover more than one perspective (Lyons 2006).

Presently this educator is exploring the effects of this process and also considering introducing the idea of a Standardised Patient—that is, an actor who can portray the symptoms of someone sick so that medical personnel can practice how they would respond. He believes this model can also be used to teach communications skills, so that a new level of competency in communication can be taught and measured. But he is trying to figure out: 'Can it be introduced to doctors in training? Could it also be used as well to educate medical and related personnel in communication and consultation skills? How would it be measured? Could it train people from different medical cultures [to] gain an international perspective?' (Lyons 2006). But as he says: 'I like to do things in terms of measuring, and teaching. I always have enjoyed teaching. I am much more interested in teaching' (Lyons 2006). Thus he plans a pilot for the Standardised Patient project. He is also clear about why—not only to try out a new pedagogy but to research its results.

And I like to do research, to bring in research, to use it to empower people. There is more than one way. Every time you teach you must get feedback. You can then say, 'Let's look at this. What is going on here?' (Lyons 2006).

Teaching inquiries and research are thus joined even at the planning stage for a new programme.

Vignette 3: Discovering what inquiry and research mean to understanding
Like the medical educator described above, this language teacher is presently working towards a Masters in Teaching and Learning, having already completed the other portfolio programmes. His dominant sense of what he is learning is how to question what he is doing in his teaching everyday:

In slow and simple ways this programme makes me question what I do all the time. I have been teaching for over ten years and yesterday I asked myself why I was doing something. I looked at the students and some did not seem hooked in. So I wonder are these students power pointed out? (Lyons 2006).

So he begins the idea of testing his hunch. In addition, he says: 'I understand much more what my responsibility is, and how to check it out. I see my responsibility to students has matured as has my partnership with students' (Lyons 2006). Thus inquiry has become a daily habit, sometimes with ethical dimensions. But the most dramatic learning for this teacher is a new understanding of the nature of knowledge and knowing:

From our inquiries in the programme I find that for the first time I understand what research is about! Even when I did a PhD, I did it like it was another essay, the thing to do, to do it and get out of the road. But I was never really satisfied with it. Last year when we talked about the Masters and what it entailed, about boundaries in a field, and others in the Teaching and Learning programme began to talk about their research work, I could see the research process for the first time, what is meant by research. And I could relate to the people around me, to what they were interested in. I could see exactly where I was and what my research topic was. I could see where it fitted into language and where it fitted into my teaching and my students' learning. The portfolio process as inquiry into something is worthwhile (Lyons 2006).

Future Testable Hypothesis
Several hypotheses emerge from these brief investigations and suggest a future agenda for research. These hypotheses are:

- The portfolio inquiry process fosters a new integration between teaching and research. Research is embedded in the teaching process as new techniques are tried out, tested and assessed.
- As a perspective on inquiry develops, it leads to increasing investigations and creative experimentation in teaching.
- The inquiry process enhances a teacher's sense of responsibility to students and may induce heightened ethical concerns or awareness of ethical dimensions of teaching.
- Engaging in inquiries into teaching and learning can foster new ways of seeing and knowing one's own discipline, new perspectives towards knowledge and knowing and how you know—that is, a meta-cognitive awareness.

Thus, a rich set of questions remains to be explored in the future.

References

Becker, W.C. & Andrews, M.L. 2004, *The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington.

Bok, D. 2006, *Our Underachieving Colleges*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Boyer, E. 1990, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Princeton NJ.

Dewey, J. 1998 (1933), *How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process*, Houghton Mifflin, New York.

Gardner, H. 1983, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, Fontana Press, London.

Ghaye, T. 2000, Editorial, *Reflective Practice*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 5–9.

Huber, M. & Hutchings, P. 2006, 'Building the teaching commons', *Change*, vol. 38, no. 3, pp. 24–31.

Hutchings, P. 1998, *The Course Portfolio*, American Association for Higher Education, Washington DC.

Hyland, A. 2004, *University College Cork as a Learning Organization*, University College Cork.

Lyons, N. 1998, *With Portfolio in Hand: Validating the New Teacher Professionalism*, Teachers College Press, New York.

Lyons, N. 2002, 'Results: What faculty say they learn and value', in *Advancing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning through a Reflective Portfolio Process*, eds N. Lyons, A. Hyland & N. Ryan, University College Cork.

Lyons, N. 2006, 'The portfolio research project', unpublished research interviews, University College Cork.

Lyons, N., Hyland, A. & Ryan, N. (eds) 2002, *Advancing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning through a Reflective Portfolio Process*, University College Cork.

Rodgers, C. 2002, 'Defining reflection: Another look at John Dewey and reflective thinking', *Teachers College Record*, vol. 104, no. 4, pp. 842–866.

Schön, D. 1983, *The Reflective Practitioner*, Basic Books, New York.

Shulman, L. 1993, 'Teaching as community property: Putting an end to pedagogical solitude', *Change*, vol. 25, no. 6, pp. 6–7.

Zeichner, K. & Wray, S. 2001, 'The teacher portfolio in US teacher education programs: What we know and what we need to know', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, vol. 17, no. 5, pp. 613–621.

Chapter 6

The Role of Teaching Portfolios in the Development of a Reflective Learning Culture at Dublin City University

Jean Hughes
Dublin City University
Jean.hughes@dcu.ie

This chapter charts the introduction of teaching portfolios at Dublin City University (DCU). It describes some pre-portfolio research, which was conducted to inform the development and introduction of portfolios, as well as the approach eventually adopted. It concludes by outlining the challenges and outcomes of the two courses in which the portfolio has featured to date.

Context

As the newest Irish university (established in November 1980), DCU is better placed than most to respond to a continuously shifting higher education (HE) environment. Since its inauguration, DCU has been a pioneering higher education institution with its flagship industrial training programme (INTRA), in which students spend one semester of their degrees working in industry. DCU has always been highly innovative in forging strong partnerships and collaborations with industry. In 2005, DCU launched its new strategic plan *Leadership through Foresight*, using a new and innovative planning methodology, with a particular focus on 'being a distinctive agent of radical innovation, within a culture of world class excellence in higher education and scholarship' (DCU 2005). With this background, DCU continues to be the kind of learning organisation suggested by Fullan (1993).

The notion of the university as a learning organisation has had a profound influence on the ethos underpinning the DCU Learning Innovation (LI) Strategic Plan, a component plan of Leadership Through Foresight, launched in December 2005. This Plan emphasises the development of a culture of research-led or inquiry-based learning, which will encourage the development of students' abilities to approach their learning through questioning, research and reflection. Reflective learning is central to any such culture, and we consider that academic staff must become reflective practitioners if they are to foster this approach to learning among their students. Scholars agree that reflective teaching portfolios are a powerful—if not essential—tool for the reflective practitioner (see Seldin 1991; Lyons 1998). Thus, the LI Plan states as one of its key objectives that 'all staff will be supported in the development of teaching portfolios to enable them to become more reflective practitioners' (OVPLI, 2005, p. 27).

The introduction of teaching portfolios required that we take account of the autonomy and individuality of individual teachers, while also seeking to contribute to an organisation-wide change of culture, especially the development of a culture of inquiry-based and research-led learning. In this, we were guided by Fullan's (1993) characterisation of teachers as change agents and his argument that individual

change must occur in parallel with organisational change. In other words, we aimed to contribute to change at the whole-of-university level by effecting change in classroom and academic development practices.

Pre-Portfolio Evaluation

We undertook pre-portfolio interviews with five nursing lecturers to inform our approach to the introduction of teaching portfolios (Hughes 2006). We focused on nursing lecturers because of their likely familiarity with reflective practice and because teachers in this field have usually previously completed formal training in teaching or tutoring, usually involving the use of teaching portfolios. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, which addressed three major areas: reflective practice, teaching in DCU and teaching portfolios. In relation to teaching portfolios, we asked the lecturers four closed questions:

1.   Should DCU introduce teaching portfolios?
2.   Have you ever had a teaching portfolio?
3.   Do you currently have a teaching portfolio?
4.   Do you know anyone with a teaching portfolio?

The responses to these questions are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Responses to Closed Questions about Teaching Portfolios

Interviewee	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1	Y	N	N	N
2	Y	Y	N	N
3	Y	Y	N	N
4	Y	Y	N	N
5	Y	Y	Y	Y

It should be noted that three of the four interviewees who had maintained a portfolio (Q2) had done so in the context of a formal education programme. Interestingly, none of these respondents continued to maintain a teaching portfolio after the programme, and this presents an interesting challenge with respect to building continuity and longevity into the portfolio process. The one interviewee who actually kept a portfolio (Q3) did so in the form of a plan or scheme of work rather than a reflective portfolio.

We also asked interviewees about the:

•   usefulness of portfolios
•   relative advantages and disadvantages of a portfolio template or proforma
•   likely usefulness of a formal course to introduce teaching portfolios.

From these open-ended discussions, a picture emerged of the role that teaching portfolios could play in acknowledging effective teaching practice. Interviewees felt that effective practice was not necessarily recognised because it can be difficult to demonstrate, especially when compared with research excellence. Thus teaching portfolios were seen as a way of not only improving teaching practice through reflection but also as a way of demonstrating improvement and quality. On a related point, interviewees saw teaching portfolios as a strategy for balancing the competing demands of teaching and research.

Interviewees provided useful feedback on the format that teaching portfolios should take at DCU. They all felt that some form of template was needed to help structure portfolios and generate entries, but each also stressed that such a template must allow for individual tailoring and customisation.

Objectives of Portfolio Development

These interviews made it clear to us that teaching portfolios at DCU needed to address several objectives in addition to the overarching strategic objective of developing a reflective learning culture. They needed to:

- provide a means of demonstrating or evidencing teaching excellence
- facilitate a reflective approach to improvement of teaching practice
- promote pedagogical research.

Portfolio Construction

Our approach to the introduction of and support for teaching portfolios at DCU was informed by the objectives of the strategic plan, the interviews with nursing lecturers and the relevant scholarly literature (Kolb 1984; Seldin 1991; Lyons 1998). To help us, we engaged an educational consultant, Ivan Moore, from the Centre for Excellence in Enquiry-based Learning at Manchester University.

Our approach had two strands: the development of a suitable model or models for the portfolio and the development of a support structure in the form of a formal portfolio course.

Portfolio Models

Given the feedback we had received about accommodating individual teaching practices and needs, we developed three possible portfolio models for use by academics at DCU:

- critical incident framework (cellular and case study approach)
- continuous professional development framework (CPD) (cellular and case study approach)
- Boyer's scholarships (cellular and case study approach).

The *critical incident* model is primarily for those individuals whose main goal is to examine, reflect on and improve their own practice by examining particular events,

or 'critical incidents'. 'Critical incidents are vivid happenings that for some reason people remember as being significant' (Brookfield 1995, p. 114). They change what happens after them. This model provides people interested in critical incidents with a framework to structure their reflection.

The *continuous professional development framework* (CPD) model adapts the UK Higher Education Academy (HE Academy) framework for professional standards. This framework identifies six areas of activity, six areas of core knowledge and five professional values (Higher Education Academy 2006). It is likely to be of particular use to those individuals who wish to use their portfolios as evidence in support of an application for advancement or award.

The model based on Boyer's *scholarships* combines reflective investigation into teaching practice with Boyer's four scholarships: discovery, integration, application and teaching. Individuals using this model are encouraged to view teaching 'problems' in the same way as research problems—as the starting points for inquiry (Bass 1998, cited by Hutchings & Schulman 1999). Thus this model supports a scholarly, research-led approach to learning and teaching.

When teachers take a *cellular approach* to any of the models above, they enter reflective comments about specific incidents or areas into cells on a matrix. The *case study approach* involves focusing on a longer-term experience, such as a whole module or programme. Further information about these models and associated approaches is provided in the chapter by Jean Hughes and Ivan Moore.

Portfolio Course

The course to support teachers in developing portfolios is organised around four facilitated group sessions, each taking the form of an action learning set—that is, a small group of learners (three to four people) whose focus is on learning through and about their common practice. Facilitators provide some input into these sessions, helping participants to focus on reflection and evaluation, rather than description. They encourage the use of evidence of the impact of teachers' actions and decisions on student learning, and help participants to link research into student learning (that is, the scholarly literature) and their reflective writing. More information is provided in the chapter by Jean Hughes and Ivan Moore.

Challenges of Portfolio Development

When we introduced teaching portfolios and ran the portfolio course for the first time, we experienced challenges in relation to structure, timing and operation. The experience of the first course has informed the second.

Timing

We ran the course for the first time towards the end of the academic year, between May and June 2006, when teachers were no longer taking classes. We hoped that this would mean that teachers would be free from timetabling constraints and, although busy correcting exams, would be available to attend the course sessions.

Two main problems became evident. Because teachers were not timetabled, other meetings were also scheduled, often at short notice. It therefore proved impossible for all participants to attend all the sessions. Thus we began the course with twelve participants, but only six of these attended the final session.

The second problem was of even more fundamental importance: because the course was conducted outside teaching time, it meant that participants were reflecting-on-action rather than reflecting-in-action (see Schön 1983).

The second course ran during core teaching time, with its four sessions scheduled between October 2006 and January 2007. Sixteen participants signed up for the course: fourteen attended the first session and ten completed the course). This arrangement proved much more successful than the first course. Participants came with fresh, current incidents or case studies; they identified their chosen models; and they all made entries in their portfolios between sessions. An additional benefit of running the course during teaching time is that participants could meet between sessions, because they are generally available on the day and time that a session normally runs and they reported valuable peer support as an outcome.

Portfolio Models

In the first course, we presented participants with the three alternative portfolio models and associated approaches in the first session. With hindsight, it is clear that this was probably overwhelming for the participants, although we did not assume that they would be familiar with reflective practice, Boyer's scholarships or the role of Higher Education Academy. We did give them some background for understanding these models, but they nevertheless had to grapple not only with the differences between the models but also with deciding which was the most relevant for them. Although we made it clear that participants could change models at any stage, it probably would have been simpler to limit them to one or two models until they were comfortable with the process of portfolio development.

In the second course, we briefly mentioned the three possible models during the first session but limited participants to using the critical incident model, with a choice of either the cellular or case study approach. We introduced the other models towards the end of the course and assistance will be given to teachers who wish to adapt their critical incident portfolio to an alternative template. In addition, participants in the second course had the opportunity (and were encouraged) to attend a workshop on reflective learning given by Dr Jennifer Moon in September 2006. This allowed them to gain information on and some practice in reflective writing and proved a useful context for the portfolio course.

Structure

As noted above, each session in the portfolio course is designed around action learning sets, with some input from a facilitator. Each set is supposed to discuss portfolio development; identify any issues arising; monitor individual progress; and report back to the whole group. In general, participants followed this model but the

working of the action learning sets and the facilitator input varied significantly between the first and second courses.

In the first course, individuals tended to use the sessions for general discussion of teaching issues and problems: this was undoubtedly useful but it is not clear that it necessarily advanced portfolio development. In part, this may have been caused by the composition of the groups changing from week to week. Moreover, participants had not been asked to meet in between sessions, so sessions began with an informal check-in to see how participants had progressed between times. Generally, this set an informal tone and it was quite difficult to switch back to the more formal, structured session. Finally, facilitators decided on the topics for formal discussion because participants did not request topics, despite being invited to do so.

In the second course, the sets appeared to work more effectively, with individuals meeting in between sessions. As noted above, the scheduling of this course has contributed to effectiveness in this area. The mixture of formal input and small group work seemed to work better too, because we began each session with some formal input from the facilitator before moving into the action learning sets. Finally, participants in this second course themselves requested topics for each session, ranging from educational theories to student learning styles.

Mentors

To support participants in the first course, we provided them with mentors. All the mentors except one came from other Irish higher education institutions (this was because of the limited experience of DCU staff with reflective portfolios). Mentors were extremely generous with both their time and their interest, but experience with this form of mentoring was mixed. Participants who contacted their mentors reported very favourably on the individual mentors. The only negative feedback was from the mentors, who sometimes contacted us to say that the participants were not making enough use of them. Interestingly, mentees of the DCU-based mentor reported the most activity because it was easy to meet up and they often bumped into each other on campus.

Based on this experience, we decided to try a peer support model rather than a mentoring model for the second course. The peer support model is based on the action learning sets, which means that the groups meet in between course sessions and are also available to each other through e-mail and so on. With two to three people in each set, we hoped to avoid the situation where an individual is left without support. Although the composition of the groups changed slightly in the beginning because some participants were unable to attend, the groups settled down after that. Informal feedback was very positive, with participants finding excellent support from their peers. It is also interesting to note that while participants might not be able to attend a formal session, they did tend to make a point of attending their group meetings in between sessions, reflecting the value of the peer-mentoring process.

Portfolio Development

The participants in the first course had very mixed experiences with portfolio development. This might have been because the first course assumed that participants would develop a totally electronic portfolio. Also, we did not provide any sample entries, mainly because we were trying to honour the highly personal, individual nature of portfolios.

One participant has developed a very comprehensive portfolio using the CPD framework and intends to apply for membership of the HE Academy. This participant also feels that the portfolio will play a key role in future promotion Another participant has developed a comprehensive critical incident portfolio on paper, which is being used to support doctoral study. Two other participants have indicated that they are very interested in continuing with portfolio practice but have not yet managed to make a significant start. Another feels that 'the moment has passed'; with several competing activities, most with external deadlines and drivers, this person will not continue with the process at this time. Two participants left the University during the summer and one felt the course was too unstructured to be productive. The experience of another participant who had decided not to continue with the portfolio but was prompted to change this because of a critical incident at the start of the new semester was particularly interesting (see Appendix 1).

At the start of the second course, the facilitator brought in her own portfolio, showed and explained its physical artefacts (such as pieces of assessment which had been really successful; articles of which she was particularly proud, a notebook in which she kept her own thoughts and so on) and described the various electronic, paper, personal and professional components. In addition, each participant was given a box folder, which contained a pen, a refill pad and a CD to demonstrate the various media that might be useful. The second course showed more promising results than the first. Of the participants, all developed a portfolio; all identified the critical incident or case study on which they wished to focus; all had made initial statements of their teaching philosophies; and all had met in between sessions. In addition several had acquired a small notebook in which to record their reflections. Two participants have based recent applications for promotion on their reflective portfolio and one has decided to structure an article she 'had been struggling to write' on Boyer's scholarships.

Future challenges

Formal evaluation has not yet been conducted although this is planned for after the second course and will gather feedback on both courses. Longer term, it will be a challenge to encourage people to continue their portfolio development, especially those without extrinsic motivation such as promotion.

Outcomes

As will be clear from the discussion above, we had some mixed feelings about the success of the first portfolio course, with some disappointment about the attendance and the progress made. But this experience probably provided a richer learning

opportunity than if the course had run with no problems. By combining structure and flexibility, gradually introducing the alternative models and approaches, and running the course during teaching time, we hope we have created opportunities for more success in the second course.

Possibly the most important outcome of the DCU portfolio experience so far is the development of a reflective network. Participants in both courses have commented on the value of having reflective peers and a network of people who are interested in reflective practice, which gives them the opportunity to discuss teaching and learning issues and so on. As a result, there is growing interest in this area across the University, with the emergence of various projects and initiatives on reflective practice and reflective learning. Participants have also commented favourably on the opportunities offered by the courses for them to meet, get to know and discuss teaching and learning with people from different disciplines. Moreover, some of the participants in the second course were not teachers, but came from areas of the University that nevertheless support reflective learning, including the DCU Careers Service and Student Life Office. These two factors suggest that the fledgling reflective network is extending beyond academics to create an institution-wide community of practice. A concrete example of this is that several of the portfolio participants have responded to a request to act as mentors to students taking the 'Uaneen Module' , a portfolio-based module available to DCU students who can earn academic credits for a range of extracurricular activities by developing and submitting a reflective learning portfolio.

Development activities will be organised to support this community, including annual or semi-annual away-days for course participants. This is likely to be particularly helpful for those participants who might otherwise lack the motivation to continue with their portfolio development.

This outcome is particularly important because it is consistent with the strategic objective of portfolio development at DCU noted at the beginning of this case study—that is, it makes a contribution to developing a culture of reflective learning at both the classroom and the institutional level.

Plans for Future Development

DCU plans to continue with portfolio courses as long as there is a demand for them. We hope to introduce portfolios to support several other initiatives including promotion and the President's Awards for Teaching Excellence. We also hope that participants in previous courses will act as mentors to new participants and that, as portfolios develop, some individuals will use them in applications for membership of professional bodies (such as the Higher Education Academy).

References

Brookfield, S. 1995, *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Dublin City University 2005, *Leadership through Foresight* [DCU Strategic Plan], Dublin City University, Ireland.

Fullan, M. 1993. *Change Forces: Probing the Depths of Educational Change*, Falmer Press, London.

Higher Education Academy 2006, *The UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education*, UK HEA, York. Available from <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/regandaccr/StandardsFramework(1).pdf [8 December 2006].

Hughes, J. 2006, 'Pre-portfolio evaluation', paper presented to the All Ireland Society for Higher Education (AISHE) Conference, NUI Maynooth, 31 August–1 September 2006.

Hutchings, P. & Schulman, L. 1999, 'The scholarship of teaching: New elaborations, new developments', Change, vol. 31, no. 5, pp. 10–15.

Kolb, D.A. 1984, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, Prentice-Hall, New Jersey.

Lyons, N. 1998, *With Portfolio in Hand: Validating the New Teacher Professionalism*, Teachers College Press, New York.

OVPLI 2005, *Learning Innovation Strategic Plan*, Dublin City University, Ireland.

Schön, D. 1983, *The Reflective Practitioner*, Basic Books, USA.

Seldin, P. 1991, *The Teaching Portfolio*, Anker Publishing Company, USA.

Appendix 1: Critical Incident Portfolio Sample

The portfolio sample below was written by a participant in the first DCU portfolio course (May–June 2006). This participant had decided that she would probably not continue with the portfolio process, but she found herself using the critical incident model to resolve a difficult large-class situation.

Critical Incident: Lecture with 2nd Year Nursing Students

I gave a one-hour lecture on the theory of reflective practice to 230 second-year undergraduate BSc Nursing students. I came away from the session frustrated and annoyed as I felt I had not gained appropriate control of the class and was dreading the additional two hours of lectures I knew I had to deliver to them two days later. I decided to liaise with a number of my lecturing colleagues for their advice on how to manage large groups and also focused on advice relating to questioning of large groups. I was amazed to find that most of my colleagues were having the same difficulties with this particular class. One colleague suggested that I should use Gibbs' reflective cycle, which I had covered in the theory session with the students to reflect on my own experience with the class. The following paragraphs detail my reflection, which I in fact shared with this same class two days after the experience.

Gibbs Reflective Cycle (adapted to the Critical Incident Portfolio Model)

What happened?

I delivered a one-hour lecture to 230 students. The class was very noisy, requiring me to stop the lecture on more than five occasions to ask the talkers to be quiet. This meant I had to shout over the noise to ensure the people who did want to listen got value from the lecture. Also I was more of a dictator than a lecturer which is not my style as I like to be interactive and upbeat when teaching. In addition, I got a very poor response to questions I directed to the large group throughout the lecture.

What did I feel at the time?

I felt disrespected by the noisy students and was very disappointed in the behaviour of the group as a whole whilst feeling sorry for the students who did want to listen and learn. I was very frustrated by the end of the hour as I had spent four hours on a bank holiday weekend preparing the lecture and I felt very few students had benefited from my efforts. Also I was frustrated when I asked questions that nobody was answering.

What was I thinking at the time?

Honestly I was thinking, 'I wish I didn't have to continually shout over the noise as I'm getting hoarse. I should move up the aisle and stand beside the students who are talking but I can't because my voice won't project well now that it's hoarse'. Also I was thinking, 'I wish I had the courage to throw out the noisy students but I'm not sure if I'm allowed to do so under the new mandatory attendance system'. This meant I was lacking in confidence in relation to making a firm decision about ejection of students. I wished I had more experience with questioning as my strategy was not working with this group.

Evaluation: What was good/bad about the experience?

Good	Bad
• Content covered despite style of teaching	• Dictator style of teaching leading to teacher-led lecture
• Interested students asked questions at the end	• Had to shout leading to hoarseness
• Apologies offered by a number of students on behalf of the class	• Never fully controlled the noise element
• Finished within time	• Poor response to questions therefore limited assessment of student learning

Analysis: What sense can I make of the situation?

I was fully aware that the monitored attendance meant certain students feel forced to attend the lectures and making noise was their way of rebelling against the system. My personal interest in the students' education meant I was reluctant to ask students to leave. In relation to questioning in a large group I understood that students feel uncomfortable asking or answering questions in front of large groups and I know reflective practice is a difficult concept for students to grasp so they became uninterested.

Conclusion: What else could I have done?

I could have moved around the class more to encourage noisy students to interact with the larger group. I could have created more student interaction by focusing on specific students or rows of students when asking questions. I could have worn a microphone for voice projection allowing me to move away from the podium and thus control the noise better. I could have asked students to leave and recorded them as absent. I could have used the energy of the large group in a more constructive way by introducing group work into the session.

Action Plan

I plan to do all of the above when I meet this group again in two days and most importantly I plan to be myself and enjoy teaching as I always have and to be more confident in actively ejecting noisy students.

What did I do afterwards?

I met with the class for a two-hour session, part two of the reflective lecture I had been asked to cover. I spent a few minutes revising the topic and immediately incorporated a different approach to questioning. I asked the students if they would like to hear my reflection and they were really interested. I spent 20 minutes going through my reflection and then broke the class up into a number of groups asking each group to use the same reflective cycle to reflect on an event which was to be fed back to the larger group. One group reflected on how they felt following my reflection which was excellent. I felt we bonded as a group and that I had regained the respect of the group. I did not have any problems with noise on this occasion and it was an excellent lecture. The class all stood up and clapped at the end.

Reflective Teaching Portfolios for Continuous Professional Development at Trinity College Dublin

Orla Hanratty and Ciara O'Farrell
Trinity College Dublin
Orla Hanratty
orla.hanratty@tcd.ie
Ciara O'Farrell
cofarre@tcd.ie

Context and Objectives

> Portfolios have much to offer the teaching profession. When teachers carefully examine their own practices, those practices are likely to improve (Wolf 1996, p. 37).

The Centre for Academic Practice and Student Learning (CAPSL) at Trinity College Dublin (TCD) is in its third year of offering academic staff members a programme on developing reflective teaching portfolios. The programme's objective is to support academic staff within a socially constructed context to develop reflective teaching portfolios that encourage analysis and evaluation of teaching that positively impacts on student learning. This case study describes the programme's theoretical grounding and how this theory is implemented in practice.

Teaching portfolios differ enormously according to their purpose. As a means of facilitating continuing professional development, the portfolio we espouse aligns with the concept of 'praxis', which is 'informed, committed action' (Kemmis 1985, p.141). Our portfolio is substantially reflective, identifying successes, weaknesses and progress towards positive changes in teaching practice. Whereas a more summative portfolio that focuses on documenting achievements may be appropriate for promotion, awards and similar accomplishments, our programme is formative and aims to effect change through reflection. This is consistent with Nona Lyons' concept of the reflective teacher 'scaffolding' learning: 'Instead of presenting a set of courses and credits earned for the purposes of credentialing and certification, the teacher apprentice—or expert—stands at the center of his or her own learning, defining and defending the authority of a credential' (Lyons 1998, p. 5).

Origins of Programme

CAPSL's first portfolio programme ran over three academic terms in 2004 and 2005, and was designed and facilitated by Professor Nona Lyons[1]. Lyons framed portfolio development in this programme in relation to Lee Shulman's concept of the teaching portfolio as:

> a structured documented history of a (carefully selected) set of coached or mentored accomplishments substantiated by samples of student work and fully realized only through reflective writing, deliberation and serious conversation. (quoted in Lyons 1998, p. 3)

Lyons views portfolio development as the manifestation of a new professionalism in higher education, and she emphasised to us the importance of structuring our portfolio requirements to promote a coherent and long-term vision of learning and teaching development, so that the portfolios produced would be an act of theory (as advocated by Shulman) rather than an 'elaborate scrapbook'. Although we have made minor changes to the content and structure of our programme with each subsequent cohort, these values have not changed; indeed, feedback shows that key to the success of our programme is the framework promoted by Lyons: reflection, dialogue with peers and mentoring.

Portfolio Construction

Outline of Portfolio Programme and Resources

Our current programme runs for six weeks, with weekly three-hour sessions divided into two stages. As Table 1 below shows, the sessions in Stage 1 focus on identifying participant goals, reflective writing and introducing the purpose and structure of the portfolio, whereas Stage 2 consists of four sessions devoted to professional dialogue.

Table 1: Overview of TCD Portfolio Development Programme

Stage	Session
1. Constructing a Reflective Teaching Portfolio	1. The Importance of Reflection and Evaluation 2. Developing Your Portfolio through Reflective Writing
2. Analysing Teaching	Professional Dialogue as a Social Process (4 sessions)

To support their learning in the programme, participants receive a ring binder containing section dividers with sample outlines and resources. The folder contains the following sections:

- introduction
- professional history
- teaching philosophy statement
- entries
- final reflection
- evaluation techniques
- peer feedback
- resources.

The folder and its resources are designed to encourage participants to build their literacy in learning and teaching, and we support learning by providing excerpts from texts and directing participants to additional resources. The folder also provides space in which to record, store and review portfolio writing and related documents and artefacts.

The Importance of Reflection

In Session 1, we emphasise the importance of reflection, the scholarship of teaching and of supporting inquiry using evaluation. We begin with the proposition that reflecting directly on professional practice is a core element of a teacher's work (Purse & Brockbank 1998, p. 99). This underpins our belief that a reflective teaching portfolio should be more than a miscellaneous collection of artefacts or list of professional activities and accomplishments.

Therefore, we encourage participants to become critical reflectors, engaging in higher-order thinking about and analysis of their teaching. To help them generate meaningful change, we firmly emphasise an intentional, deliberate reflection in line with Gelter's notion of a conscious, active process of focused and structured thinking that is distinct from free-floating thoughts (Gelter 2003). We promote meta-cognitive knowledge and skills, encouraging those involved to become aware of their own cognitive processes— 'thinking about thinking which detaches us from immediate action, to observe how we do things, to evaluate how well we do them, and to suggest possible ways of improving' (Cowan 1998, p. 141). It is the fusion of this process and its product (the portfolio itself) that enables participants to reflect, evaluate and further develop their professional practice through a gradual unfolding of their understandings of learning and teaching (Darling 2000).

In practical terms, this means we encourage participants to reflect not only on what did or did not go well in their teaching, but also to identify reasons for its success or failure and to construct implications for practice. This process can have several results:

- a shift in the way participants identify problems and select and monitor solutions
- a new understanding or a deeper insight that leads participants to think about how something is done
- an informed decision to leave current practices as they are
- a shift in the values and attitudes that underpin participants' teaching.

To prompt this reflective process, we introduce the participants to various formative evaluation techniques (such as 'the muddiest point', the 'one-minute paper', student surveys and self-evaluation checklists,) and suggest that they use these as a way of 'hearing' the student voice and/or recording their own voices on their teaching and their students' learning.

Developing the Portfolio through Reflective Writing: The Teaching Philosophy Statement

Session 2 focuses on using reflective writing as the basis for constructing a teaching philosophy statement and portfolio entry (described below). To begin this activity, we use free writing to trigger participants' consideration of several themes, with prompts such as 'What do I believe about teaching?' and 'How do I play that out in the classroom?' We find that free writing is an effective technique for getting participants to articulate and discuss initial responses to these key questions. We then introduce our concept of a teaching philosophy statement and outline the structure.

We define the teaching philosophy statement as a personal narrative of 400 to 600 words that codifies a lecturer's sincerely held beliefs about learning and teaching, and we emphasise that it should show how theory is applied to the practice of teaching. Resources include sample teaching philosophy statements, which participants review and comment on. This prompts discussion and assists in identifying participants' personal beliefs as they emerge from their teaching contexts. Additional free-writing prompts further develop participants' initial responses by giving them opportunities to identify themes in their teaching philosophy statements as well as encouraging them to consider the central role of learners within their practice. Participants leave the session with the basis of their personal teaching philosophies, which they develop further in their own time.

Developing the Portfolio through Reflective Writing:
The Portfolio Entry

Nona Lyons describes a portfolio entry as a 'significant piece of evidence' resulting from an inquiry into learning and teaching (2002, p. 18). An entry may focus on a specific incident or an examination of an aspect of teaching. The structure we suggest our participants follow for an entry is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Suggested Structure for TCD Portfolio Entries

Title	**Name of entry (What is being explored?)**
Context	**Introduction to the teaching situation/relevant background information**
Rationale	**Why is this entry being included?**
Reflection	**An inquiry into teaching practice that documents what you are learning about your teaching and what remains to be explored**
Implications for Practice	**How has this entry changed your thinking, practice or how might it do so in the future?**
Support Data	**For example: syllabus, samples of student work, formative evaluation data (feedback, student survey,) assignments and so on**

Finally, we provide sample portfolio entries as part of the resources, to give insight into the level of analytic detail required, and the value of identifying implications for practice.

By the end of Session 2, in addition to drafts of their teaching philosophy statements, participants have written up themes that can be developed into reflective entries.

Developing Professional Dialogue as a Social Process

After a break of a week, the next four three-hour sessions (Stage 2) in the programme require each participant to analyse their teaching by presenting to the

group either their teaching philosophy statement or portfolio entry. The group is limited to a maximum of 20 participants so that each session can allow up to five participants to present their work-in-progress for ten minutes and have ten minutes of open discussion and peer feedback. Feedback forms are used to structure written comments, which can be reviewed in greater detail by the presenters after the sessions. Participants' feedback often focuses on the value of peer dialogue; not only does it broaden their views of teaching and student learning, but it makes them realise the challenges they face are often shared by others. Typical comments on the peer evaluation process include:

- *It is both educative and reassuring.*
- *Fascinating discussion.*
- *Most useful was everybody else's ideas. I was surprised that, regardless of the department/area/subject, so many of the ideas to improve teaching and learning could be applied, or perhaps adapted and then applied.*
- *It gave me the chance to apply principles to the experiences of other participants as well.*
- [It] *enabled me to contextualise my own anxieties and concerns.*

Our peer review process is based on the idea of professional dialogue. Joy Wanless (1998) notes that 'the idea of learning as a social and collaborative process sits strangely on our traditional competitive Western education system, with its emphasis on detachment and distance, particularly for academics in higher education' (p. 147). As one of our participants commented when asked to note what he found most useful about the programme: '[I] felt collegiate for a change'.

Peer review is widely accepted in the research process; indeed, it plays an integral part in validating the scholarly aspects of academic research. If we view teaching as a professional activity also, peer review is a valuable component because as scholar–teachers it gives us a means to interact with each other, not just with our students. All professionals aspire to develop intellectually and to increase their expertise. This aspiration is familiar to lecturers in their fields of academic research, but we must also recognise and support it in relation to teaching. As one participant said, 'What I would highlight is the dearth of this type of experience in TCD. It is really motivating to think about your teaching which easily gets lost in the pressure to do research'.

Brockbank, McGill and Beech (1998) define reflective learning as a 'process which *involves dialogue with others* for improvement or transformation whilst recognising the emotional, social and political context of the learner' (p. 3, our emphasis). Indeed, if one accepts the Vygotskian theory of cognitive development—that thinking begins on a social plane before it becomes internalised—then a socially collaborative environment is necessary to achieve the depth of reflection we espouse.

The social nature of reflection is often identified as particularly important in the process of reflecting on practice (Richert 1992; Russell 1993; Bolton 2001). Therefore, our programme aims to provide a forum where respectful intellectual pedagogic debate and lively reflective dialogue can take place among peers as the

basis for socially constructed learning. At the very least, as Lyons points out, this dialogue makes public what too often remains hidden from public view—debate and discussion about teaching practices and what constitutes good teaching (Lyons 1998, p. 4). Undoubtedly, this is an important outcome, but there are also other advantages to this approach. When learning is limited to the insights of the individual, it can be difficult to achieve the required detachment to look critically at *oneself*; however, dialogue and reflection with others in a supportive atmosphere that encourages constructive but honest feedback has the potential to engage the teacher in an exploration of values, beliefs and practices that goes beyond their current understanding or practices.

The outcome of this, as noted time and time again in our participant feedback, is a broadening of participants' views of the learning and teaching process. We introduce them to the main theories of learning and teaching (behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism, social constructivism), and it is the first time that many have come across these. Participants note how this shared dialogue facilitates the scholarly identification, articulation and exchange of concepts about learning, as well as strategies and devices to improve learning and teaching. Learning and discussing as a group, they begin to see why we emphasise a practice based on theory; that research into teaching can and should inform their practice; and the extent to which student learning is affected by this.

Participants value the collegial impact of the programme and emphasise the benefits of interfaculty sharing of techniques and experiences. They comment that, because their discipline areas can be quite insular, they greatly appreciate the support that comes from the diversity of faculty within the portfolio community. Not only do they learn from each other and contribute to debates on the challenges faced by their colleagues from other subject areas, they also feel the social benefits of working in a community of practice:

- *I learnt hugely from everybody else.*
- *The process was superb—great to get diverse viewpoints from colleagues in different faculties.*
- *The biggest learning was from each other.*
- *I don't feel so isolated in my career now.*

Portfolio Mentoring

The second aspect of fostering professional dialogue occurs within the mentoring relationships we set up, relationships that create opportunities for reflective and respectful critical dialogue. Our mentors come from across TCD. They can include academic developers from CAPSL, people with a strong experience in learning and teaching, or people who have won Provost Teaching Awards. Generally, however, they come from the ranks of TCD's academic staff who have previously attended a portfolio programme and/or completed a teaching portfolio.

Mentors are not presented as tutors or experts, but as peers interested in reflective practice, portfolios or learning and teaching. They act as listeners, sometimes advisors, sometimes readers. Both mentors and mentees must agree to participate in a mentoring relationship before being matched with someone (from a different

faculty or school where possible), and from then on the relationship depends on the agreed objectives of the mentoring pair.

Feedback on this aspect of the programme, from both mentors and mentees, has been consistently positive, as the comments below indicate:

- *I think this is a very worthwhile part of the course.*
- *I found the mentoring process to be of great benefit; my mentor was very helpful in viewing my work and suggesting ideas. This was following a long conversation regarding where I was coming from and going to with my teaching etc. I'm glad that I met with him.*
- *It was extremely useful to me as my mentor was very insightful as to the whole purpose of the course, and was able to give me some very useful feedback and direction on the philosophy statement I had prepared.*
- *Very useful/informative.*
- *Gave some useful insights on what the reflective process is about.*
- *Interesting also to see different perspectives on how to approach reflective process and demands of different subjects.*

Assessment of the Portfolios

One of the common concerns in evaluating portfolios is how to create a reliable and equitable assessment system, given the inevitably subjective nature of the portfolio process. Creating criteria, ensuring consistency and reviewing, even for a Pass/Fail result, can be challenging and often problematic activities. Because our Reflective Teaching Portfolio programme is formative and reflective rather than summative, we emphasise process rather than product in our evaluation. Put simply, we prefer to emphasise the evaluation of participants' teaching *through* their portfolios, rather than summatively assessing or grading the reflective teaching portfolio itself.

What we do instead is offer participants a Certificate of Completion based on a mandatory submission that consists of a written teaching philosophy statement and two portfolio entries. We view it as appropriate that the evaluation of teaching occurs through peer review, although programme instructors also offer significant formative feedback on all submitted portfolios based on the guidelines given in the introductory sessions and reinforced within the presentation sessions. We also offer broader feedback on how participants have reflected on their teaching, or how they have analysed implications for practice or any other themes presented, and we identify areas for development based on gaps or aspects that need to be explored in more detail.

Challenges in Portfolio Development

'It's so demanding. I won't have time to keep this up'

Developing a reflective teaching portfolio is undoubtedly a demanding and time-consuming process, and undoubtedly not all participants maintain their portfolios. We therefore assure participants that the outcome of this process results in opportunities for meta-reflection and collegial interactions that will help them to grow professionally. The community of practice that has arisen out of these

programmes encourages participants to meet and continue their reflective dialogue, prompting them to maintain a dynamic portfolio and to develop their interest into other areas of learning and teaching.

'I don't want to be judged by my peers'
Critically reflective learning is 'necessarily disturbing as well as potentially exciting and exacting' (McInnes, Shiels & Davis, p. 89). Participants are very welcome to showcase their individual achievements in their presentations as well as the challenges or problems they face. Most admit that this does involve an element of risk-taking, but that it is a worthwhile process, as these comments illustrate:

• *Unfortunately the culture of lecturing is that you don't ask your peers. It has been such a worthwhile process to go through this process.*
• *I learnt it is good to criticise oneself, and to know that I am not always correct.*
• *I was dreading presenting in front of my peers but the process has empowered me as an individual.*

'I don't want to be seen to be judging a peer'
Building a peer community to give constructive feedback is one of our greatest challenges. Undoubtedly, it takes time to build trust among the participants so that they feel comfortable giving and receiving critically constructive and honest feedback. Whereas some participants comment on how positive it is that the environment is 'safe for reflection', others note that the feedback from fellow participants is 'too nice'. In an attempt to counter this, we emphasise this challenge to each group before each presentation session, and have altered the peer feedback forms to prompt more debate. Nevertheless, participants in a recent programme noted that although the oral feedback worked well, the written feedback was still 'too nice' and less useful. It seems we have not yet found the right balance between creating a safe environment for reflection, and achieving a truly honest, critical reflection. A still more dialectic approach is needed.

Having said this, however, our most recent programme had only ten participants, and for the first time reflective, constructive feedback seemed to hit the desired pitch. Participants followed a simple 'feedback sandwich' approach initially, but after the first few presentations this was absorbed into a less formal discussion. Notably, all participants commented on the positive impact constructive feedback made, but when asked how they would feel giving such feedback in part of a group of 20, they unanimously said that it would be more difficult. According to these participants, the size of this particular group allowed a sense of trust to quickly develop. Therefore, we plan to divide our next cohort of 20 into two groups of ten (each group attending every second week), and to evaluate how this works.

'I can't write reflectively'
A challenging task for the participants in our programme's multidisciplinary groups has been moving from descriptive writing to reflective writing, particularly within the short time frame of six weeks. Based on feedback from participants, we now explore Moon's (2004) model of reflective writing and have introduced activities on levels of reflective writing. We have also prepared sample case studies that match the four

levels of reflective writing defined by Hatton and Smith (1995), which participants review and discuss in terms of depth of reflection. These initiatives assist participants in learning to write reflectively.

Outcomes of Portfolio Development at TCD

At the individual level, participants who have completed the programme have noted a variety of unexpected outcomes. Although not an intended outcome, several participants have been nominated for Provost Teaching Awards and two have actually won them since completing the programme ('the programme was very influential in this'; 'it helped enormously in my application'.) Others have used their teaching philosophy statements in applying for promotions and have commented on how discussion of educational theory, curriculum design, assessment and teaching methodologies has helped them in this process.

Many participants comment that participation in the programme has increased their confidence in their approach to teaching. Others focus on how the programme has stimulated development of their teaching in specific areas:

- *I now write learning outcomes for every lecture.*
- *I consider the whole design of the courses I teach—from aims to teaching strategies and assessment methods.*
- *I now seek feedback from my peers and students and value others evaluating my teaching.*

It is particularly warming when participants remark that they have developed as reflective practitioners; that they will continue to inquire into their teaching; and that they will strive to better balance their teaching and research.

At an institutional level, the most valuable unexpected outcome has been the evolution of a dynamic, vibrant portfolio community of practice (Wenger 1998). Keen to encourage this, CAPSL provides regular opportunities for those interested to meet and continue professional dialogue not just on reflective teaching portfolios but on many aspects of learning and teaching. Recently, the community met to discuss future developments and proposed the following:

- a series of lunchtime mini-presentations to discuss latest portfolio entries or teaching philosophy statements
- research on ways to encourage publishing about teaching
- presentation of papers spearheading scholarship of teaching
- presentation of papers at conferences
- creation of a booklet of portfolio entries/experiences
- creation of a database of portfolio entries and teaching philosophy statements.

Conclusions and Plans for Future Portfolio Development

Professional development in the area of learning and teaching may take many forms. In the case of CAPSL and TCD, it may mean:

- becoming an active player in the evolving reflective teaching portfolio community of practice
- becoming a mentor to future reflective teaching portfolio cohorts or attending learning and teaching workshops
- joining a reading circle or attending a teaching collaborative session
- presenting a topic for discussion or a paper on an aspect of learning and teaching
- developing one's reading on learning and teaching, educational theory or instructional practice
- attending an educational conference, undertaking educational research within the classroom or contributing to literature in the scholarship of teaching.

The reflective teaching portfolio is often just the first step in a valuable and rewarding process supported by CAPSL at TCD.

References

Bolton, G. 2001, *Reflective Practice: Writing and Professional Development*, Sage Publications, London.

Brockbank, A., McGill, I. & Beech, N. (eds) 1998, *Reflective Learning in Practice*, Gower Publishing, Hants UK.

Cowan, J. 1998, *On Becoming an Innovative University Teacher: Reflection in Action*, SRHE & Open University Press, Buckingham.

Darling, L.F. 2000, 'Portfolio as practice: The narratives of emerging teachers', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 107–121.

Gelter, H. 2003, 'Why is reflective thinking uncommon?', *Reflective Practice*, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 338–342.

Hatton, N. & Smith, D. 1995, 'Reflection in teacher education: Towards definition and implementation', *Teacher and Teaching Education*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 33–49.

Kemmis, S. 1985, 'Action research and the politics of reflection, in *Reflection: Turning Experience into Learning*, eds D. Boud, R. Keogh & D. Walker, Kogan Page, London, pp. 139-163

Lyons, N. 1998, *With Portfolio in Hand: Validating the New Teacher Professionalism*, Teachers College Press, New York.

Lyons, N. 2002, 'The Project: Interrogation, documentation, and representing the scholarship of teaching through a reflective portfolio process', in *Advancing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning through a Reflective Portfolio Process*, eds N. Lyons, A. Hyland & N. Ryan, University College Cork, pp. 15-24.

McInnes, P., Shiels A. & Davis, S. 1998, 'IMPACT at thus plc', in *Reflective Learning in Practice*, eds A. Brockbank, I. McGill & N. Beech, Gower Publishing, Hants UK, pp. 85–92.

Moon, J. 2004, *A Handbook of Reflective Experiential Learning: Theory and Practice*, Routledge, London.

Purse, N. & Brockbank, A. 1998, 'e-learning at Kodak', in *Reflective Learning in Practice*, eds A. Brockbank, I. McGill & N. Beech, Gower Publishing, Hants UK, pp. 93–102.

Richert, A. 1992, 'Voice and power in teaching and learning to teach', in *Reflective Teacher Education: Cases and Critiques*, ed. L Valli, State University of New York Press, Albany NY, pp. 187–197.

Russell, T. 1993, 'Critical attributes of a reflective teacher: Is agreement possible?', in *Conceptualizing Reflection in Teacher Development*, eds J. Calderhead & P. Gates, Falmer Press, London, pp. 144–153.

Wanless, J. 1998, 'The Salford Cathedral Centre', in *Reflective Learning in Practice*, eds A. Brockbank, I. McGill & N. Beech, Gower Publishing, Hants UK, pp. 140–149.

Wenger, E, 1998, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*, Cambridge University Press.

Wolf, K, 1996, 'Developing an Effective Teaching Portfolio', in *Educational Leadership*, Vol 53, no 6.

----
[1] The programme was administered by Mr. Robert Kennelly who, along with Ciara O'Farrell, supported Nona Lyons in facilitating the programme, pp34-37.

Chapter 8

Theory and Practice in the Development of Teaching Portfolios at NUI Galway [1]

Timothy Murphy and Iain MacLaren
National University of Ireland, Galway
Timothy Murphy
timothy.murphy@nuigalway.ie
Iain MacLaren
iain.maclaren@nuigalway.ie

Introduction

Initiated in 2004 as part of a collaboration with the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, the teaching portfolio pilot programme at NUI Galway has proven to be popular. This is partly because portfolios are now required for promotion applications, teaching excellence awards and postgraduate qualifications in third-level teaching. The model we have developed to support these applications is highly pragmatic, with the aim being for staff to readily document their experience and highlight their primary approaches to teaching and learning. Portfolios can be an important tool in the development of a reflective practitioner approach to teaching, so we have also paid particular attention to their ability to develop a focus on teaching among those staff who perceive themselves primarily as academic researchers. The pilot study has revealed several practical and theoretical issues that must be addressed if schemes such as ours are to become more than a mere administrative obligation.

Context

Teaching portfolios are now in widespread use in the higher education sector in Ireland, having gained a foothold in the promotions and awards frameworks for academic staff since the early 2000s. In early initiatives at UCC (Lyons, Hyland & Ryan 2002), portfolios were first introduced as a means of encouraging the development of both the scholarship of teaching (Boyer 1990) and approaches to teaching development based on reflective practice (Schön 1983). Portfolio submissions have since become required in applications for promotion to senior lectureships and/or teaching excellence award schemes in most Irish universities (MacLaren 2005).

The use of teaching portfolios for administrative purposes such as promotion or award applications is based on the rationale that, whereas it is relatively easy to provide evidence of research activity (for example, refereed papers and research grant income), effective teaching and learning are far more difficult to measure. Portfolios can partly address this challenge by providing a more or less standardised structure that potentially allows comparison between candidates.

Of course, an administrative standpoint such as this is anathema to the academic development community. For this community, the primary purpose of teaching portfolios is to:

- encourage teaching staff to reflect actively on their teaching practice
- challenge preconceptions about the nature of teaching in higher education
- in the longer term, develop an interest in a critical and scholarly approach to this aspect of their academic practice.

Many hope that this approach will eventually raise the status of teaching, so that senior university managers, state funding agencies and other authorities view it as equal to traditional disciplinary research. Whether such a goal will be achieved, and indeed whether portfolios are the means of achieving it, are questions beyond the scope of this chapter. These are, however, themes to which we shall return implicitly throughout.

Since the mid-1990s, many new academic teachers in Ireland have necessarily focused their interests on research, often in line with the interests of senior university managers. Permanent positions and the likelihood of promotion depend on published research output and significant income (particularly in science, engineering and medicine). Many new academics perceive teaching as an additional, unavoidable burden—or it can feel this way, given the 'research hothouse' context in which they find themselves. Moreover, universities have developed specialist research centres and institutes, funding has been provided to attract leaders in the field to relocate to Ireland, and the term 'fourth-level Ireland' has attained common currency.

In all this rapid development, it is sometimes hard to identify exactly the position of 'third-level' teaching and learning. Where stands a lecturer whose primary commitment is to teaching excellence? How can teaching activity not only be valued by individual academics (including those who are research driven) but also unquestionably integrated into 'routine' academic practice? As we can see from the experience of other countries, there are dangers in separating teaching from research to the extent of having different staff responsible for each. Indeed, there are links between research and teaching that have not yet been fully exploited so such an environment of separation, it is felt by many, would lead to a poorer undergraduate learning experience.

We face many challenges, therefore, in contemporary higher education, and it is important to realise that this is the context in which teaching portfolios have appeared. As a result, there is significant tension between their uses as evaluative or managerial tools and as instruments of change and reflective practice. Is there a way in which we can bridge this gap and use portfolios to encourage and promote the idea of an academic practice that spans teaching, research, community and wider scholarly activity?

The Case of NUI Galway: A Pragmatic Approach
At NUI Galway, our approach to these issues has been to accept, pragmatically, the need for a means of documenting teaching activity for career progression, while also exploring the possibility that such documentation could trigger a more critically reflective approach to individual professional practice. In addition, we hope that this will lead to a heightened awareness of the benefits of an organised, structured and

planned approach to teaching and learning—that is, a scholarly approach like that used in research.

We started from the pessimistic assumption that many staff required to produce portfolios might not be as comfortable with reflection on, and evaluation of, teaching as they are with research. Of course, we knew that many excellent teachers apply for promotion also, and it was equally important to give them an opportunity to document their commitment and success. We recognised, however, that the formal documentation of teaching activity is likely to be a new experience for both groups. An additional consideration was that, although staff undertaking formal professional, postgraduate qualifications in teaching and learning (we offer a Postgraduate Certificate, Diploma and Masters) construct and develop portfolios over the duration of their programmes, other staff were unlikely to have the time to build something as substantial.

In the next two sections, we discuss:

- the theoretical considerations underpinning our portfolio scheme, which mean that it can be used a scholarly framework for teaching and learning
- the portfolio's objectives and construction, with particular emphasis on its ability to be used for a range of academic purposes—evaluative, reflective and scholarly.

Theoretical Considerations

Three key areas of theory underpin the broader aims of our evolving teaching portfolio scheme:

- critical reflectivity
- cognitive re-investment
- the research-teaching nexus.

Critical Reflectivity

The central role of reflectivity in the teaching portfolio process is acknowledged in the literature (Andresen 2000; Centra 1994; Knapper & Wright 2001; Kreber 2002; McLean & Bullard 2000; Moon 2000; Schön 1983) and is worth some detailed consideration here.

Critical reflectivity involves opening up knowledge claims 'to proper intellectual challenge, of the kind one would apply to any proposition in the field of research or theory in one's discipline' (Andresen 2000, p. 143). Teaching portfolios may be particularly appropriate for accessing such knowledge claims because their construction requires reflection on 'what one teaches, how one teaches, why one teaches that way, how effective that is, and, if necessary or desired, effectively communicating that to others' (Babin, Shaffer & Tomas 2002). Such reflection is perceived as invaluable in enabling practitioners to record personal development and expertise in a dynamic and systematic way (Brown 2000). It enables us 'to make our pedagogical lives conversationally available: debatable, accountable, evaluable' (van Manen 1991, p. 19).

We can use Schön's description of reflection-in-action (the reflection that occurs concurrently with teaching) from *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* (1987) to understand how critical reflectivity might occur. Schön (1987) argues that it is sometimes possible through observation of and reflection on our actions to make a description of the tacit knowledge implicit in them (p. 15). Indeed, he wonders how practitioners are to learn wisdom except by reflection on practice dilemmas that call for it. He also states that 'just as we should inquire into the manifestations of professional artistry, so we should also examine the various ways in which people actually acquire it' (Schön 1987, p. 14). Brookfield (1995) is also helpful here:

> professional education has taken a wrong turn in seeing the role of the practitioner as interpreter, translator, and implementer of theory produced by academic thinkers and researchers … instead … practitioners, including teachers, must research their own work sites. This involves their recognizing and generating their own contextually sensitive theories of practice (p. 215).

Portfolios can, of course, be used as part of this process. Moreover, as McLean and Bullard (2000) point out, portfolios:

> which are produced in contexts in which critical reflective practice, authenticity, and serious engagement with ideas about the teaching/learning relationship are promoted may have the potential both to stimulate teachers to articulate and improve their practice and to be a contribution to understanding the nature of the formation of professional university teachers (p. 94).

Cognitive Re-investment

McAlpine et al. (1999) build on Schön's concepts of reflection-in-action (reflection concurrent with practice) and reflection-on-action (the retrospective analysis of events). Focusing on the reflective processes of six university staff who were recognised for their teaching excellence, this study aimed to develop better insight into how successful instructors go about improving their teaching[2]. The results of their study indicated:

> that instructors first wanted to reach a certain stage of competence in e.g. performance elements of instruction, and then, when that is under control, continue to develop competence but with the focus on increasingly complex aspects of their learning about teaching, such as their understanding of student learning. In other words, they establish priorities and continue to work at developing aspects of their expertise when they are ready (C. Weston 2007, personal communication, 2 February).

A continuous willingness to change teaching approaches to provide an adequate level of challenge for maximum enjoyment of teaching was evident in all the participants. McAlpine et al. (1999) refer to this as 'cognitive re-investment', and it is identified as a hallmark of teachers who are recognised for their excellence. Such continuous effort at instructional problem-solving is characteristic of what Kreber (2002) describes as *expert professionalism*: 'it is precisely by identifying, analysing, and solving problems that experts, over time, develop problem solving strategies that are *even more effective*' (p. 13). Teaching portfolios have the potential to make this

'expert knowledge' more publicly accessible to the academic community in general, which is likely to be particularly useful for those who are embarking on academic careers.

It might be said that critical reflectivity and cognitive reinvestment characterise the best kinds of disciplinary research as well as the activities of experts in a range of professional fields. Applied to teaching and learning, they offer a way of understanding this aspect of academic life as fully professionalised and academically credible, rather than as a mere add-on to the 'real' academic work of research. Thus these two concepts can empower academic staff as dynamic change agents in the reshaping of teaching practice, the development of curriculum and in nurturing innovation and reform in student learning and assessment. This might be particularly important in research-led institutions such as NUI Galway, where the concepts can be used to extend the portfolio concept towards bridging the gap between teaching and research.

The Research-Teaching Nexus

Critical reflectivity is pivotal to the process of constructing a teaching portfolio, an activity which can also help to stimulate the process of 'cognitive re-investment'. The end result could lead to a transformed understanding of the relationship between teaching and research. Such a transformed understanding is identified by Boyer (1990) as one of the most important obligations now facing US universities and colleges, which need 'to break out of the tired old teaching *versus* research debate and define, in more creative ways, what it means to be a scholar' (p. xii).

Some suggest that the conflict between teaching and research may be resolved by universities treating learning as they do research—that is, as consisting always of not yet wholly solved problems. Thus teachers and students, as well as researchers, are all always in research mode (Elton 2001; Jenkins in press; Neumann 1994). Indeed, in this view, teachers and students are researchers, and researchers are learners. Also critical to this effort is imparting to learners 'a questioning critical approach to knowledge, as well as a positive attitude to learning' (Neumann 1994, p. 327). This position is consistent with the activities and attitudes noted above as characteristic of critical reflectivity and cognitive reinvestment in teaching and learning, as it is, of course, with traditional disciplinary research.

Viewed in this way, teaching, learning and research might be seen as complementary aspects of an inclusive academic practice, which can be captured in, reflected on and evaluated using a teaching portfolio. Such a portfolio might represent a scholarly attitude towards teaching since it by necessity would require not just an introspective reflection on individual practice but also the ability to see this within the wider context of the published research literature on teaching and learning. Within such an approach, teaching practice might also benefit from the adoption of the cultural norms of research-related activity such as collective endeavour (in contrast to the often isolated, individual responsibility that characterises much of university teaching), peer review, experimentation, evaluation and continuous development.

Portfolio Objectives and Construction

After reviewing portfolio models currently in use across Ireland, the USA, the UK and Australia, we adopted that of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst (Mues & Sorcinelli 2000), with whom we have several formal and informal partnerships. The Amherst model is attractive because it is a brief document that requires twelve to fifteen hours to compile and focuses on the practical rather than theoretical side of teaching practice. In other words, we feel that it is accessible to the widest range of academic staff and, because it is not overburdened with educational theory, it can be easily constructed by academics from widely different disciplinary backgrounds. Furthermore, this simplicity of structure is more likely to lead to a set of documents that are comparable and well suited to promotions and awards purposes.

Considered from an educational development standpoint, the document is not quite an artefact of scholarship or of deeply reflective practice, but it does provide a base model, or point of reference, from which these more challenging activities can be developed. Such a trajectory is consistent with the findings of McAlpine et al. (1999), who contend that 'once issues of performance are handled early in one's career, professors will tend to address more complex issues like method and their relation to students' learning' (p. 121). As most members of academic staff produce such portfolios, we will be able, for example, to more clearly identify professional development needs and locate local opportunities for targeted support. We hope we will also be able to encourage a cultural shift towards critical reflectivity in the institution, which is 'an approach to practice by which we question what (the assumptions or presupposition) we typically take for granted. Questioning means to put our assumptions to a test; to examine the validity of the claims to knowing (about teaching, learning and assessment) that we make' (C. Kreber 2007, personal communication, 10 January).

The portfolio document itself has six main sections as listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The NUI Galway Portfolio

Section	Content
1. Teaching experience and responsibilities	Comprehensive summary, including details on class sizes, hours, level and so on.
2. Teaching philosophy and goals	Beliefs about student learning and the role of the teacher, encompassing subject-specific dimensions and ultimate goals for students.
3. Teaching methods and strategies	Description of the range of teaching methods used, demonstrating, where possible, their alignment with the philosophy statement.
4. Evaluation of teaching and learning	Reflection on the effectiveness of teaching and the extent of student engagement and learning. This requires evidence from at least three sources/methods.
5. Activities undertaken to improve teaching	This includes a description of courses, workshops and professional development activities as well as reflections on teaching evaluation and how such has led to changes in practice or approach. An indication of awareness of some of the literature in the field of teaching and learning is also appropriate.
6. Goals, challenges and plans for the future	What are the teacher's intentions over the coming years for teaching development and what challenges might arise? Contextual issues such as constraints imposed by departmental or institutional policy can be raised here. To what extent are there conflicts between the different academic roles—teacher, researcher, administrator? Are there ways of reconciling these? What are the teacher's personal, professional goals as a teacher and more broadly as an 'academic'?

The statement of teaching philosophy is often one of the most challenging aspects for those unfamiliar with portfolios and whose primary interests have tended to lie in research. As we indicate in our *Guidelines for Preparing a Teaching Portfolio* (Centre for Excellence in Learning & Teaching 2004), however, this statement is the foundation on which the portfolio is built and acts as a key demonstration of reflection on practice. Staff enrolled in our postgraduate programmes in teaching and learning in higher education have obvious opportunities to discuss and develop principal concepts of learning, on the basis of which they can construct their teaching philosophy statements. For other staff, support for the development of the statement is available through participation in a series of informal seminars ('Conversations in Teaching and Learning') or through an individual consultation with CELT staff. In the pilot period for this portfolio model (academic years 2004–2005, 2005–2006), over 30 staff used this individual consultation service, in addition to 24 who developed portfolios as part of the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching & Learning.

The gathering and analysis of evaluation data on individual teaching is also of crucial importance, and a portfolio that lacks such analysis is of little or no value. We are open-minded about the details of evaluation data, but we do make some recommendations about appropriate methods. These include:

- feedback questionnaires (and we advise on appropriate models/templates)
- peer observation (CELT can facilitate peer-matching and provides guidelines and feedback forms (based on the approach used at St Andrews (St Andrews Learning and Teaching: Innovation, Review and Enhancement 2004))
- our Grouped Student Feedback scheme.

The Grouped Student Feedback scheme has run for over five years at NUI Galway and is offered as a confidential, individualised service for any member of academic staff. It is facilitated by an external consultant who will meet with the students in a particular class at mid-semester and form them into small groups to identify some of the strengths and potential areas for improvement in the teaching practice of the lecturer concerned. A report is then produced and its findings discussed with that lecturer, who is guaranteed complete confidentiality at all stages in the process. This has been a very popular scheme and to date over 200 staff have participated.

Challenges and Critical Issues in Portfolio Development

In a pilot programme run from 2004 to 2006, over 50 academic staff at NUI Galway developed portfolios according to the Amherst model. Since then, new University regulations have been passed, requiring all applicants for promotion to submit such a document. Several challenges and issues arise in the use of portfolios, many of which have been discussed in the literature and others which have arisen from our own experience. In the rest of this chapter, we highlight some of these critical issues, draw attention to the already extant international literature on these topics and make some recommendations for future development, identifying where teaching portfolios are best situated in the spectrum of professional development activities.

The critical issues and challenges that have emerged for us at NUI Galway concern how best to develop:

- *clarity*—that is, a shared understanding of what constitutes 'good teaching' and acceptance of the scholarship of teaching
- clear and accepted *criteria* for assessing or evaluating portfolios
- *trust* in the process by which portfolios are constructed and reviewed.

Clarity: What Constitutes 'Good' Teaching?

Casey, Gentile and Bigger (1997) acknowledge that 'there are real variations in teaching quality in different courses, between different subject areas, and within subject areas' (p. 462). The traditional, somewhat instrumentalist, approach has been to evaluate teaching quality through the use of standardised student feedback questionnaires. The efficacy of these has been challenged and debated extensively in the literature and it is clear that, although a well-designed questionnaire can be effective at revealing specific issues in a particular class, large-scale deployment of a

generic form as part of routine practice does not by itself lead to critical reflection; neither does it necessarily facilitate a developmental approach to curricular reform.

This is where teaching portfolios can be of potential use. As Babin, Shaffer and Tomas (2002) claim, the true benefit of teaching portfolios 'is open discussion about teaching and what constitutes *good* teaching' (p. 38). Cleary and Stuhldrehe (1997) argue that they have the potential to 'showcase' college teaching as a unique form of scholarly inquiry that can be identified, made public and evaluated.

We need, however, to be clear about our definitions and the perceived purposes of teaching portfolios and other aspects of academic staff development. Kreber (2002) recommends that 'the meaning of terms such as expert teacher, excellent teacher and scholar of teaching needs to be articulated more precisely to show the ways in which these concepts differ and overlap' (p. 164). Indeed, in many discussions of portfolios there is a tendency to conflate these terms. Moreover, it might well be true that the process of compiling and updating portfolios has the potential to catalyse the 'scholarship of teaching'; however, it does not always—or even often—work out this way in practice.

It is also important to be aware of context. As Healey (2000) notes, there is an important distinction between the scholarship of teaching in the North American and UK contexts. In North America, the recognition of and rewards for scholarship of teaching are considered important. In the UK, however, this is less important than the relationship between research and teaching.

At NUI Galway, many lecturers receive excellent student feedback and evaluation indicating that they are highly effective in the classroom, with some recognition being offered via the annual President's Awards for Teaching Excellence. This does not necessarily mean that they are engaged in scholarly activity in relation to their teaching practice. Can a teaching portfolio still accommodate and present the achievements of such teachers on an equal footing with those of scholarly teachers? Should it do so? Should the definition of 'good' teaching ultimately incorporate a scholarly approach to teaching?

We agree with Kreber's (2002) contention that 'effective teaching is linked to learning about the discipline, learning about how students learn, and learning about the wisdom of practice' (p. 157). Although 'scholarly' in nature, this does not by any means imply that all lecturing staff should be, for example, contributing towards the literature in the *scholarship of teaching*. Some academic staff developers miss this subtle, but important, distinction. The danger is that, while they are raising the status of teaching-related endeavours, they run the risk of alienating those academic staff who prioritise research in their own discipline, ironically potentially strengthening the research–teaching divide. A comprehensive portfolio scheme should embrace all academic staff regardless of their individual interests, while ensuring that the overall quality of teaching and learning is raised. In our own institution, in which there has been a rapid and substantial increase in research activity over the last ten years, there is a strong desire to ensure that the fundamental institutional goal of a 'rounded' academic prevails and that we do not end up with

'teaching only' and 'research only' staff, as has been the trend in some institutions outside Ireland.

Criteria for Assessing or Evaluating Portfolios

The development of clear and transparent criteria for assessing and evaluating [3] portfolios is a major prerequisite for the successful implementation of an institutionally embedded teaching portfolio scheme (Baume & Yorke 2002; Burns 1999; Casey, Gentile & Bigger 1997; Dryud 1997; Felder & Brent 1996; Knapper & Wright 2001; Ross et al. 1995; Tigelaar et al. 2005). Dyrud (1997), for example, concludes that this is one of the 'thorniest issues'. Burns (1999, p. 132) agrees, acknowledging Centra's (1994) claim that, although institutions are increasingly accepting teaching portfolios as an important part of systematic evaluation procedures, their validity and usefulness as an evaluation method is not yet certain. Indeed, Richlin and Manning (1996) note that many programmes that use portfolios to make decisions about promotion or tenure seldom have guidelines that apply explicit criteria to those portfolios.

When considering this issue, it is vital to distinguish between the use of portfolios for *summative* (for example, comparing candidates for an award, promotion or tenure) and *formative* (that is, developmental) purposes. As Centra (1994) indicates, when a portfolio is developed and presented for summative purposes, it is reasonable to expect that teachers will tend only to provide positive examples of their professional effectiveness. In contrast, if the portfolio is being used as a means of individual professional development, it has more value if it contains reflection on critical incidents in teaching practice and how the teacher could have done better.

As Ross et al. (1995) point out, the reliability and integrity of the evaluation process will suffer if insufficient attention is paid to questions about *content* in portfolios. From an analysis of 73 award-winning portfolios[4] prepared at the University of Florida for the Teaching Improvement Program, they conclude that a common framework to facilitate the systematic presentation of data about the nature, quantity and quality of teaching is feasible. Their model includes a standard set of acceptable contents: standardised information on institutional context; a 'teaching statement'; evidence of recent efforts to improve teaching; and, where claims of excellence are being made, the requirement for multiple sources of evidence. Explanatory statements describing the evidence base and limits on the required amounts of content are also deemed essential.

A significant difficulty in evaluating many teaching portfolios arises because of the richness and uniqueness of their contents (Tigelaar et al. 2005), which often necessitates interpretation and the consideration of the individual context of each submission. Moss (1994) has drawn attention to the potential unreliability of portfolios as forms of 'assessment', with serious problems identified in terms of consistency, objectivity and comparability, particularly where scores or ratings are generated. Knapper and Wright (2001) express concern about trying 'to force portfolios into a quantitative paradigm when one of their strengths is providing rich qualitative data that will be different from person to person' (p. 27).

This means that those who serve on promotion and award panels must be appropriately trained. With the rapid acceptance of the portfolio as a legitimate evidence base on which to make selection decisions, such panels have a moral and professional obligation to be fully aware of the issues in the construction and interpretation of such materials. Without such training, it is hard to see how the issues of 'objectivity' (insofar as that is possible in practice) and consistency can be handled in a way that ensures goodwill and trust.

At NUI Galway, as with many other institutions in Ireland and the UK, portfolios were implemented in advance of such specialist training and it is crucial that such a deficit is now addressed as a priority. The need for such specialist training is also identified by Seldin (2004), who cautions that 'whoever serves as portfolio mentor (or coach) must have a wide knowledge of procedures and current instruments to document effective teaching' (p. 5; see also Felder 1996; Tigelaar et al. 2005).

Trust

Trust is a critical issue because, as Wright (1999) remarks, 'candidates must know that their teaching records will get more than summary treatment and that the positive evidence contained in a teaching portfolio can lead to tangible rewards' (p. 97).

In other words, there is a distinct onus on institutions to demonstrate that portfolio development will lead to promotion and/or teaching awards and that this is not just another empty exercise in managerialism, or another symptom of the 'audit culture' that has been spawned in certain national education systems over the last decade. To this end, institutions must ensure confidentiality, provide opportunities for feedback, offer constructive support and encourage good practice, so that there is the perception of genuine value in the exercise.

As described earlier, at NUI Galway we have provided a confidential feedback system to individual academic staff on the students' perceptions of their teaching, which has proven very popular. In particular, its strength has been the trust that has been established between the independent consultant and the individual members of staff. When moving into a more formalised and potentially more public framework, great care must be taken to ensure that this trust is maintained and that there is satisfactory, mutually agreed, resolution of the issue of appropriate disclosure and ownership of evaluative feedback. This issue is currently being pursued via a joint project between those responsible for academic staff development, the Quality Office and Human Resources.

Learning from Experience : NUI Galway Pilot

Informal feedback from documents submitted by participants in our teaching portfolio pilot demonstrated convincingly that the model we have adopted is realistic and suitable for a range of purposes, including the University's quality processes. With this in mind, we have since adapted the format to provide strong recommendations about specific content. This means that, as the portfolio concept

becomes embedded in the institution, a more or less standardised template provides a basis on which staff can share experience and ideas and perhaps leads towards the construction of collectively produced 'course portfolios'. At the moment, NUIG's Review Process for Academic Units includes a 'self-assessment': 'a critical evaluation by the academic, administrative, support and technical staff, and students of the teaching, research, administrative and other activities in the Unit' (Quality Office 2007). Course portfolios may in time become a more appropriate tool for NUIG's Review Process than this 'self-assessment', which is produced only every five years for summative purposes and is not therefore a 'living document'.

The NUIG teaching portfolio also requires evaluation data, which is mandated by the Review Process. As noted above, staff are advised on the range of evaluation methods available locally, encouraged to use at least three approaches and supported in applying these approaches. Obtaining and providing evidence of evaluation and a reflective response (for example, changed teaching strategies or curriculum design) has been one of the two principal areas in which staff have required significant assistance, and it continues to represent a challenge for us. Nevertheless, there is now an increased focus on teaching evaluation at NUIG, something that had hitherto been underdeveloped in the institution (at least at a systematic, strategic level).

Conclusion

We have drawn attention to some of the primary issues in the use of teaching portfolios to demonstrate practice in higher education. It is, we suggest, vitally important to consider seriously the scope of the teaching portfolio as a means of facing up to the perceived dichotomy between research and teaching. If undertaken in a supportive environment (aided by appropriate mentoring or similar professional development structures), a scholarly, research-oriented approach to teaching and critical self-examination can lead to change in practice and a potential decrease in the stress caused by the tension between research and teaching. Greater confidence in one's teaching and an ability to adapt approaches to circumstances will increase the likelihood that a teacher demonstrates the 'artistry' or 'reflection-in-action' of which Schön speaks—that is, the hallmark of a professional.

References

Andresen, L.W. 2000, 'A useable, trans-disciplinary conception of scholarship', *Higher Education Research and Development*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 137–153.

Babin, L.A., Shaffer, T.R. & Tomas, A.M. 2002, 'Teaching portfolios: Uses and development', *Journal of Marketing Education*, vol. 24, no. 1, p. 35–42.

Baume, D. & Yorke, M. 2002, 'The reliability of assessment by portfolio on a course to develop and accredit teachers in higher education', *Studies in Higher Education*, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 7–25.

Boyer, E. 1990, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Princeton NJ.

Brookfield, S. 1995, *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Brown, S. 2000, 'The Institute for Learning and Teaching and UK approaches to accrediting teaching: Looking to the future', *Medical Teacher*, vol. 22, no. 5, pp. 513–516.

Burns, C.W. 1999, 'Teaching portfolios and the evaluation of teaching in higher education: Confident claims, questionable research support', *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 131–142.

Casey, J.R., Gentile P. & Bigger S.W. 1997, 'Teaching appraisal in higher education: An Australian perspective', *Higher Education*, vol. 34, no. 4, pp. 459–482.

Centra, J.A. 1994, 'The use of the teaching portfolio and student evaluations for summative evaluation', *Journal of Higher Education*, vol. 65, no. 5, pp. 555–570.

Centre for Excellence in Learning & Teaching 2004, *Preparing a Teaching Portfolio*, NUI Galway. Available from: <http://www.nuigalway.ie/celt/documents/teachingportfolio.pdf> [1 February 2007].

Cleary, M.J. & Stuhldrehe, W.L. 1997, 'Using teaching portfolios to enhance teaching effectiveness in health education', *American Journal of Health Studies*, vol. 13, no. 1, p. 33–43.

Dyrud, M.A. 1997, 'Portfolio assessment for promotion and tenure: Three assessment challenges', in Proceedings of the 27th *Annual Frontiers in Education Conference*, eds D. Budney & G. Bjedov, ASEE/IEEE Pittsburg PA. Available from: <http://fie.engrng.pitt.edu/fie97/papers/1426.pdf> [1 December 2006].

Elton, L. 2001, 'Research and teaching: Conditions for a positive link [1]', *Teaching in Higher Education*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 43–56.

Felder, R.M. & Brent, R. 1996, 'If you've got it, flaunt it: Uses and abuses of teaching portfolios', *Chemical Engineering Education*, vol. 30, no. 3, pp. 188–189.

Healey, M. 2000, 'Developing the scholarship of teaching in higher education: A discipline-based approach', *Higher Education Research and Development*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 169–189.

Jenkins, A. In press, 'Critiquing excellence: Undergraduate research for all students', in *International Perspectives on Teaching Excellence in Higher Education*, ed. A. Skelton, Routledge, London.

References

Knapper, C.W. & Wright, A. 2001, 'Using portfolios to document good teaching: Premises, purposes, practices', *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, no. 88, pp. 19–29.

Kreber, C. 2002, 'Teaching excellence, teaching expertise, and the scholarship of teaching', *Innovative Higher Education*, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 5–23.

Lyons, N., Hyland, A. & Ryan, N. (eds) 2002, *Advancing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning through a Reflective Portfolio Process*, University College Cork.

MacLaren, I. 2005, 'New trends in academic staff development: Reflective journals, teaching portfolios, accreditation and professional development', in *Emerging Issues in the Practice of University Learning and Teaching*, eds G. O'Neill, S. Moore & B. McMullin, All Ireland Society for Higher Education, Dublin, pp. 111–118.

McAlpine, L., Weston, C., Beauchamp, J., Wiseman, C. & Beauchamp, C. 1999, 'Building a metacognitive model of reflection', *Higher Education*, vol. 37, no. 2, pp. 105–131.

McLean, M. & Bullard, J.E. 2000, 'Becoming a university teacher: Evidence from teaching portfolios (how academics learn to teach)', *Teacher Development*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 79–101.

Moon, J.A. 2000, *Reflection in Learning & Professional Development: Theory & Practice*, 2nd edn, RoutledgeFalmer, London.

Moss, P.M. 1994, 'Can there be validity without reliability?', Educational Research, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 5–12.

Mues, F. & Sorcinelli, M.D. 2000, 'Preparing a teaching portfolio', Center for Teaching, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Available from: <http://www.umass.edu/cft/publications/teachingportfolio.pdf> [1 December 2006].

Neumann, R. 1994, 'The teaching–research nexus: Applying a framework to university students' learning experiences', *European Journal of Education*, vol. 29, no. 3, pp. 323–338.

Quality Office 2007, *The Review Process for Academic Units*, National University of Ireland, Galway. Available from: http://www.nuigalway.ie/quality/rev_academic_process.html [1April 2007].

Richlin, L. & Manning, B. 1996, 'Using portfolios to document teaching excellence', *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, no. 65, pp. 65–70.

Ross, D., Bondy, E., Hartle, L., Lamme, L. & Webb, R. 1995, 'Guidelines for portfolio preparation: Implications from an analysis of teaching portfolios at the University of Florida', *Innovative Higher Education*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 45–62.

Schön, D.A. 1983, *The Reflective Practitioner*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Schön, D.A. 1987, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

References

Seldin, P. 2004, *The Teaching Portfolio: A Practical Guide to Improved Performance and Promotion/Tenure Decisions*, 3rd edn, Anker Publishing, Bolton MA.

St Andrews Learning and Teaching: Innovation, Review and Enhancement 2004, *Peer Observation of Teaching*, University of St Andrews, Scotland. Available from <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/saltire/Staff/Peer_Obs/stascheme.php> [11 January 2007].

Tigelaar, D., Dolmans, D., Wolfhagen, I. & van der Vleuten, C. 2005, 'Quality issues in judging portfolios: Implications for organizing teaching portfolio assessment procedures', *Studies in Higher Education*, vol. 30, no. 5, pp. 595–610.
van Manen, M. 1991, The Tact of Teaching: The Meaning of Pedagogical Thoughtfulness, State University of New York Press.

Wright, W.A, 1999, 'Portfolio people: Teaching and learning dossiers and innovation in higher education', *Innovative Higher Education*, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 89–103.

----

[1] The work discussed in this paper forms part of a wider study on teaching portfolios as part of an HEA-funded study based at the Centre for Excellence in Teaching & Learning (CELT), NUI Galway.

[2] It was significant in this study that three of the staff members had no formal training in pedagogy.

[3] Given that much of the literature referred to here originates in the US, it is important to be careful about the cultural distinction between the terms 'assessment' and 'evaluation' when used on either side of the Atlantic.

[4] Representing academic staff from different colleges and different types of post/contract.

Portfolios for Professional Development versus Portfolios for Promotion: A University College Dublin Case Study

Geraldine O'Neill
University College Dublin
geraldine.m.oneill@ucd.ie

Context

Like many Irish Higher Education institutions, University College Dublin (UCD) has been coming to terms over the last few years with the need to support its academic staff in the development and use of teaching portfolios. Over the last six years, educational developers in UCD's Centre for Teaching and Learning have been working to support academic staff in professional development programmes and other contexts in developing and using teaching portfolios, both for ongoing professional development and as evidence in support of applications for promotion. This case study focuses on academic staff engagement with teaching portfolios in UCD's Graduate Diploma in University Teaching and Learning, with particular attention to how staff are guided through the process of constructing their portfolios. The study also describes challenges and notes the tension between different portfolio purposes, but concludes by outlining the positive outcomes of portfolio development at UCD.

The use of teaching portfolios in Ireland follows on from their more extensive use internationally, particularly in the UK, USA and Australia. Therefore, it was to the international literature that UCD's educational developers turned when initially establishing the UCD teaching portfolio system. Highly influential at this time was Lee Schulman's work (1993) on the scholarship of teaching and Professor Nona Lyons's work on teaching portfolios (Lyons 1998). In this book, Lyons used what she considered to be a pioneering definition of a teaching portfolio by Schulman:

> A teaching portfolio is a structured documentary history of a (carefully selected) set of coached or mentored accomplishments substantiated by samples of student work and fully realised through reflective writing, deliberation, and various conversations (quoted in Lyons 1998, p. 3).

This definition emphasises the role of conversations with others in helping staff develop teaching portfolios, as well as the importance of reflective writing. Some portfolio definitions give weight to other qualities. For example, Peter Seldin, who has written extensively in the USA on this area, describes the teaching portfolio as:

> A collection of materials that document teaching performance … It is flexible enough to be used for tenure and promotion decisions or to provide the stimulus and structure for self-reflection about teaching areas in need of improvement (2000, p. 37).

As we can see, he particularly emphasises the collection of materials—that is, documentary evidence such as formal and informal student feedback, course evaluation, course outlines and other material.

Most definitions maintain that these two key components—reflective writing and documentary evidence—should be included in a teaching portfolio. In addition, two main purposes are proposed: professional development, and documentation of claims for promotions, the latter often described as a teaching profile (Oermann 1999; Seldin 2000). These two purposes are not mutually exclusive because the portfolio for professional development can be used to feed in at times to the portfolio for promotions or advancement. As Table 1 shows, however, portfolios used for these different purposes have different traits.

Table 1: Traits of Professional Development and Promotions Portfolios

Professional Development Portfolio	Promotions Portfolio
• **Ongoing/developmental** • **Formative** • **Viewed by author and shared with peers** • **Intrinsically motivated** • **Large** • **Includes documentary evidence** • **Contains reflective writing**	• **Constructed over a defined period in time** • **Summative/benchmarking** • **Viewed by others—for example, promotions committees** • **Extrinsically motivated** • **Shorter, focused entries** • **Includes documentary evidence** • **Contains reflective writing**

Although the use of reflection is advocated in both types of teaching portfolios, it seems to be given more weight in the teaching portfolio for professional development (Lyons 1998, 2006; Hurst, Wilson & Cramer 1998; Shulman 1998; Boud 1998). In addition, analysis of international university websites on teaching portfolios suggests that more importance is attached to documentary evidence in the promotions portfolio. Figure 1 represents how the different components are weighted in the two different portfolio types.

Figure 1: Weighting of Reflection and Evidence in Different Portfolio Types
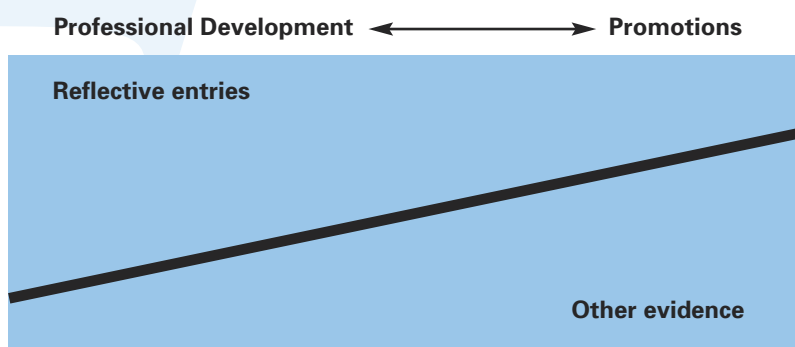
Objectives of Portfolio Development

The teaching portfolio described here is used primarily with staff in a professional development programme, the Graduate Diploma in University Teaching and Learning. The programme consists of four 15-credit modules and is designed for both academic and other University staff in a teaching role, for example, librarians.

The modules are:
* Module 1: Reflecting on Practice
* Module 2: Improving Practice through Practitioner Research
* Module 3: Exploring Educational Theories through Research and Discussion
* Module 4: Literature Review.

The programme provides staff with a flexible, experiential and developmental programme in the area of teaching and learning. It encourages participants to develop as self-directed, lifelong learners and promotes reflection on their teaching and student learning. Naturally, it employs a range of learning and assessment activities, chief among which is a teaching portfolio, a core part of the learning activities in Modules 1 and 2.

In the context of this programme, the portfolio's primary purpose is professional development, but staff undertaking the Graduate Diploma may at some stage also wish to use their portfolios for promotion applications. For example, UCD has developed a specific teaching portfolio for use in Senior Lecturer promotions, the teaching benchmarks of which demand the presentation of both documentary evidence and reflection. Indeed, Table 2 highlights the use of the terms in one of the four benchmarks for teaching at Senior Lecturer level.

Table 2: Benchmark T2 for Promotion to Senior Lecturer, UCD 2006

T2: Quality of Teaching	
Satisfactory	**Excellent**
• **Evidence of satisfactory performance as a university teacher in leading international university, as evidenced by e.g. student surveys, peer review or external evaluation.** • **Reflection on outcomes of teaching in Teaching Portfolio.**	**Demonstrated ability as an outstanding university teacher, proven through a President's Teaching Award or Teaching Grant or equivalent independent verification. Teaching Portfolio should contain clear externally validated evidence of teaching excellence. Teaching Portfolio should also contain clear evidence of high quality personal reflection on teaching methods and outcomes.**

Although Table 2 suggests that there is distinction between reflection and evidence, reflection itself can also be considered as one sort of evidence. There is often a tension, however, between the use of portfolios to deepen reflective practice as part of professional development, and their use as documentary evidence of best practice in teaching (Lyons 1998, p. 121). For example, as part the reflective process in a professional development portfolio, staff may be encouraged to explore a 'dilemma' in teaching, something that they perceived went 'wrong'. They will be encouraged to reflect on this from other angles, share this in discussions with their colleagues. But staff may not be prepared, or feel confident, to present this in their promotion portfolio, where 'dilemmas' are often hidden and the teaching showcase is presented. Hutchings and Shulman (1999) highlight a similar concern in the US context:

> Even faculty (staff) … who identify 'problems' … want to explore and have the intellectual tools for doing so, face the reality that they live and work in a culture (on their campus and/or in their scholarly or professional community) that is only beginning to be receptive to such work. Doing it is a risk, both in terms of tenure and promotion and in terms of wider impact on the field, since there are as yet few channels for other faculty to come upon and engage with this work in ways that will make a lasting difference (p. 13).

In the Graduate Diploma, we employ a teaching portfolio style that gives programme participants experience in using portfolios for both purposes. The use of the portfolio in the Graduate Diploma also encourages participants to develop their understanding of and skills in reflective thinking and writing. It fosters a scholarly approach to learning and teaching because participants are required to link their reflections with the relevant literature. The portfolio is used primarily in the Graduate Diploma's first module, 'Reflecting on Practice', where it operates as a core part of the teaching, learning and assessment strategy. It is also used in Module 2, 'Improving Teaching through Practitioner Research'. These two modules run concurrently.

Specifically, the objectives of the portfolio in the programme are for participants to:

1. develop the skills of reflecting on their teaching practice and sharing these with their colleagues
2. build and present evidence of their teaching
3. use the online and face-to-face environments as forums for aspects of the reflection, discussion and submission of their portfolios
4. support their teaching portfolio with reference to the relevant literature.

By the end of the programme, participants should be able to construct their portfolios using either a professional development model such as that proposed by Lyons (1998, 2001, 2002) or a set of predefined headings suitable for promotion or awards applications.

Portfolio Construction

The portfolio template developed for this programme is based on the work of Nona Lyons, with particular emphasis on teaching philosophy, design, enactment, results and final reflection on teaching (Lyons 1998, 2001, 2002; see also Centre for Teaching and Learning 2006a).

Step 1: Statement of Teaching Philosophy

The importance of including a statement of teaching philosophy is well supported in the literature (see, for example, Oerman (1999) and Hurst, Wilson and Cramer (1998)). In Module 1: Reflecting on Practice, participants are given examples of teaching philosophy statements and guidelines on how to write them (Centre for Teaching and Learning 2006b). Working in the UCD online environment, Blackboard™, they then post a statement of their own teaching philosophy based on their views and beliefs about teaching and learning (500–1000 words).

Step 2: Feedback

Following this, each participant is given individual face-to-face feedback on their teaching philosophy by one of their tutors. This is in keeping with Shulman's emphasis on the importance of serious conversations and dialogue in the construction of the teaching portfolio (1998).

Step 3: Reflective Writing

To enable participants to explore reflective thinking and writing in some depth, we introduce them to Hatton and Smith's concepts of dialogic and critical reflection (Hatton & Smith 1995; see also Appendix 1). This type of reflective thinking and writing is associated with portfolios for professional development, for improving teaching and for formative purposes. Participants submit a reflective entry (2000 words) on a past critical incident to an online 'learning circle/group page'. The entry must demonstrate some dialogic reflection and critical reflection; include reference to the relevant literature; and note how the literature supports or contradicts the participant's teaching philosophy.

Step 4: Peer Reflection and Sharing

Like Shulman (1998), Teitel, Ricci and Coogan (1998) highlight the importance of peer sharing and reflection in developing portfolios for professional development: 'Portfolios should be shared with colleagues, because colleagues are an important source of creative input and because such sharing promotes collaboration' (p. 152). Therefore, participants are asked to respond online to the critical reflections of two other participants on their group page, offering further thoughts on these two incidents as well as related resources (entries are 80–100 words each). Moon has written extensively on reflection and particularly on deepening reflective writing, and argues that 'some of the best methods of deepening reflection involve working with others' (Moon 2004, p. 147; see also Moon 1999, 2003) because 'different people can see the same event in different ways' (Moon 2004, p. 142).

Step 5: Promotion-type Entries and Documentary Evidence

In the next task, participants submit two or three reflective entries but of the type required in promotions portfolios. For example, the entries should be shorter and focused on how their learning in the module has impacted on their teaching and/or their students' learning. The participants are also required to produce some documentary evidence of change or planned changes to their teaching, supported by references to the relevant literature.

Step 6: Student and Peer Feedback

This step occurs in Module 2, during which participants are required to gather student and peer feedback on their teaching. In this part of the programme, the participants are introduced to the different types of peer and student evaluation that can be used for both professional development and promotional purposes in a teaching portfolio. This module also exposes participants to the literature

surrounding student evaluation (Gibbs, Habeshaw & Habeshaw 1988; Marsh 1987; Murray 1997; Saroyan & Amundsen 2001; Worthington 2002).

At this point in the programme, participants are also introduced to the different types of documentary evidence that are used in portfolios, based on an audit of the literature and other university websites internationally. These are broadly divided into evidence from self, students and others (including peers) (Centre for Teaching and Learning 2006c).

Step 7: Final Reflection

In the last task (Module 1), participants submit a final online reflection based on what they have learned in the module, including what they learned from the feedback on their reflections from their colleagues. The task brings some cohesion to the portfolio activity, as recommended by Lyons (2001) and is useful for both professional and promotional portfolios.

Challenges

Shulman (1998) draws attention to some of the negative perceptions associated with the teaching portfolio—for example, that it is mere showmanship or that it becomes trivialised to certain types of documentary evidence. Wright, Knight and Pomerleau (1999) highlight similar issues, including the time-consuming nature of portfolios, staff resistance to self-promotion, staff lack of experience in creating them and so on. Certainly, teaching portfolios have not always been easily accepted in the Graduate Diploma or in other contexts at UCD. Some aspects of UCD's institutional culture are influenced by traditional scientific perspectives, which are not necessarily sympathetic to reflective practice, seeing it as time-consuming 'navel-gazing'. In the case of promotion applications, when used without evidence, reflective practice has provoked statements such as 'It's just like patting yourself on the back to say "I'm a great teacher"'.

Many participants in the Graduate Diploma report, however, on the effectiveness of peer (colleague) sharing and reflection, particularly through face-to-face dialogue, in externalising the teaching practices being carried out in the UCD classrooms. They note that, without the reflective activities associated with the portfolio, they would not have encountered these practices. The participants report that they are more confident in attempting new ideas and changing their teaching practices, and that they realise that there is no single 'recipe' for good teaching. Some describe how they are now more thoughtful when approaching their teaching; for others, the experience validates that what they are doing is 'fine'.

This feedback is supported by the literature. In their study on the use of portfolios for experienced teachers, for example, Tietel, Ricci and Coogan (1998) note how the use of portfolios changed how a group of experienced teachers thought about their teaching roles by validating their experience. Shulman (1998) also notes that the perceptions of portfolios are not, of course, all negative, reminding us that 'portfolios encourage reconnection between process and product' and 'portfolios are owned and operated by teachers' (p. 36).

The sharing of reflections in the online environment has received mixed responses, however. Some participants report that they find the time to reflect on an appropriate response to colleagues' reflective entries very useful, but they warn that online language in this context can sometimes sound patronising or critical. Many prefer to engage in dialogue about the portfolio face to face, over coffee, or in discussion groups, when some trust has developed. One group of participants has recommended that they should be longer in the programme before they engage in online discussion, because they feel this activity requires some trust-building and familiarity.

Outcomes of Portfolio Development at UCD

There have been some positive outcomes from teaching portfolio development at UCD, particularly in relation to the use of the portfolio for professional development. As noted above, the professional development portfolio has:

- externalised some good teaching practices
- given staff members confidence in their teaching
- allowed teaching practices to be disseminated to national and international audiences.

Moreover, the portfolio activities appear to have socialised the Graduate Diploma participants into a group that is continuing beyond the boundaries of the programme. They appear to have developed into what Lave and Wenger (1991) would describe as a 'community of practice'.

The portfolio used for promotions can seem more procedural and sometimes appears to lack validity and reliability. This issue is regularly noted in the literature. Nevertheless, there now exists at UCD an extensive website that outlines the structure, evidence and reflections required for a teaching portfolio—this was not the case five years ago. The website provides a clear template for the structure and criteria for assessing the portfolio for promotions, but more information is still needed on how to match the promotions assessment criteria with appropriate evidence. Van Note Chism (2006) offers a comprehensive overview of this dilemma in relation to teaching awards, and there is some very useful advice in this article for those using the teaching portfolio for promotion or evaluation.

Conclusion and Ideas for Future Portfolio Development

The most successful aspects of the portfolio learning process at UCD seem to be the peer reflection and sharing activities and the dual focus on the portfolio's different uses in professional development and promotion applications. The online delivery of these aspects is valuable for only some participants, however, indicating that it is not essential to the process and does not need to be maintained indefinitely in the Graduate Diploma.

For those in the university not involved in the Graduate Diploma, the portfolio experience is likely to have been primarily associated with promotion applications

and the anxiety that inevitably attaches to this process. To counter this and to extend the positive experiences of the Graduate Diploma participants to the wider UCD community, it would be desirable to develop a 'bottom-up' culture (Tietel, Ricci & Coogan 1998) that supports the voluntary use of the professional development portfolio (Kulski & Radloff 1998). If this occurred, staff would be developing teaching portfolios in an ongoing way, and they could use these as the basis for both reflective skills and documentary evidence when applying for promotion. This would give back to staff the ownership of the teaching portfolio. In the future, then, we clearly need to help staff develop and participate in this culture: 'Portfolio making is not a simple undertaking. It needs to be scaffolded and portfolio makers need to be supported in their development' (Lyons 2006, p. 156).

Acknowledgements

References

Boud, D. 1998, 'Promoting reflection in professional courses: The challenge of context', *Studies in Higher Education*, vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 191–206.

Centre for Teaching and Learning 2006a, *Portfolio Design/Structure*, University College Dublin. Available from:
<http://www.ucd.ie/teaching/teachingPortfolio_sub/design_portfolio.html>
[8 November 2006].

Centre for Teaching and Learning 2006b, *Developing a Philosophy of Teaching and Learning*, University College Dublin. Available from:
<http://www.ucd.ie/teaching/teachingPortfolio_sub/philosophy_t&l.html>
[8 November 2006].

Centre for Teaching and Learning 2006c, *Additional Evidence to Put into Portfolio/Profile*, University College Dublin. Available from:
<http://www.ucd.ie/teaching/teachingPortfolio_sub/additionalEvidence_portfolio.html> [8 November 2006].

Gibbs, G., Habeshaw, S. & Habeshaw T. 1988, *53 Interesting Ways to Appraise Your Teaching*, Technical & Educational Services Ltd, Bristol.

Hatton, N. & Smith, D. 1995, 'Reflection in teacher education: Towards definition and implementation', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 33–49.

Hurst, B., Wilson, C. & Cramer, G. 1998, 'Professional teaching portfolios: Tools for reflection, growth, and advancement', *Phi Delta Kappan*, vol. 79, no. 8, pp. 578–582.

Hutchings, P. & Shulman, L.S. 1999, 'The scholarship of teaching: New elaborations, new developments', *Change*, vol. 31, no. 5, pp. 10–15.

Kulski, M.M. & Radloff, A. 1998, 'Adding value to teaching: A framework for institutional use of the teaching portfolio', *South African Journal for Higher Education*, vol. 12, no. 3, pp. 179–185.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. 1991, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, Cambridge University Press.

Lyons N. 1998, *With Portfolio in Hand: Validating the New Teacher Professionalism*, Teachers College Press, New York.

Lyons, N. 2001, 'Interrogating, documenting and representing the scholarship of teaching: Portfolio options', unpublished University College Cork course handout, in possession of author, Dublin.

Lyons, N. 2002, 'Guidelines for creating a teaching portfolio', in *Advancing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning through the Reflective Process: The University College Cork Experience*, eds N. Lyons, A. Hyland & N. Ryan, University College Cork, pp. 113–115.

Lyons, N. 2006, 'Reflective engagement as professional development in the lives of university teachers', *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 151–168.

Marsh, H.W. 1987, 'Students' evaluation of university teaching: Research findings, methodological issues and directions for future research', *International Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 253–388.

References

Moon, J. 1999, *Learning Journals: A Handbook for Academics, Students and Professional Development*, Kogan Page, London.

Moon, J. 2003, Learning Journals and Logs, Reflective Diaries, Centre for Teaching and Learning, University College Dublin. Available from: <http://www.ucd.ie/teaching/printableDocs/Good%20Practices%20in%20T&L/learningJournals.pdf> [8 November 2006].

Moon, J. 2004, *A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning: Theory and Practice*, RoutledgeFalmer, London.

Murray, H.G. 1997, 'Does evaluation of teaching lead to improvement of teaching?', *International Journal for Academic Development*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 20–41.

Oermann, M. 1999, 'Developing a teaching portfolio', *Journal of Professional Nursing*, vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 224–228.

Saroyan, A. & Amundsen, C. 2001, 'Evaluating university teaching: Time to take stock', *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 341–353. Seldin, P. 2000, 'Teaching portfolios: A positive appraisal', *ACADEME*, vol. 86, no. 1, pp. 37–44.

Shulman, L. 1993, 'Teaching as community property: Putting an end to pedagogical solitude', *Change*, vol. 25, no. 6, pp. 6–7.

Shulman, L. 1998, 'Teacher portfolios: A theoretical activity', in *With Portfolio in Hand: Validating the New Teacher Professionalism*, ed. N. Lyons, Teachers College Press, New York, pp. 23–37.

Teitel, L., Ricci, M. & Coogan, J. 1998, 'Experienced teachers construct teaching portfolios: A culture of compliance vs. a culture of professional development', in *With Portfolio in Hand: Validating the New Teacher Professionalism*, ed. N. Lyons, Teachers College Press, New York, pp. 143–155.

Van Note Chism, N. 2006, 'Teaching awards: What do they award?', *The Journal of Higher Education*, vol. 77, no. 4, pp. 589–617.

Worthington, A.C. 2002, 'The impact of student perceptions and characteristics on teaching evaluations: A case study in Finance Education', *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 49–64.

Wright, W.A., Knight, P.T. & Pomerleau, N. 1999, 'Portfolio people: Teaching and learning dossiers and innovation in Higher Education', *Innovative Higher Education*, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 89–103.

Appendix 1: Levels of Reflective Writing (Hatton & Smith 1995)

Descriptive writing (which is considered not to show evidence of reflection) is a description of events or literature reports. There is no discussion beyond description.

Descriptive reflection is description of events but includes some justification in relatively descriptive language. The possibility of alternative viewpoints in discussion is accepted. Reflection may be 'based generally on one perspective factor as rationale' or, presumably in a more sophisticated form, is based 'on the recognition of multiple factors and perspectives'.

Dialogic reflection demonstrates a 'stepping back' from the events and actions, which leads to a different level of thinking about discourse with self and exploration of the discourse of events and actions. It uses the 'qualities of judgements and possible alternatives for explaining and hypothesising'. The reflection is analytical or integrative, linking factors and perspectives. It may reveal inconsistency in attempting to provide rationales and critique.

Critical reflection demonstrates awareness that actions and events are not only located within and explicable by multiple perspectives, but are located in and influenced by multiple historical and socio-political contexts.

Chapter 10

The Use of Teaching Portfolios for Academic Professional Development at Dublin Institute of Technology

Roisin Donnelly and Marian Fitzmaurice
Dublin Institute of Technology
Roisin Donnelly
roisin.donnelly@dit.ie
Marian Fitzmaurice
marian.fitzmaurice@dit.ie

Context

This case study describes the Postgraduate Certificate in Third Level Learning and Teaching at Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), focusing on the programme's use of a teaching portfolio for formative, reflective and summative purposes. The programme was the first of its kind in the Republic of Ireland. It is aimed at new and existing academic staff in third-level institutions in the Republic, including lecturers and also librarians and other academic support staff with responsibility for teaching in their areas. It was initially offered in 2000, and over 90 academic staff have since graduated from the programme. Participants come from DIT and several higher education institutions throughout the Republic, and they represent a wide variety of disciplines in the Applied Arts, Science, Tourism and Food, Engineering, the Built Environment and Business. There is also diversity in the levels at which our participants teach: some work on apprenticeship courses and others are involved in undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes.

The Certificate includes two modules—Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, and Designing Curricula and Assessment Strategies—and normally runs for three hours per week for 15 weeks. It promotes experiential learning, which takes place in several ways through:

- analysis of classroom situations, episodes and experiences in microteaching groups, where participants can discuss their own educational practices and those of others
- collaborative experimentation with instructional strategies and materials aimed at collecting information on different aspects of classroom activity
- interpretation of this information from a professional perspective.

Each module is assessed through the design and development of an individual teaching portfolio. MacIsaac and Jackson (1992) map out three broad sets of assessment functions that portfolios can serve:

- Portfolios can be used for self-assessment or reflection on personal growth.
- Portfolios can facilitate progress assessment within an educational programme for adults.
- Portfolios can enhance self-presentation to external sources.

The most important functions in this programme are formative—that is, self-assessment and reflection on personal growth. Formative feedback plays a very

important role in the development of each participant and is discussed in more detail later. To emphasise the importance of the portfolio's role in prompting formative self-reflection, we carefully guide the construction of the portfolios (as discussed below) and assess the quality of the reflective process. As noted above, however, we also use the portfolio for summative assessment of the modules.

Klenowski, Askew and Carnell (2006) conclude that if learning portfolios are to be used for assessment, there needs to be an explicit and ongoing discussion with the participants about why they are being used and the model of learning and professional development on which they are based. In the case of the Postgraduate Certificate in Third Level Learning and Teaching, we have settled on a process for portfolio development that has at its core the idea of sharing knowledge with peers, reflecting on teaching, making knowledge on teaching public, and gathering evidence on teaching and student learning. This model is based on research and international comparative analysis, which reveals that teachers can use portfolios as an effective means of reflecting on their teaching philosophy, practice, effectiveness, goals and development.

Objectives of Portfolio Development

In this programme, the portfolio is designed as a vehicle that academic staff can use to reflect on and document issues in their teaching and learning with the aim of informing or improving their practice. The process of portfolio development provides them with opportunities to chronicle their growth as learners and enhance their understanding of their practice. We also consider that it is important to provide opportunities for participants to form a learning community and collaborate with peers. To achieve this, we encourage dialogue and the development of supportive relationships, so that learning is facilitated by and with peers to create a culture of collaboration, connectedness and commitment to community. We have designed procedures for preparing portfolios and we outline the portfolio framework for participants. The portfolio contents include core and optional items as well as written tasks and reflective entries on teaching improvements.

The programme team aims to support academic staff in their attempts to connect with their professional practice through the development of the portfolio, and to do this we support them in becoming reflective about their teaching practice. Reflective practice is a process of learning and developing through examining practice (Bolton 2001) and the written portfolio is the vehicle for reflection. The process of becoming reflective and developing a teaching portfolio is intensive and oftentimes demanding, so each participant is assigned a tutor. The relationships with tutors complement the peer learning community described above.

Portfolio Construction

Early in the first module of this programme, we give participants the definition of the teaching portfolio used in this programme: it is a written, reflective collection of work, summarising the teacher's approach to learning and teaching, and providing evidence of major teaching activities and accomplishments. Its purpose is to highlight and demonstrate the teacher's knowledge and skills in teaching in higher education.

Taking this further, although the portfolio documents evidence of a teacher's selected accomplishments and is substantiated by samples of work, it is fully realised only through the process of reflective writing and deliberation by the teacher on its contents (Lyons 1998). The portfolio is created through a thoughtful process of collecting concrete evidence of teaching and students' learning and organising these in a meaningful way. Therefore, all portfolio entries carry a crucial element—reflection. Through reflection, teachers revisit and inquire into their teaching and learning, assessing what succeeded or failed and why. In this process, they uncover the meanings and interpretations they make of their own practices. Through the portfolio, they can make this knowledge public and open to scrutiny. Thus the portfolio can be a means both of inquiring into teaching and a way of recording the results of that process.

Figures 1 and 2 below illustrate the portfolio structures required in each of the two modules in our programme. The subsequent discussion focuses only on the portfolio developed in Module 1 (Portfolio 1), because a greater emphasis is placed on the reflective element of professional practice in this module.

Figure 1: Portfolio Structure (Module 1: Learning and Teaching in Higher Education)

Reflection on Practice			
Section 1: Personal Learning and Teaching Development	Personal learning and teaching philosophy statement	Summary of prior learning	Action plan for professional development
	Individualised learning plan for Module 1	Summary of Module 1 learning	
Section 2: Teaching Demonstrations	Microteaching video(s) and accompanying lesson plans and materials	Minimum of two peer observations	One tutor observation
Section 3: Account of Teaching Improvement Efforts	Evidence from practice	Reflections	Evidence of equity
References			

Figure 2: Portfolio Structure (Module 2: Designing Curricula and Assessment Strategies)

Reflection on Practice			
Section 1: Personal Learning and Teaching Development ←	**Individualised learning plan for Module 2**	**Reflective account of Module 2 learning:** 1. curriculum design 2. assessment strategies 3. group work	**Action plan for professional development**
Section 2: Design for Learning ←	**Small-scale curriculum and assessment project**		
Section 3: Scholarship of Learning and Teaching ←	**Resource review**	**Thematic paper**	
References			

Reflection on Practice

The complex nature of teaching and learning means that resolution is not absolute. Although solutions from one context may guide thinking in another, they are rarely universal—therefore, we need to reflect on implications for our own practice. Scholars offer several explanations of why reflection is necessary and of how it can be best supported. Argyris (1976) makes the distinction between espoused theories and theories in use. He contends that there is often a substantial contradiction between what we say we believe and how we actually act. Therefore, reflection can help us uncover the contradictions in our professional work. This is a demanding but important stage in reaching an understanding of the complexity of the classroom or tutorial. Eraut (1994) emphasises that professionals continually learn on the job, but unless they set aside time to deliberate, their learning may not be integrated into any general theory of practice. This is supported by Newman (1998), who also points out that reflection is essential to professional development in learning and teaching because:

> [s]imply telling teachers about new curricular initiatives, asking them to take on new instructional methodology without helping them to understand the assumptions they are operating from, is a waste of time. People might take away 'nifty tips', but nothing really changes for students (p. 191).

Brookfield (1995) confirms that critical reflection helps learners to describe experiences, analyse what they have learnt from those experiences and develop a process of judgement using which they might frame current or future experiences.

The portfolio process in our programme requires participants to engage in reflection on practice. As part of this process, participants are encouraged to interact with the literature and to consider strategies for reflection. This is supported by guided reflective activity using a model developed by Jennifer Moon (1999). The following questions prompt participants to begin the process of reflection on practice.

- What teaching strategies do you currently employ?
- What have you learned on this course to date that relates to your current practice?
- What are the general implications of the new knowledge/skills for your teaching?
- How might you use the new learning to improve your professional practice?

Thus the challenge of engaging participants in reflection is undertaken through the dual processes of teaching them about reflection and guiding them through reflective activity related to learning and teaching in higher education.

The opening section in each portfolio, Reflection on Practice (see Figures 1 and 2), incorporates participants' thinking and learning in this area. It should present an overview of the entire portfolio and needs to be holistic rather than episodic in nature, so that it reflects the overarching theme that is chosen for the work. The theme could be a specific issue or concern in their teaching and their students' learning. We find that allowing participants to choose a relevant and current theme helps them to become reinvigorated about their teaching. Thereafter, there is a broad menu of possible portfolio entries, which are organised into the sections shown in Figures 1 and 2. These entries provide the framework for participants to reflect on teaching and learning in higher education and on their own practice.

Portfolio 1, Section 1: Personal Learning and Teaching Development

A standard section in both portfolios is an account of participants' personal learning and teaching development (Section 1). In Portfolio 1, this begins with a statement of learning and teaching philosophy. Participants should explain how they try to apply their underlying personal teaching philosophies through the development, implementation and subsequent modification of their teaching practice and their reflection on this process. The portfolio subsequently documents teaching philosophy, practice, effectiveness, goals and development. Participants should reflect on the portfolio as a personal statement of the growth in their understanding of teaching and learning based on analyses of their teaching performance and of any actions they take for improvement.

To complete this section on learning and teaching development, participants include information in four additional categories. First, a summary of prior learning reveals a participant's route to the course and includes details of learning in various contexts (for example, academic or workplace). The second category is an individualised

learning plan, which is a personal account of a participant's hopes and expectations for learning in the module. The third and fourth categories involve the participants writing a summary and self-assessment of what they have learned by the end of the module and, finally, an action plan for further professional development in the future.

Portfolio 1, Section 2: Teaching Demonstrations

This section includes selected lesson plans, materials and reviews of microteaching tutorials, two of which are held in Module 1. In their portfolios, participants can choose to include a video of their teaching practice from these sessions, and they also have the option of videotaping their own authentic classroom-based teaching practice for inclusion. Microteaching provides the participants with teaching practice and feedback. Each participant is assigned to a small group composed of peers on the programme and led by a programme facilitator. Each participant teaches a unit of five to ten minutes on a concept or problem in his or her discipline to the group. Group members and the facilitator provide feedback on each participant's teaching and discuss both generic and specific issues related to learning and teaching. The microteaching tutorials allow participants to demonstrate organisational skills, communication skills and application of educational theory. They also provide the participants with the opportunity to apply some of the following learning and teaching strategies appropriate to their current teaching:

*   presentations in lectures, tutorials or demonstrations
*   seminars and discussion groups to facilitate group learning
*   case studies or role plays to facilitate active learning
*   facilitation of practical or laboratory classes
*   one appropriate technology for teaching and learning within their own subject area (selected from the media and technologies used in the programme).

To complement these teaching demonstrations, participants are required to organise three observations of their classroom teaching practice, two by peers and one by a programme tutor. This provides a further basis for reflection both individually and in collaboration with colleagues and tutors. Our experience of this process is that it gives teachers from diverse disciplines the opportunity to engage in a dialogue about generic learning and teaching issues within higher education. It foregrounds the richness of the different perspectives and stimulates important conversations to continue outside the module.

Portfolio 1, Section 3: Account of Teaching Improvement Efforts

In Section 3, participants focus and reflect on any efforts they make to improve teaching practice. Their reflections should address four important issues. First, it is important for the participants to reflect on how they have applied their knowledge of learning theories and teaching strategies by actually using a wider variety of teaching strategies in their microteaching and in their classroom practice.

Second, participants must show how they have learned from observing the teaching of others, and from the self-observations, peer observations and tutor observations of

their teaching practice. This is complemented by analysis of participants' teaching experiences through research about learning in their courses and through feedback from peers, tutors and students.

Third, participants are encouraged to show how they have gained an understanding of individual student needs and perspectives, and how new teaching methods have been used to meet those needs (including equity issues and social inclusion). They can include discussion of how they have used formative evaluations to provide students with ongoing feedback about their learning.

Finally, it is important for participants to engage in ongoing reflection about the role of lecturers within their institutions. This can include considerations of leadership, management, research and administrative roles, in addition to learning and teaching.

Assessment of Portfolios

The portfolios in this programme are used primarily as a tool for reflection on practice. The formative aspects of the portfolio are reinforced by giving participants two opportunities throughout the module to submit draft portfolio work to their tutors for comment and feedback. As noted above, however, they also have a summative purpose, and participants are required to complete the components outlined above for assessment in the modules. The assessment criteria are given to all participants at the outset of the programme, and are also discussed with them in detail during class sessions. Specific criteria are:

- organisation and planning
- implementation and development learning in classroom practice
- evaluation and reflection
- scholarship
- presentation.

The portfolios are assessed by two internal assessors, who know the candidates they assess, as has been recommended by Tigelaar et al. (2005).

Challenges in Portfolio Development

Klenowski, Askew and Carnell (2006) contend that, when portfolios are promoted for assessment and learning purposes, there is the possibility that too much will be promised and in practice much less will be achieved. They argue that it is therefore important to evaluate the portfolio process on a continuous basis. In the early stages of this programme (2000–03), participants were required to complete the portfolio in semester 1 for the assessment of Module 1. Feedback from participants revealed that they regarded this as too demanding a task within the short timeframe (September to January). In 2003, the portfolio structure was changed into two complementary parts, and spread over the academic year as shown in Figures 1 and 2.

Outcomes of Portfolio Development at DIT

It appears that the portfolio process stimulates participants 'to revisit their own knowledge and express it in personally meaningful ways' (Lyons 1998, p. 51). It can also be concluded that the process of generating a portfolio is a sometimes painful experience for the participants, but it is nevertheless empowering. It helps them to manage their learning, to find their voices and to develop vital skills for success in teaching:

- *It raised the question of how I am teaching. It became very evident that I was teaching but not as well or as how I should be teaching.* (2003–04 participant)
- *It was brilliant to be able to write down your core values and your philosophy of education—things that are embedded in you but you never articulate and put them on paper.* (2002–03 participant)
- *The educational change that occurred depends on what I as the teacher did and thought. For me, it is as simple and complex as that. It is not what anyone else thinks—it is what I think in my classroom, and that is what the portfolio does—it unearths the values I hold as a teacher.* (2004–05 participant)
- *It does force you to reflect and discuss it with your colleagues. Teaching is an isolated profession so you do not have your peers around. But by doing the portfolio you are forced to get feedback from them. So it is making one's environment more friendly in which to work.* (2004–05 participant)

There is evidence that the portfolio process also focuses considered reflection on the participants' teaching practice. It engages participants in a process that results in the articulation of their theories about teaching, learning, curriculum and students:

- *You become less concerned with the content, although that is important, and reflect more on why you are teaching what you are teaching, how it links to everything else and the most appropriate way to present it to a particular group of students.* (2002–03 participant)
- *I now think about the learning rather than the teaching and that makes me think about the best way I as a teacher can enhance the learning experience. I certainly reflect more on what I do.* (2003–04 participant)
- *I question much more what I do, why I am doing it and what the students will get from it.* (2004–05 participant).

Through the process of developing a portfolio, academics are developing deeper understandings of learning and teaching in higher education.

Unexpected Outcomes of Portfolio Development

Through the portfolio process, participants have expanded their awareness of learning and teaching in higher education and have revised, adjusted and developed their teaching in the light of this developing awareness. Learning to teach well is a lifelong pursuit and the portfolio process has started these participants on an exploratory journey during which reflection and collaboration will inform their teaching. Biggs (1999) contends that, because teaching is a personal matter, new ideas need to be used reflectively and adapted to one's own context. At DIT, a

discourse has developed around important issues in teaching and learning, and there is a developing critical community of learners endeavouring to articulate and become more competent in their professional roles. This is evidenced by informal work in departments and by research projects in learning and teaching throughout the institution. There is also an annual Showcase of Learning and Teaching Innovations, which provides a forum for sharing and disseminating good practice in relation to learning and teaching. Sachs (2000, p. 89) argues that what should emerge over time are 'cultures which place educational practice at their centre', and the portfolio process clearly has an important role to play in creating such a culture.

Plans for Future Portfolio Development

In 2006–07, a formalised peer mentoring scheme has been introduced in which academic staff who have graduated from the programme, thus completing the design and development of an individual teaching portfolio, begin a mentoring relationship with other staff entering a 'new to them' (Woodd 1997, p. 333) educational institution. Mentors will assist and support new staff to integrate into a community of practice within their departments, providing advice on the completion of portfolios within disciplinary contexts.

As academic staff developers, we must strive to maintain such communities of shared practice through campus-wide and inter-institutional conversations focused on forward-looking learning and teaching. We can achieve this by providing quality support for all teachers from beginning instructors to experienced, highly regarded academic staff.

References

Argyris, C. 1976, *Increasing Leadership Effectiveness*, John Wiley & Sons, New York.

Biggs, J. 1999, *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*, SRHE & Open University Press, Buckingham.

Bolton, G. 2001, *Reflective Practice*, Paul Chapman Publishing, London.

Brookfield, S. 1995, *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Eraut, M. 1994, *Developing Professional Knowledge and Competence*, Falmer Press, London.

Klenowski, V., Askew, S. & Carnell, E. 2006, 'Portfolios for learning, assessment and professional development in higher education', *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, vol. 31, no. 3, pp. 267–286.

Lyons, N. 1998, *With Portfolio in Hand: Validating the New Teacher Professionalism*, Teachers College Press, New York.

MacIsaac, D. & Jackson, L. 1992, 'Portfolio assessment processes and outcomes', *Portfolio News*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 1–13.

Moon, J. 1999, *Reflection in Learning and Professional Development*, Kogan Page, London.

Newman, J.M. 1998, *Tensions of Teaching: Beyond Tips to Critical Reflection*, Teachers College Press, New York.

Sachs, J. 2000, 'The activist professional', *Journal of Educational Change*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 77–95.

Tigelaar, D., Dolmans, D., Wolfhagen, I. & van der Vleuten, C. 2005, 'Quality issues in judging portfolios: Implications for organising teaching portfolio assessment procedures', *Studies in Higher Education*, vol. 30, no. 5, pp. 595–610.

Woodd, M. 1997, 'Mentoring in further and higher education', *Education and Training*, vol. 39, no. 9, pp. 333–343.

Chapter 11

The Use of Student Feedback in Teaching Portfolios at the University of Limerick

Nyiel Kuol and Sarah Moore
University of Limerick
Nyiel Kuol
Nyiel.kuol@ul.ie
Sarah Moore
Sarah.moore@ul.ie

Context

This chapter explores how a small group of higher education teachers (nominees for the University of Limerick's teaching excellence awards) used student feedback in preparing and presenting their teaching portfolios. In particular, it examines how and the extent to which student evaluation data was used to reflect on and illustrate the nominees' effectiveness as teachers in academic environments.

The Functions of Teaching Portfolios

In many contexts, teaching portfolios have become widely used to facilitate decision-making about the career progression and development of academics. Such decisions include the selection of recipients for teaching excellence awards, evaluation of faculty for promotion, and granting of tenure and reappointment (Calegari, Geisler & Larkins 1999). The benefits of portfolio preparation go beyond a summative, reward-related evaluation of faculty teaching, however. In fact, it can be argued that portfolios are best used as a structured methodology for stimulating and developing reflective practice, and that this opportunity for reflection often leads to improved teaching (Calegari, Geisler & Larkins 1999; Danielson & McGreal 2000). The literature contains considerable guidance on what teaching portfolios should contain and how they should be presented (see, for example, Lyons 1998; Edgerton, Hutchings and Quinlan 1991; Shore 1986). Writers on these topics tend to recommend the inclusion of such elements as:

- a broad description of teaching responsibilities
- a statement of teaching philosophy
- evidence of teaching effectiveness
- proof of ongoing strategies undertaken to enhance or to improve teaching (Babin, Shaffer & Tomas 2002).

The Role of Student Feedback in Teaching Portfolios

Babin, Shaffer and Tomas (2002) and other commentators in this field (Calegari, Geisler & Larkins 1999) also recommend that student feedback be included in the teaching effectiveness section of a portfolio, in spite of the controversy over the use of student feedback systems to assess or evaluate teaching quality (see, for example, Moore & Kuol 2005). Generally, it seems clear that student feedback is an important source of information. What tends to be less clear, however, is how student feedback

typically is (or should be) used, invoked and interpreted in the context of a teaching portfolio (Centra 1994), particularly in relation to its subsequent ability to facilitate effective teaching.

This chapter engages in an exploration of the reflective strategies used by a small group of academic faculty at the University of Limerick (UL) as evidenced by their portfolio-based references to and reflections on student feedback. The tentative results are used to suggest briefly some more structured and challenging ways in which student feedback might be meaningfully interpreted as part of a portfolio preparation process.

Objectives of Portfolio Development

As the literature suggests, teaching portfolios are used mainly for two purposes: faculty evaluation (summative) and teaching improvement resulting from individual reflection on teaching (formative). The widespread use of teaching portfolios is often associated with evaluative motives (Edgerton, Hutchings & Quinlan 1991). On the other hand, Seldin and Associates (1993), Anderson (1993), and Babin, Shaffer and Tomas (2002) argue that the process of developing a teaching portfolio is more beneficial to teachers than the resulting portfolio itself, and that simply engaging in the portfolio development process provides insights into teaching, which in turn may lead to teaching improvement.

Therefore, a teaching portfolio can be defined not only as a factual summary of a teacher's major strengths, abilities and teaching accomplishments (Seldin 1991; Edgerton, Hutchings & Quinlan 1991); it is also recognised as a key mechanism for reflection on teaching.

Portfolios for Reflection and Improvement

Teaching portfolios have often been used and are frequently presented as reflective tools that allow teachers to become more self-aware, understand the reasons for observed phenomena in their teaching and develop a stronger sense of professional insight and identity as teachers (see, for example, Wolf, Whinery & Hagerty 1995). This is consistent with Schön's (1983) idea of 'reflective practitioners'—people who think while they are doing, who 'reflect in action', who become researchers of their own practice and who are then better equipped with knowledge about their impact on the learning, engagement and performance of their students.

Preparation of a teaching portfolio can lead to demonstrated improvements in teaching effectiveness. Seldin (in Calegari, Geigler & Larkins 1999) argues that faculty who have engaged in a process of teaching portfolio preparation, compared to those who have never done so, are more likely to discuss their teaching with colleagues, more willing to experiment with new teaching strategies and more engaged in the development of enhanced teaching materials. They are also more likely to have developed an ability to reflect on and analyse their own teaching effectiveness.

There is, however, very little structured research on or analysis of the extent to which (and in what ways) teachers use student feedback as part of the portfolio preparation process. Our analysis focuses on a small group of teachers to shed some further light on this issue. More specifically, we explore how nominees for a teaching excellence award reflected on student feedback during the process of portfolio preparation.

Background to the Teaching Excellence Award at UL

Since 2001, UL's excellence in teaching award has been portfolio based. Nominees are short-listed according to student feedback ratings (a useful but inevitably imperfect methodology, which is subject to the traditional strengths and weaknesses of student evaluations of teaching). Once short-listed, candidates are required to produce a teaching portfolio that incorporates a range of information.

Constructing a Portfolio for the UL Teaching Excellence Award

The UL portfolio can include (but is not necessarily restricted to) the following:

- a statement of the individual's teaching philosophy and personal orientations to teaching
- evidence of teaching performance and effectiveness, teaching quality, teacher–class relationship; evidence of planning and preparation
- examples of assessment methodologies used and evidence that relates to their impact on student learning
- incidences of innovative approaches to teaching
- participation in professional development workshops and ongoing professional development in teaching and learning
- research in teaching and learning within or beyond an individual's own academic discipline.

Such requirements are consistent with the perspectives of O'Neill and Wright (1993) and Seldin (1991, 1993, 1997). All recommend that a structured model should be available when faculty are developing a portfolio. Furthermore, portfolios intended for summative purposes (for example, teaching excellence awards) should follow certain guidelines in order to enhance comparability. Although existing literature is not always clear about whether a teaching portfolio should contain both teaching failures and successes, much of the scholarly discussion implies that, for summative purposes, a portfolio should present the best teaching achievements (Edgerton, Hutchings & Quinlan 1991; Seldin 1991, 1993). In any case, the literature also highlights the importance of including a reflective commentary that explains the rationale for the information in the teaching portfolio. This is worthwhile and consistent with the aims associated with portfolio preparation (Edgerton, Hutchings & Quinlan 1991).

Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs)

The use of student evaluations of teaching effectiveness (SETs) has been largely motivated by an increasing emphasis on monitoring the quality of teaching in higher education. Reasons for collecting SETs include:

- providing formative or diagnostic feedback to teachers that will be useful for teaching improvement
- providing information for personnel and administrative decision-making purposes
- enhancing communication and interaction with students, especially in large-class settings where informal channels may be more difficult to establish or interpret
- conducting research on teaching effectiveness.

Some of the literature cautions against the assumption that student feedback can provide data that necessarily measures or indicates teaching excellence. Although a full critique of SET systems is beyond the scope of this case study, we can say that SETs are often referred to as systems that satisfy only relatively shallow bureaucratic needs. Some feel that they are, or can be, merely popularity contests, which have unintended and negative outcomes such as grade inflation and a lowering of standards (see, for example, Tomasco 1980; Green, Calderon & Reider 1998; Carey 1993; Calderon, Gabbin & Green, 1996).

On the other hand, there is also a body of literature that endorses and encourages the use of SETs (see, for example, Stockham & Amann 1994 and Hand & Rowe, 2001). As the immediate beneficiaries of teaching, students are in a position to report or comment on:

- the teaching strategies that best facilitate their learning
- teachers' preparedness for class
- teachers' approachability during and outside class hours
- usefulness of feedback provided on essays
- the impact of teaching on their level of interest in the subject matter.

Outcomes

Evidence of SETs in UL Portfolios

We engaged in a qualitative analysis of teaching portfolios, which involved a detailed scanning of the texts of twelve separate portfolios and the identification of references to UL's formal SET system. Although a detailed display of the research is beyond the scope of this case study, we can report that our analysis enabled the identification of six key 'categories of reflection', which seem to have been prompted by a reflection by participants on the data their students provided via the formal SET system. These categories are:

- using qualitative student comments as evidence of effective teaching (92 per cent)
- focusing on students' responses to specific teaching interventions (64 per cent)
- invoking evidence of teacher-class relationship (64 per cent)
- invoking student feedback as a trigger for continuous improvement (50 per cent)
- using quantitative student ratings as evidence of effective teaching (18 per cent)

- using negative aspects of feedback to address problems with teaching (18 per cent).

Essentially, our analysis shows that in practice, the members of this exploratory group used only a relatively small range of reflective categories. As seen above, the most frequently invoked aspect of student feedback appearing in the portfolios is students' qualitative opinions, expressed in their own words and reproduced by teachers in their portfolios. The categories we identified also reveal a focus among participating teachers on how particular teaching innovations 'worked' from the perspectives of their students. There are also relatively frequent references to how student feedback nourishes and sustains continuous improvement. Less frequently appearing categories focus on the use of quantitative scores and the use of negative student feedback to enhance performance.

How UL Teachers Use SETs in their Portfolios

Edgerton, Hutchings & Quinlan (1991) maintain that teaching portfolios developed for evaluative purposes (for example, teaching excellence awards) are more likely than reflective portfolios to have a standard structure. In practice, however, there are significant and complex differences in the ways that teachers prepare their portfolios.

In this small study, we observed that even though these portfolios were submitted for the same purpose, the ways that information from SETs is used, presented, invoked and interpreted varies significantly from one submission to another. Some teachers refer to SETs in general terms, whereas others use them to verify or confirm specific aspects of teaching effectiveness, approaches, methods, materials and student assessments. In addition, teachers seem to differ in deciding whether to present only their best teaching achievements or to include the 'failures' or 'deficiencies' that may have been highlighted through the SET system. In this study, a minority of teachers view SETs as diagnostic tools that highlight less effective areas of teaching and learning. And only where this is highlighted are intended teaching-related changes discussed.

All of the participants in this study had already been selected as excellent teachers, but all had also received student feedback that highlighted teaching weaknesses as well as strengths. Only some, however, chose to focus on negative aspects for the purposes of reflection and discussion. In addition, participants seemed to be more comfortable invoking qualitative data (that is, student comments) than quantitative ratings, which are less frequently referred to by participants even when those ratings are not just above average, but very high. The real words and perspectives of students seem to carry more weight for participants and are more likely to be integrated into their accounts, interpretations and self-evaluations of their teaching.

Challenges of Using Sets in Teaching Portfolios

In summary, even this small and somewhat restricted study shows that portfolio preparation does provide an opportunity for teachers to reflect in some broad and meaningful ways on students' evaluations of their teaching. The analysis also shows

however, that participants were most likely to use student feedback primarily to attest to the effectiveness of particular teaching approaches; they were somewhat less likely (although not completely unlikely) to view the feedback as a diagnostic tool for highlighting less effective areas of teaching or as a guide for attempts to engage in teaching-related improvements. These findings are further testimony to the teaching portfolio literature, which maintains that teachers do engage in self-reflection and that they also actively interpret information provided by others for the purposes of portfolio preparation. Our study tentatively suggests, however, that they may need more encouragement and guidance in adopting a diagnostic or improvement-orientated approach to their teaching.

Conclusions and Ideas for Future Portfolio Development

Self-reflection is central to the process of teaching improvement. Calegari, Geisler and Larkins (1999) note the utility of teacher reflection on teaching approaches, strategies and goals and how these have been successful during the process of constructing a teaching portfolio. Thus, reflection on teaching strategy and on student and peer feedback is an essential part of any meaningful teaching portfolio. Through reflection and comparison of self-reports and reports from other sources personal growth, professional development and performance improvements can be achieved.

As we have discussed above, the experts in teaching portfolio research favour student evaluation information as one of the valuable sources for self-reflection. They are, however, less clear about how this information should be used. The key message from this small exploratory study is that student feedback can be used and reflected upon in various ways, not all of which may be immediately obvious to teachers involved in preparing their teaching portfolios. Because of this, we recommend that any institutional guidance on teaching portfolio preparation should not simply guide faculty to look for student feedback as part of that process. We argue that guidance needs to go further than this and provide a framework of reflective categories for higher education teachers to consider in advance of portfolio preparation and compilation. Furthermore, portfolio guidance would do well to clarify the extent to which learning from negative student perspectives can represent one of the most useful routes to a genuinely reflective and professionally developing agenda for individual teachers. Indeed, award systems might be enhanced by valuing such an approach.

References

Anderson, E. 1993, *Campus Use of the Teaching Portfolio: Twenty-Five Profiles*, American Association for Higher Education, Washington DC.

Babin, L.A., Shaffer, T.R. & Tomas, A.M. 2002, 'Teaching portfolios: Uses and Development', *Journal of Marketing Education*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 35–42.

Calderon, T.G., Gabbin, A.L. & Green, B.P. 1996, *Report of the Committee on Promoting and Evaluating Effective Teaching*, James Madison University Press, Virginia.

Calegari, J., Geisler, G.G. & Larkins, E.R. 1999, 'Implementing teaching portfolios and peer reviews in tax courses', *The Journal of the American Taxation Association*, vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 95–107.

Carey, G. 1993, 'Thoughts on the lesser evil: Student evaluations', *Perspectives on Political Science*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 17–20.

Centra, J.A. 1994, 'The use of the teaching portfolio and student evaluations for summative evaluation', *Journal of Higher Education*, vol. 65, no. 5, pp. 555–570.

Danielson, C. & McGreal, T.L. 2000, *Teacher Evaluation to Enhance Professional Practice*, ASCD, Alexandria VA.

Edgerton, R., Hutchings, P. & Quinlan, K. 1991, *The Teaching Portfolio: Capturing the Scholarship in Teaching*, American Association for Higher Education, Washington DC.

Green, B.P., Calderon, T.G. & Reider, B.P. 1998, 'A content analysis of teaching evaluation instruments used in accounting departments', *Issues in Accounting Education*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 15–30.

Hand, L. & Rowe, M. 2001, 'Evaluation of student feedback', *Accounting Education*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 147–160.

Lyons, N. 1998, *With Portfolio in Hand: Validating the New Teacher Professionalism*, Teachers College Press, New York.

Moore, S. & Kuol, N. 2005, Students evaluating teachers: Exploring the importance of faculty reaction to feedback on teaching', *Teaching in Higher Education*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 57–73.

O'Neill, M.C. & Wright, W.A. 1993, *Recording Teaching Accomplishments: A Dalhousie Guide to the Teaching Dossier*, 4th edn, Office of Instructional Development and Technology, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada.

Schön, D. 1983, *The Reflective Practitioner*, Basic Books, New York.

Seldin P. 1991, *The Teaching Portfolio: A Practical Guide to Improved Performance and Promotion and Tenure Decision*, Anker, Bolton MA.

Seldin, P. & Associates 1993, *Successful Use of Teaching Portfolios*, Anker, Bolton MA.

Seldin P. 1997, *The Teaching Portfolio: A Practical Guide to Improved Performance and Promotion and Tenure Decision*, 2nd edn, Anker, Bolton MA.

Shore, B.M. 1986, *The Teaching Dossier: A Guide to its Preparation and Use*, Canadian Association of University Teachers, Montreal, Canada.

References

Stockham, S. & Amann, J.F. 1994, 'Facilitating student feedback to improve teaching and learning', *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*, vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 51–55.

Tomasco, T.A. 1980, 'Student perceptions of instructional and personality characteristics of faculty: A canonical analysis', *Teaching of Psychology*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 79–82.

Wolf, K., Whinery, B. & Hagerty, P. 1995, 'Teaching portfolios and portfolio conversations for teacher educators and teachers', *Action in Teacher Education*, vol. 17, no.1, pp. 30–39.

Fostering, Recognising and Rewarding Scholarly Teaching at University College Cork: Three Perspectives

Áine Hyland, Marian McCarthy and Bettie Higgs
University College Cork
Áine Hyland
ahyland@pres.ucc.ie
Marian McCarthy
MMcCarthy@education.ucc.ie
Bettie Higgs
B.higgs@ucc.ie

Introduction

This chapter describes and documents the results of efforts to establish and embed teaching and learning as a form of scholarship at University College Cork (UCC). In this section, the authors of the chapter identify their roles and the contribution each of them has made to the venture.

Áine Hyland, Vice-President of UCC from 1999 to 2006 and Professor of Education from 1993 to 2006, describes the vision that impelled her to undertake the challenge of introducing the concept and practice of the scholarship of teaching and learning to her colleagues. She describes the context in which the vision originated; the political challenges she faced in introducing the various projects and initiatives to support teaching and learning; the need to ensure coherence between the various projects and initiatives; the practical issues involved in translating vision into reality; and the ongoing vigilance required to ensure that hard-won victories were not eroded over time. She points to the bottom-up nature of the undertaking and the significance of involving recognised and respected University researcher/teachers from the start. At issue was a culture change in UCC, such that teaching and learning as a form of scholarship could become a way of life in the academic community across all disciplines, from newly recruited lecturers and researchers to experienced and long-serving professors. Although the establishment of a Teaching and Learning Centre was an element in the plan, its role would be a supportive one in the context of an already established commitment to the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Marian McCarthy has been recently seconded from her post as lecturer in the Education Department to become Academic Coordinator of the certificated courses in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education in the Centre for Teaching and Learning, Ionad Bairre (established 2006). She describes her experiences in the late 1990s when she was asked by Áine Hyland to introduce staff to and mentor them in new theories and pedagogies of teaching and learning. She asks: What do faculty need to become engaged in investigating new pedagogies? Does that change over time? Is there a process of development evident? What supports or sustains faculty in this work? What stands in their way?

Bettie Higgs describes her day-to-day work as ongoing Academic Coordinator of the overall programme to support teaching and learning, located in Ionad Bairre. She

discusses the issues involved in initiating and developing various projects to support the scholarship of teaching and learning since 2002. Because not all faculty are in a position to commit themselves to the demands of a certificated course (for example, the Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education), she describes how she must continue to meet the requirements for support from such faculty at a time of rapid change within the University. The ongoing seminars and support sessions coordinated by Bettie Higgs run in parallel with the certificated courses, requiring close collaboration and cooperation between all involved in supporting teaching and learning at UCC. Among the questions she addresses are: What does it take to sustain such an undertaking on a day-to-day basis in a university setting? What facilitates its evolution into a more permanent component of university life, especially during a period of rapid change? What are the expectations for its future?

In Chapter 5 of this book, Nona Lyons describes her part in introducing a critical element of UCC's achievements—that is, the reflective portfolio inquiry process. She also discusses some results, especially what staff say they have learned from their systematic inquiries into teaching and learning. She asks: What scaffolds the task of creating a reflective teaching portfolio? What is a reflective inquiry practice? What do faculty say they learn from the process? Does it actually change their practice? How do we know? How do they know? What is necessary to sustain these efforts?

The Vision: Áine Hyland

UCC has long been recognised as an institution where teaching is held in high regard. This is evident from the inscription on the University's coat of arms: 'Where Finbar taught let Munster learn'. It is also evident in UCC's five-year strategic development plan for 2000 to 2005, *Agenda for Excellence* (2000), which outlined the University's commitment to scholarship and to excellence in its core activities of teaching and research. The Plan emphasised the key role of teaching and learning, and stated that teaching and learning development would form an important part of UCC's overall new strategy in the development of staff. The Plan also added that:

> There should be parity of esteem between teaching and discipline-based research, which should be formalised and validated by recognising effective and innovative teaching and learning practices by giving them the same status as research. Research into the teaching and learning process should itself be recognised and rewarded in the same way as all other forms of scholarship. There is a necessity to encourage and support academic staff in the scholarship and practice of effective teaching (University College Cork 2000, p. 13).

This commitment to encouraging and supporting teaching as a valid form of scholarship has gained momentum in many universities throughout the world in recent years. Such universities are concerned that the increased focus and emphasis on research in universities and institutions of higher education may have led to a devaluing of their teaching mission. As Ernest Boyer (1997) notes:

> Education is a seamless web, and if we hope to have centres of excellence in research, we must have excellence in the classroom. It is the scholarship of teaching that keeps the flame of scholarship alive (p.ii).

The same sentiment was echoed by Frank Rhodes, Emeritus President of Cornell University, in his introduction to a collection of essays published in 1998 to celebrate the 250th anniversary of Princeton University. Rhodes (1998) writes:

> We need our best scholars to be our teachers, and we need them to give the same creative energy to teaching as they give to scholarship. We need to identify, support, and reward those who teach superbly. There is no antithesis between teaching and research. Great teaching can, in fact, be a form of synthesis and scholarship (p.8)

In Ireland, the centrality of teaching in the university's mission was also adverted to by Malcolm Skilbeck in his 2001 report, *The University Challenged*, where he remarks:

> New and improved ways of teaching students is one of the challenges facing higher education staff. The status and prestige of research notwithstanding, according to the Carnegie Commission's international survey of the academic profession, teaching students emerged very strongly as the principal defining characteristic of the academy (p.72).

Yet, as Burton Clark (1987) noted in *The Academic Life* published by the Carnegie Foundation in 1987, universities seldom recognise and reward excellence in teaching. He pointed out that the greatest paradox of academic life in modern America is that, although most professors teach most of the time, and large proportions of them teach all the time, teaching is neither the activity most rewarded by the academic profession nor the one most valued by the system at large.

The same contradictions apply in many European universities. Appointments and promotions have traditionally been made on the basis of research standing and output. Although lip service is paid to teaching and community service—the other two pillars of an academic's life—these elements are not always seen to be of equal value in the appointments and promotions stakes. For example, academics in Ireland are not required to have any teaching qualification prior to appointment as university lecturers, and until the late 1990s, there had been only limited provision of training courses in teaching in higher education. In theory, teaching is one aspect of the promotions equation, but academics believe that those involved in assessing promotion applications have traditionally focused almost predominantly on the research record of applicants. This view was articulated in several submissions to the Review Group on the Academic Promotions Scheme in UCC in 2001. The submission of UCC's Academic Staff Association (2001) stated this view as follows:

> There is a widespread perception that the application of the (promotions) criteria is skewed heavily towards research publications and the generation of research income. This perception, whether well-founded or not, sends out a very confusing signal to ambitious young academics. On the one hand

they are being encouraged by the President to inspire and nurture the students, particularly undergraduate students, who are the prime source of income of the University, while on the other hand, they are being advised by wiser, and perhaps more cynical older colleagues that they should concentrate their energy on those matters which are seen to relate most strongly to career enhancement (Academic Staff Association 2001, (n.p.).

The tension between teaching and research that developed in the university sector in the 20th century became more marked as more and more funding became available for research from private and public sources. Since the Second World War, there appeared to be a growing belief that a university could excel either in research or in teaching but not in both. And since research was elevated to a position of superiority in the hierarchy of values within the university sector, the more prestigious universities were increasingly described as research universities, suggesting that in a university, teaching was less important than research.

The publication of Boyer's seminal book *Scholarship Reconsidered* in 1990 might well be considered a watershed in the history of higher education. This book offered a new paradigm for recognising the full range of scholarly activity within universities. Boyer posited a more inclusive vision of scholarship than had previously been recognised. He suggested that there are four forms of scholarships within universities: the scholarship of discovery, the scholarship of integration, the scholarship of application and the scholarship of teaching. The scholarship of discovery comes closest to what academics mean when they talk about research, although in its broader meaning as suggested by Boyer, it also includes creative work in literary, visual and performing arts. The scholarship of integration makes connections within and between the disciplines. It seeks to interpret, draw together and bring new insight to bear on original work. The scholarship of application seeks to engage the academic with the issues of the day, whether these are in the areas of arts, social sciences, law, commerce, science, medicine or engineering. Lessons learned in the application of knowledge can enrich teaching, and new intellectual understandings can arise from the very act of application. In the scholarship of application, theory and practice interact.

The scholarship of teaching provides the main link between academics and their students, especially undergraduate students, and initiates students into the best values of the university. Good teachers enthuse and engage their students. They imbue them with the excitement of learning and can instil that passion for discovery that will continue the cycle of research and teaching into the next generation. Many academics entered academic life as a result of the enthusiasm and example of a university teacher. Teaching can be one of the most rewarding aspects of the academic's life. In the classroom and in the lecture hall, an academic's research can be subjected to ongoing review and critique by students—often as fundamental and challenging as review by one's peers. For an academic, teaching can provide an ongoing forum to engage in debate and discussion about research.

This complementarity of research and teaching in higher education was referred to as follows by John Slaughter, President of Occidental College, in a speech delivered at Engineering Deans Institute in Salt Lake City, Utah, 29 March 1982: 'Research is

to teaching as sin is to confession. If you don't participate in the former, you have very little to say in the latter (quoted in Rhodes 1998, p.12). And if, as Frank Rhodes suggests, we need our best scholars to be our teachers and those who teach superbly need to be identified, supported, and rewarded, how should this be done?

At UCC, in the context of the commitment to teaching in the University's strategic plan (2000), it was clear that a scheme for recognising and rewarding teaching needed to be introduced and that a structured and coordinated approach to supporting teaching and learning needed to be put in place. UCC had prided itself on being the first university in the Republic of Ireland to set up a Teaching Development Unit in 1984; throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, this Unit pioneered innovative approaches to supporting university teaching. In the early 1990s, the impact of the Unit had begun to wane and it was not until 1999, with a new emphasis on training and development, that the issue of support for teaching was again taken seriously within the University.

In my role as academic Vice-President and a member of the Executive Management Team of the University, I decided that developing opportunities for recognising, valuing and rewarding excellence in teaching and learning would be a significant part of my role. My appointment as Chair of the Staff Enhancement and Development Committee (SEDC) of the Academic Council of the University in January 2000 provided me with an opportunity to ensure that there would be an explicit recognition of and support for teaching within UCC. As Professor of Education and Head of the Education Department since 1993, I had been interested in university teaching for many years. In 1994 I had submitted a course proposal to the Faculty of Arts in UCC for a Higher Diploma in Teaching in Higher Education. Unfortunately, this course outline was not acceptable to the Faculty at that time. I had also argued at a national level that university lecturers should be required to undertake some preparation for the teaching aspect of their work, as was increasingly the case in other countries.

The renewed interest in teaching in UCC coincided with several other relevant developments both within the University and in the broader educational community. The requirement for systematic quality review of university departments and units, in the Irish Universities Act of 1997, had led to the establishment of the Quality Promotions Unit in UCC. The Director of the Unit added her dynamism and enthusiasm to the venture to promote excellence in teaching. The timing also coincided with enhanced funding opportunities through the Higher Education Authority (the statutory body responsible for allocating state funding to higher education in Ireland) for initiatives within universities that would support teaching and learning.

Under my leadership, UCC submitted grant applications under both the HEA's Targeted Initiatives Scheme and the Training of Trainers Scheme in 2000 and in subsequent years. Among the projects for which funding was granted were a President's Awards Scheme for Excellence in Teaching and an Awards Scheme for Research on Innovative Forms of Teaching and Learning. Funding was also provided to support Teaching Portfolio Seminars in the context of a more explicit recognition of teaching in the University's promotion scheme. Grants totalling more

than €1 million were secured under both schemes for a wide variety of initiatives over the five-year period 2000/1–2005/6. These included projects on the Scholarship of Teaching, Multiple Approaches to Teaching and Learning, Peer Review of Teaching and Peer Mentoring.

In 2004, approval was given by Academic Council for the provision of certificated courses for staff at Certificate, Diploma and Masters levels in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. In their first two years, these courses were attended by over 60 staff from all faculties—Medicine and Health, Science, Law, Engineering, Commerce, Arts and Social Sciences. These included junior staff, in the early years of their university careers, and senior staff at professorial level with over 25 years of teaching experience. There are currently a further 45 staff registered for the Certificate course and 17 staff registered for the Masters course, a course that will provide a rich opportunity for research into teaching and learning across the disciplines. Working with colleagues who have already achieved at doctoral level in their own disciplines has proved a rewarding challenge, with participants and leaders learning from each other.

The approach to supporting teaching within UCC was influenced by the work of the US Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the publications of the American Association for Higher Education and the work of Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Project Zero's work on Teaching for Understanding (Stone-Wiske 1998) was particularly influential, as was Howard Gardner's (1983) research on multiple intelligences, David Perkins'(1992) work on thinking and the work of Seidel et al. (1997) on portfolio assessment.

Coincidentally, in the academic year 2000–01, Nona Lyons was a visiting scholar at UCC, where she had advised on portfolio development for the Higher Diploma in Education course. Nona had been involved in portfolio development and assessment as a faculty member in Dartmouth College in the United States, and had edited and published an important collection of articles entitled *With Portfolio in Hand: Validating the New Teacher Professionalism* (1998). UCC was fortunate that Nona was available for several years to spend time in UCC providing support and leadership for sessions on portfolio development. Between 400 and 500 staff members attended Nona's portfolio seminars between 2001 and 2006. The seminars were an opportunity for staff to share their teaching approaches and experiences. They also gave staff members the opportunity to present entries from their portfolios, which provided a catalyst for powerful conversations among staff. Staff from across all disciplines and faculties—Arts and Social Science, Commerce, Law, Science, Food Science, Engineering and Medicine—attended.

From 2000 to 2006, the following developments within the University heightened staff awareness of the significance of university teaching:

• The President's Awards for Excellence in Teaching were won every year by highly respected faculty members, most of whom were also known within the University for their research excellence.
• The awards for research on innovative forms of teaching helped to develop a scholarship of teaching approach to teaching and learning. Seminars led by

successful recipients of these awards were well attended by other staff, thus providing a mechanism to disseminate innovative teaching strategies and approaches.

- Two collections of articles written by staff members were published and widely disseminated. (Lyons et al. 2002; Hyland 2004).
- The wide-scale introduction of Quality Review (QR) of departments, with its associated self-assessment component1, highlighted the role of teaching in the work of the University's departments.
- Student evaluation of courses, which had not been a general practice in Irish universities, was introduced as a required component of the QR exercise and undergraduate students were not slow to point out what was good and bad in the teaching they had experienced.
- The revised promotions scheme from 2002 onwards required applicants to submit a Teaching Portfolio. Many of those promoted at both the Senior Lecturer and the Associate Professor levels had won a President's Award for Excellence in Teaching or an award for research on innovative forms of teaching and this provided tangible evidence that teaching was valued in the promotions race.

By summer 2006, it was clear that the various strategies for supporting teaching and learning in UCC were showing success.

UCC's reputation as a university that valued and recognised research-led teaching began to grow nationally and internationally. UCC was asked to lead the Irish Universities' Quality Board project on Teaching and Learning in 2004. UCC was one of a network of European universities involved in 2005–06 in the European University Association (EUA) Quality Culture Network on Teaching and Learning. During the same period, Dr Bettie Higgs, Academic Coordinator of UCC's Teaching and Learning Support team and a member of the staff of the Geology Department, was chosen as a Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) scholar by the Carnegie Foundation. In summer 2006, UCC was successful in its application to join the Carnegie Foundation's CASTL Institutional Leadership programme and agreed to lead the network on Graduate Education for the next two years. This network includes Rutgers University, Michigan State University, the University of Wisconsin in Madison and Howard University. In October 2006, UCC has been successful in a bid for funding to lead an (Irish) National Academy for the Integration of Research and Teaching and Learning. A sum of €3 million (almost $US4 million) has been provided from the Strategic Innovation Fund of the (Irish) Higher Education Authority for this National Academy.

As I reflect on my role in initiating and implementing change in the teaching and learning agenda of UCC during my period as Vice-President, I realise that the role required a combination of political acumen, academic knowledge and pragmatism. The complexities of university politics have been well documented, but it is difficult to appreciate the Machiavellianism that exists in universities unless one has experienced it.

University 'change agents' must be eternally vigilant—vigilant to ensure that university strategic plans continue to forefront teaching and learning; vigilant to ensure that teaching and learning remains a university priority when funding is being allocated within the university; vigilant to apply for new funding opportunities for teaching and learning at national and international levels; vigilant to ensure that any new structures that have been built within the university to support and enhance teaching and learning are not eroded or destroyed by colleagues who would prefer the old status quo to be undisturbed. Political awareness also means that when new senior managers are appointed (whether academic—for example, Deans—or non-academic—for example, Human Resources Directors or Finance Officers), they are appropriately briefed on the significance of teaching and learning and encouraged to become advocates or at least passive supporters.

At an academic level, effective and successful change agents must have academic credibility with their academic colleagues; to maintain and develop this credibility, they need to be visibly supportive of teaching. In UCC, President G.T. Wrixon continued to teach at least one undergraduate course during his term, to emphasise his commitment to teaching; as Vice-President, I taught one undergraduate and one graduate course every year as well as supervising several PhD students. One should also maintain contact with national and international research on teaching and learning, so that one is able to answer questions such as the following: What constitutes 'best practice'? What is the evidence for this? What actions are other internationally recognised universities taking to support and reward teaching and learning?

At a pragmatic level, change agents must take every opportunity to keep teaching and learning at the forefront of the university's mission and agenda. This might mean asking a high-profile figure to make a speech at a teaching awards ceremony; ensuring that the university President and other senior management figures visibly support teaching and learning; ensuring that excellence in teaching is given public recognition—for example, in the university's newsletter and website and in local and national newspapers. It means ensuring that seminars and talks on teaching are prominently advertised and held in prestigious locations (for example, the university's council boardroom); that high-quality refreshments are provided at teaching and learning events; and that celebratory events are appropriately marked.

Ultimately, it is important that we remember that our primary purpose is to improve the learning experiences of university students, undergraduate and postgraduate. In that regard, I cannot improve on words of Mary Huber and S.P. Morreale:

> What matters is not just what the disciplines can do for the scholarship of teaching and learning, nor even what the scholarship of teaching and learning can give back to the disciplines in return. What matters in the end is whether, through our participation in this new trading zone, students' understanding is deepened, their minds and characters strengthened, and their lives and communities enriched (Huber & Morreale 2002, (p. 85).

Mentoring New Pedagogies for Teaching and Learning:
Marian McCarthy

Here I discuss and reflect on my role as a mentor to staff interested in teaching and learning, first as part of an informal learning and teaching discussion group, then as facilitator of a series of short courses that focused on aspects of pedagogy, and finally as mentor of an HEA-funded course entitled 'Mentoring in a University Context'. The interactions that occur within a mentoring programme often reveal the key concerns and issues of academic staff grappling with change. Such a programme can only grow out of the needs and concerns of mentees; it cannot be imposed. Therefore, it provides a gauge of changes taking place in a university from the 'bottom up' and, in this case, illustrates one aspect of the growth of UCC towards a learning organisation. For all these reasons, it is important to document and reflect on any mentoring programme's successes and failures.

Looking Back

I have been involved in the Staff Training and Development Programme at UCC since 1995, providing induction and in-service sessions for academic staff, under the direction of Professor Áine Hyland. In the first two years, these took the form of orientation sessions for new staff and addressed their immediate needs and concerns in the area of teaching and learning. For example, I gave sessions on how to teach large groups; how to conduct a tutorial or seminar; how to take and give feedback; and how to move beyond the transmission model in the lecture theatre. My focus was primarily practical.

In the autumn of 1996, in response to requests from lecturers who wanted more focus on the strategies and theory behind the classroom techniques presented in the orientation sessions, I set up a teaching support group. This was a small, self-selecting group of interested teachers who represented a cross-section of disciplines. They came primarily from the Arts Faculty, although we did have one scientist. We met regularly over three and a half years, about three times a term on a Friday afternoon, in a seminar room in the Education Department. These sessions were informal and needs based, and focused primarily on the pedagogic and the pastoral—that is, the participants' need to talk about and share learning and teaching experiences. The sessions were enhanced by plenty of tea and sympathy. During the three years of our meetings, we built up an atmosphere of trust and security, and I am eternally grateful to that band of colleagues who taught me so much about university life and about teaching and learning. Looking back on it now, it was an extraordinary time, for our meetings were fuelled only by our interest in teaching and in collegial discussion. This was before the days of teaching as a benchmark for promotion and before the President's Awards for Excellence in Teaching (although I welcome these wholeheartedly, and it was a great source of pride to me that in the first year of the awards, three of them went to members of the group).

During our time together, I documented each session, keeping an anonymous account of the issues and concerns emerging. The main pedagogical needs that emerged were for different models of and approaches to teaching and learning. In particular, participants wanted guidance on how to:

- introduce discussion and facilitate feedback
- teach large groups interactively
- maintain student interest
- cater for student diversity in terms of disciplinary focus and cultural difference
- find out what the students know and understand
- evaluate a course.

These sessions contrasted with the orientation sessions for new staff, because there was time to build a conceptual framework and to ground hints and strategies in contemporary theories of teaching and learning. Because I was also involved with the Multiple Intelligences Curriculum and Assessment Project at this time, I drew much from the theories of Multiple Intelligences and Teaching for Understanding (TFU) and from the work of Project Zero at Harvard. Most significant at this time, and important in directing my future practice in staff development, was my focus on performances of understanding rather than on tips and activities. Thinking about teaching and learning is a habitual and gradual process, which begins with survival strategies, so I make no apology for dealing with the practical, immediate needs of staff by providing them with tips. Nevertheless, tips need appropriate educational goals if they are to be more than a first aid kit. Moreover, there is a distinction between a model of teaching and learning support based on training and one based on development; a focus on research into teaching clearly means we are dealing with the latter. Thus we now have a programme of workshops and a network of colleagues and meetings in place, so that we can move beyond the immediate survival strategies and towards the theoretical and cultural underpinnings of and assumptions about our teaching practice.

Other issues that were important to the group give a picture of the University in the late-1990s (as seen by the group, at least):

- information technology and its effect on and relationship with teaching
- the use and abuse of the Internet
- the problematic nature of some teaching spaces, particularly those allocated to large classes, and the lack of facilities and resources in certain spaces and certain subject areas
- modularisation and its effect on teaching
- the alignment of learning and assessment
- gender issues and multicultural perspectives
- the demoralising effect of an emerging bureaucracy on teaching.

We did not solve these problems, but we did give ourselves the space and time to name, discuss and share them and locate them within a broader context where possible. There was insight and we did make changes to our practice. In these respects, at least, we initiated a community of practice focused on learning and teaching. With the introduction of the Teaching Portfolio seminars, our teaching support group found a niche, a broader context and support structure.

Looking Inward

In 2001–02, as part of the Staff Training and Development programme, I provided a course of 10 sessions on Multiple Approaches to Teaching and Learning. By definition, its focus was pedagogical and drew on the theories of Multiple Intelligences and Teaching for Understanding (TFU). Given the growing interest in teaching and reflective practice emerging from the portfolio sessions, it was now possible to build on the foundations of the community of practice already established.

I encouraged participants to focus on a programme they were teaching and to develop this in a student-centred way that used the TFU model as a framework. Lecturers focused on making learning more generative; on identifying intended understanding goals (in the current climate, these foreground learning outcomes); on devising key learning performances/activities that would develop and scaffold student knowledge and understanding; and on developing ongoing assessment that would optimise feedback to students. For example, one participant was concerned with the way modularisation had caused her course to become disjointed. She took a TFU approach to it, ensuring that her goals were visible, her tasks focused on understanding and her assessment primarily formative. This gave her course a sense of cohesion and direction and integrated assessment into the module. Using this approach, other members of the group planned upcoming courses or critiqued courses they had just taught. Together we were making progress, for now the focus was more on student learning and on the pedagogical framework that would facilitate this, rather than on the lecturer's subject expertise and how it could be best transmitted.

In the academic year 2002–03, again as part of the Staff Training and Development programme, a HEA-funded course entitled 'Mentoring in a University Context' was developed. We proposed a broad brief to incorporate the various forms of mentoring in order to encourage flexibility in uptake. The course defined a mentor as 'an experienced person with whom the inductee can feel at ease and to whom he/she can speak freely about aspects of their work, including personal feelings, and who can act as an appropriate role-model' (Human Resources 2002, p. 63).

This mentoring course was conducted over seven lunchtime sessions in the Council Room, on a series of Thursdays, from November 2002 to May 2003. The first session began with an overview of the concerns of staff to date, based on the support groups I had already worked with, as described above. There were fourteen staff members present, representing a cross-section of disciplines and departments including Accountancy and Finance, Geology, Nursing, Sociology, Education, Paediatrics and Admissions. Much of the session was spent identifying the needs of the current group. Although there was a general interest in the broader pastoral and 'critical friend' aspects of mentoring, the group as a whole wished to focus on their own pedagogical needs and on supporting each other in this context. Thus, session 2 was devoted to models for conducting and observing a tutorial. The third session focused on TFU and on some excellent examples from the group on participative approaches to learning. The regular group of six to eight members then asked for input on the theoretical underpinnings of assessment, which thus defined session 4.

The next session focused on assessment as feedback and on examples that group members had found successful. Here there was a focus on peer support as colleagues planned future interventions together.

Although the sessions themselves focused on pedagogical concerns, they nevertheless provided opportunities for the development of participants' mentoring skills. Indeed, the course provided an excellent opportunity for practice-based learning, and participants were able to practice almost all aspects of mentoring. Also, a focus on reflection and self-assessment emerged, as participants began to fine-tune their individual practice.

Looking Forward

Some important themes emerge from our experience with both a community of practice in learning and teaching and with mentoring at UCC. First, it is best to work from the 'bottom up', addressing the needs of staff as defined by them: no successful mentoring programme can ignore this point.

Second, mentoring is a complex activity. It can be acted out in many ways in the various aspects of the lecturing role—that is, at different times, lecturers are called on to be teachers, learners, mentors, assessors, administrators, counsellors, tutors, demonstrators and so on. This complexity is compounded by the various traditions and practices of different departments. The course described above focused on the professional needs of lecturers/tutors, but also considered student needs because teachers were concerned to foster student learning.

Third, the definition of mentoring must be flexible. A holistic approach to mentoring is required, one that begins where the participants are and works from there. We have seen that staff members are beginning to mentor each other as they continue to meet and present and listen to each other.

The following suggestions were made for developing an advanced mentoring course by those who took the first course:

- *In the future we could study images of teaching, beginning with film representations and then progress to micro-teaching.* (This has developed into the current Peer Review Series, where faculty record their teaching and share it and review it with a group of colleagues.)
- *Work on the aspect of mentoring Teaching Assistants.* (This has now become part of a five-credit module for postgraduate students on teaching and learning.)
- *Develop our emotional intelligence with learners.* (We continue to work on the personal intelligences in the context of a focus on Multiple Intelligences theory and its implications for practice.)
- *Focus more on reflective practice and on developing a portfolio.* (Faculty taking certificated courses are now required to keep a Course Portfolio of practice.)

Looking Beyond

In Homer's *Odyssey*, Mentor is the trusted and experienced advisor to the young Telemachus, hence the derivation of the word 'mentor'. In Latin, the word comes from the past participle of the verb *monere*: to advise, or literally 'to make to think'. The idea of being a trusted and experienced advisor is a tall order, but I am the one who has learnt most from this encounter. In the context of developing a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, the idea of being 'made to think' is significant. We need to think about our teaching so that we can make it visible, share and build on practice, be accountable, have it peer reviewed, critique and advance it.

Going to Scale with Teaching and Learning at UCC: Bettie Higgs

David Perkins, researcher and co-director with Howard Gardner of Harvard's Project Zero, argues convincingly that three visionaries are needed to make a project work: a political visionary, a theoretical visionary, and someone who will make it work on the ground (Perkins 1992). At UCC, as at most universities, any potential visionaries were already juggling the demands of teaching, research, administration and service. Therefore, we gathered together a team of visionaries to carry out the three roles collaboratively.

The main political visionary was Áine Hyland. As Professor of Education, she was not only familiar with the latest research and thinking about teaching and learning; she was also deeply committed to enhancing teaching and learning at third level. She encouraged staff in her department to research current theories and to collaborate with leading institutions in the field—for example, the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. In relation to the education of university academics, the shift from a training model to a continuous professional development model informed her vision. Her attempts to persuade some senior colleagues that development in teaching and learning was necessary in third-level institutions met with resistance, but gained enough supporters to make eventual inroads towards her goal. Dr Norma Ryan, Director of the Quality Promotion Unit, immediately saw the benefits to student learning of the proposed approach and came on board. Marian McCarthy, influenced by the Harvard Teaching for Understanding model of Howard Gardner, began investigating the applicability of this model for third-level education, in part through small-group discussion and study sessions with the new staff. In 2000 I began my own portfolio development, while studying an accredited course in teaching and learning in higher education with the Open University, UK, and was exposed to current thinking particularly in Europe and Australia.

Then in 2001 President Gerald Wrixon announced a new award for Excellence in Teaching at UCC, to be documented by a teaching portfolio. Nona Lyons, who had been working with reflective portfolios for teacher education programmes in the United States, was invited to develop a set of seminars to introduce the teaching portfolio idea to UCC. Participants were encouraged to analyse and reflect on their own teaching and their students' learning in a systematic way and to document the process and what they learned from engaging in it. Lyons cast this new programme within the conceptual framework advanced by Ernest Boyer (1990)—that is, as a

scholarly activity that would foster a new and badly needed scholarship of teaching. Lyons also consulted with staff from several Irish institutions who were similarly interested in beginning a portfolio process in support of contributing to a scholarship of teaching.

Surprisingly, this activity uncovered much research already going on across the faculties, by staff who were looking at issues of teaching and learning in their own disciplines. For my own part, I was teaching and researching in the Department of Geology, and developing a reflective teaching portfolio as part of an accredited course with the Open University in the UK. For me, the new wave of activity in UCC came at just the right time to capture my enthusiasm for this type of personal and professional development. I began to construct a vision of similar accreditation being offered 'in-house' for all UCC staff who wished to be involved.

In 2002 I was asked to coordinate the Support for Teaching and Learning Programme at UCC. Under this banner, I encouraged not only existing activities but also new courses in teaching and learning, with new in-house presenters and facilitators. This work was enthusiastically received by academic staff. I also wanted to see new forms of recognition for staff who showed outstanding dedication to the development of their own teaching. The prestigious 'rewarding excellence' schemes, although welcome, were limited to a relatively small number of award-winners. I believed we needed models of accreditation that would encourage, and facilitate, staff who wanted to engage seriously with theories and practice of teaching and learning in higher education. I pledged to raise the question 'what about accreditation?' at every possible meeting. Although all members of the team shared my sentiment, it would have been easier for all concerned to keep the status quo and simply support a programme of 'open to all' lunchtime seminars. Nevertheless our discussions gradually moved in the direction of the provision of accredited courses.

The 2002–2003 academic year finished with an international conference on the Scholarship of Teaching at UCC with over 70 representatives from Irish institutions attending. Eighteen UCC staff presented their portfolio research. A publication, *Advancing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning through a Reflective Portfolio Process* (Lyons, Hyland & Ryan 2002) captured this work. Meanwhile, Professor Áine Hyland, with wide consultation, took on the job of writing module descriptions for a proposed Higher Diploma in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. I was concerned that this would be perceived by staff as similar to an existing Higher Diploma in Education provided for graduates who are preparing to teach in primary and secondary school. Consequently, a modular approach that could build to a Postgraduate Certificate, Diploma and Masters in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education was agreed, and submitted and accepted by UCC's Academic Board in 2003. Assessment was to be largely by portfolio. The first two modules, leading to the Postgraduate Certificate, were presented in 2004–2005 with 70 staff registered. Of these, 58 staff successfully completed the course and were awarded this first PGCTLHE; 40 continued and completed the Diploma the following year; and 18 are currently engaged in the Masters programme. The portfolio work carried out by these staff members, documenting their own teaching and student learning, has been presented in the form of papers and posters at conferences and in publications.

In September 2006, Ionad Bairre, UCC's Teaching and Learning Centre, was established to formalise the activities supporting professional development of staff in their desire to improve student learning. In 2006–07, a new cohort of 45 staff participated in the second cycle of the Certificate course, and Marian McCarthy was seconded to coordinate the accredited courses. In addition, the traditional open-for-all lunchtime seminars are continuing to attract staff, some coming for the first time. These seminars, such as 'Researching your own Teaching and Student Learning', 'Building a Reflective Teaching Portfolio', 'Peer-Review of Teaching' and 'Assessing Learning Outcomes' all support portfolio-building. I have found that the success of these sessions depends largely upon the participants themselves and their willingness to share their practice. As they seek ways to improve student learning, staff report renewed enthusiasm and excitement in their own teaching.

The participants completing accredited courses and the staff attending lunchtime sessions become our ambassadors in the departments and schools around the University. New directives from the EU and from government, such as those related to a learning outcomes approach, are implemented with the help of all of these people. In summary, five crucial developments have underpinned progress in this institution:

• UCC's mission statement concerning 'parity of esteem between teaching and discipline-based research' sent out a clear message that good teaching was to be valued.
• The establishment of the President's awards for Excellence in Teaching reinforced that message.
• The awards for Research into Innovative Forms of Teaching also reinforced the UCC mission statement, and encouraged an emerging scholarship of teaching.
• The requirement for a portfolio of teaching practice, both for awards and for promotion to senior lecturer, provided incentives.
• A Teaching and Learning 'team' from across the disciplines has been established, the members of which collaboratively carry out the roles of Perkin's three visionaries.

Conclusion
Here three perspectives illustrate one story—the complex undertaking of creating and maintaining a scholarship of teaching and learning, and the integration of teaching and learning with disciplinary research in full parity at UCC. We welcome and encourage others' stories.

References

Academic Staff Association 2001, 'Report submitted to the Review Group on the Academic Promotions Scheme, 2001', University College Cork.

Boyer, E. 1990, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Princeton NJ.

Boyer, E. 1997, 'Prologue: Scholarship—a personal journey', in *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate*, C. Glassick, M.T. Huber & G.I. Maeroff, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Clark, B.R. 1987, *The Academic Life: Small Worlds, Different Worlds*, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Princeton NJ.

Gardner, H. 1983, *Frames of Mind*, Basic Books, New York.

Huber, M. & Moreale S.P. 2002, *Disciplinary Styles in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Princeton NJ and the American Association for Higher Education, Washington DC.

Human Resources 2002, *Staff Training and Development Handbook*, University College Cork.

Hyland, A. 2004. *University College Cork as a Learning Organisation*, University College Cork.

Lyons, N. 1998, *With Portfolio in Hand: Validating the New Teacher Professionalism*, Teachers College Press, New York.

Lyons, N., Hyland, A. & Ryan, N. 2002, *Advancing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning through a Reflective Portfolio Process*, University College Cork.

Perkins, D. 1992, *Smart Schools: Better Thinking and Learning for Every Child*, Free Press, New York.

Quality Promotion Unit 2005, *Quality at UCC*, University College Cork, Ireland. Available from:
http://www.ucc.ie/en/SupportandAdministration/ServiceandAdministrativeOffices/QualityPromotionUnit/GuidelinesforQualityReviews/Guidelines/
[22 December 2006].

Rhodes, F.T. 1998, 'The university and its critics', in *Universities and Their Leadership*, eds W.G. Bowen & H. Shapiro, Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ.

Seidel, S., Walters, J., Kirby, E., Olff, N., Powell, K., Scripp, L. & Veenema, S. 1997, *Portfolio Practices: Thinking through the Assessment of Children's Work*, National Education Association, Washington DC.

Skilbeck, M. 2001, *The University Challenged: A Review of International Trends and Issues with Particular Reference to Ireland*, Higher Education Authority, Dublin.

Stone-Wiske, M. 1998, *Teaching for Understanding: Linking Research with Practice*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

University College Cork 2000, *Agenda for Excellence* [UCC Strategic Development Plan 2000-2005], University College Cork. Available from
<http://www.ucc.ie/services/opa/stratplan/StrategicPlan-Long.pdf>,
[20 December 2006].

References

----

[1] In this context, 'self assessment' refers not to self-assessment by an individual but to self-assessment by an academic department or other unit within the university: 'A co-ordinating committee of the department/unit/academic programme course team will prepare a Self-Assessment Report. The purpose of this report is to provide a succinct, but comprehensive statement of the department's/unit's activities and, in the case of an academic department, will include an analysis of its teaching, learning and research. It will help the department/unit to identify its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOTs) and will allow it to suggest appropriate remedies where necessary' (Quality Promotion Unit 2005).

Educating Practitioners for Reflective Inquiry: The Contribution of a Portfolio Process to New Ways of Knowing

Carmel Halton and Nona Lyons
University of College Cork
Carmel Halton
chalton@appsocstud.ucc.ie
Nona Lyons
nonalyons@hotmail.com

Context

In 2004, the Department of Applied Social Studies at University College Cork (UCC) inaugurated a new Masters of Social Science (MSocSc) by portfolio. This new programme, which exists side by side with the Master of Social Science (MSocSc) by thesis, gives experienced social work practitioners the opportunity to investigate through research real problems of their practice arising within the context of their employing agencies. Included within the new Masters programme is the requirement to complete a reflective portfolio to document the research process, which casts reflective inquiry as a mandate of professional development. This chapter uses research data collected in interviews with programme participants to report on results of the new Masters by portfolio programme, in particular, on participants' discoveries of new knowledge and ways of knowing and their awareness and understandings of these discoveries.

Objectives of the New Masters of Social Science by Portfolio

In spite of Ernest Boyer's compelling call for a new scholarship of application that addresses the real, complex problems of individuals and their institutions—that asks, 'How can knowledge be responsibly applied to consequential problems?' (Boyer 1990, p. 21)—most academic researchers have not systematically examined how and with what skills practitioners go about inquiring into the puzzles, dilemmas or contradictions they encounter in their everyday work lives. The most extensive research to date is probably research on self-study in teaching and teacher education (Loughran et al. 2004). Some research that does exist emphasises the gap between practitioners' espoused theories of action and their actual attempts to solve these problems of practice (Argyris 1990; Argyris & Schön 1974; Schön 1983, 1995). Thus in 2004 when UCC's Department of Applied Social Studies offered a new Masters in Social Science (by portfolio) programme for practitioner social workers, it simultaneously offered practitioners a mandate to document how they went about the inquiry process through a reflective portfolio process. In the new programme, participants would conduct research on a problem of their practice while they simultaneously engaged in a thoughtful, reflective interrogation and documentation of every step of the process.

Inquiry is a challenging undertaking for students and their teachers, often the subject of serious misconceptions (Kuhn 2005) and a process that needs to be scaffolded for all its practitioners. Common usage defines inquiry as an

investigation—that is, to probe, explore, research, question, query and so on (Oxford American Desk Dictionary and Thesaurus 2001, p. 427). But these definitions fail to hint at the skills involved. Here, following psychologist Deanna Kuhn (2005, p. 4), inquiry is defined initially as *thinking well* in undertaking the investigation of a problem arising in a real-life setting. Reflective inquiry in a portfolio process highlights the inquiry task as a meta-cognitive issue—that is, the thinking about one's own processes of thinking and knowing, which is needed to document the investigative process as well as the meaning and understandings one achieves through it.

This chapter reports on the results of the first test of the new two-year programme, the Masters in Social Science (by portfolio), from the perspective of the first class of social workers (n=4) in the programme and from the perspective of the course designers (the authors of this chapter). The chapter addresses two issues:

- the course designers' views of how reflective portfolio development contributes to the inquiry process, especially in real-life settings
- practitioners' perspectives on the inquiry skills they needed to undertake the programme, the skills they actually used and what they learned from the process.

This chapter first outlines the structure of the programme and its reflective portfolio, then discusses the skills needed for inquiry and the challenges involved in developing those skills, and finally reports on the responses of both participants and teachers to the new programme, highlighting how the programme explicitly interacted with and refined practitioners' way of knowing.

Programme Structure and Portfolio Construction

Run over two academic years, the new Masters of Social Science (MSocSc) by portfolio programme is structured around the development of:

- research projects situated within participants' employing agencies—participants identify areas of research interest and formulate a two-year research plan
- reflective portfolios—portfolios focus both on participants' research projects and on the development of participants' ways of knowing and inquiry-based skills.

In other words, the portfolio both supports and requires a reflective approach to the inquiry conducted through the research project.

The programme incorporates reflective inquiry through a peer inquiry group process. The participants meet in a group on a regular monthly basis for the first year of the programme and on a fortnightly basis for the second year. These two-hour group discussions include all the participants and the course director. The group is a loosely structured learning environment designed to meet the particular needs and concerns of participants at any given time, to provide them with the opportunity to present particular issues arising from their research, to invite

discussion and comment from others and, in the process, to clarify and point to ways forward in their research agendas. In this environment, participants are helped to refine their research questions and to select an appropriate research methodology, a central element of the portfolio construction process. The programme also includes lectures; individual tutorials; classes on research, journal writing and journal reading; and individual presentations of participants' progress.

For assessment, participants submit several pieces of work throughout the two years of the programme, and these pieces, listed below, comprise the final research portfolio:

• learning journal, consisting of entries on developing reflective approaches to researching social work (3000 words)
• review of literature (3000–5000 words)
• research proposal (5000 words)
• research design and final report (20 000 words)
• overall reflection and implications for the future (the finished portfolio should include an overall reflection on what the participant has learned from engaging in the portfolio research process and any suggestions arising for future research—approximately 500 words).

As a learning and assessment activity, the learning journal is intended to encourage participants to formulate, track and document their thoughts, ideas and actions throughout the programme. Participants are required to write in their learning journal at regular intervals throughout the programme. In the peer group discussions (outlined above), participants are encouraged to select entries from their learning journals and to read them aloud to the other group participants and to seek comments and suggestions. Writing the learning journal helps participants to write freely and develop a sense of competence in their writing ability. Reading journal entries in the group helps to promote participants' confidence in engaging in discussions with others about their emerging thoughts and ideas.

In joining a reflective portfolio process to a standard research inquiry process in this programme, we have added a new dimension to research inquiry—that is, a deliberate reflection on the process. We want to ensure that all aspects of the research process engaged participants in a reflective dialogue as well as providing them with a means of documenting the process of inquiry and learning. Each step of the research process—developing a research question, undertaking a literature review, developing an appropriate research design, gaining access to study participants, carrying out the research, writing it up—is subject to reflective interrogation and dialogue with colleagues and instructors through the portfolio process over the course of the programme. The portfolio aspect of the programme is deemed of special significance because it uniquely allows for the documentation of both the research and reflective processes of the programme. Participants, who are also practicing social workers, are being introduced to research for the first time and doing so within their own institutions, situations often fraught with dilemmas. The reflective portfolio process provides a place to document the experience and to ponder what it means to the research and the researcher and what new understandings it helps them to achieve.

Given both the participants' lack of familiarity with reflective inquiry, and lack of understanding of the inquiry process more generally (discussed below), we feel the inquiry process needs to be taught, mentored, modelled and supported in collaboration with others. Therefore, in this new course, we scaffold the process in several ways. We:

- review the definitions of reflective inquiry by John Dewey (1933), Donald Schön (1983) and ourselves, all of which emphasise the serious, systematic work of inquiry that is built on the requirement for evidence and deliberation
- introduce and mentor students through the process of creating portfolio entries with their evidence, the building blocks of the portfolio
- monitor students' reflective writing
- invite them to share in presenting and critiquing their portfolio entries over the course of the programme and, at its conclusion, articulating what they have found and learned from the process.

Challenges: Defining and Undertaking Reflective Inquiry

Recent research on reflective inquiry undertaken as part of a portfolio process has identified two significant problems: there is little agreement about what reflective inquiry is; and, without an agreed definition, there is little comparable research that can document or verify the purported, but highly regarded, benefits of reflective inquiry (Rodgers 2002; Zeichner 1999). Lacking description, the tasks of an inquiry process remain hidden from view and understanding that might guide new inquirers.

Defining Reflective Inquiry

As developers of the new course, we share in defining the portfolio process and teaching social work students about it. We begin with an introductory definition of reflective inquiry. To us:

> Reflection is an intentional act engaging a person alone, but especially in collaboration with others—students, teachers, practitioners, other researchers or colleagues—in *systematic inquiry*, interrogating a situation of teaching or learning, usually one presenting some puzzle, to construct an understanding of some aspect of it. Such an act looks both backwards and to the future. It is in service of understanding and meaning that will shape action. It involves gathering and documenting evidence of the inquiry. It likely involves narrative for it is the story of meaning and it can raise ethical issues for the people involved (Lyons 2002, p. 99, emphasis added).

This definition incorporates the idea of an intentional investigation of some real-life puzzle or problem, which has as its goal meaning and understanding gained through serious investigation, the assessment of evidence and collaborative reflection.

Kuhn (2005), bringing insights from developmental psychology, her own innovative empirical research with children and adolescents and her review of adult

development in inquiry, suggests the complexity of inquiry for students of all ages:

> Students must have not only the skills and the opportunity to engage in increasingly complex forms of inquiry … it is equally essential that they develop a firm belief that engaging in inquiry is worthwhile. Such a belief can be grounded only in their own experience. But inquiry experiences have the advantage of revealing their value and power as they are engaged. No further argument for their worth is necessary. Nonetheless, understanding of the nature and value of inquiry itself develops, as do the skills that inquiry requires … patterns in the development of this epistemological understanding of the nature of knowing have been identified by developmental psychologists, and their findings stand to inform the stated intentions of educators to include understanding of inquiry as a curriculum standard (Kuhn 2005, p. 59).

The Foundational Inquiry Issue: Students' Perspectives towards Knowing

With other researchers, Kuhn (2005) argues that a perspective towards knowing is the foundational beginning of inquiry—that is, awareness of oneself as a knower and of the process of knowing. Unfortunately, this is a seldom acknowledged starting place. Yet, as William Perry first demonstrated in his ground-breaking work *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years* (1970), most students are likely to begin their educational careers with a naive, dualistic perspective on knowledge, knowing, truth and so on. That is, they expect that knowledge is known and that someone—usually an authority figure—knows the one right answer. Perry found that as students develop, they come to realise that there are or can be multiple perspectives on what is known. The danger of this perspective of multiplicity is that any opinion may then be seen as as good as any other and all knowledge and truth can be relegated to 'just an opinion'. But growth beyond is possible and there comes the realisation that some positions have a better grounding in evidence. Then can come the revolutionary leap to the realisation that all knowledge is constructed—unfortunately, not all adults or students reach this point. Perry outlined these perspectives as five epistemological positions (see Kuhn 2005 and Hofer & Pintrich 2002 for similarities in models of epistemological development).

But the journey to developing richer and more complex perspectives on knowing and knowledge—that is, to developing an epistemological perspective—takes rich nurturing, according to Kuhn (2005). *Inquiry is in the service of changing understandings. Learning involves changing understandings*. Yet epistemological assumptions can have serious implications for how a learner will approach the tasks of learning and of seeing new perspectives on a subject. Teachers encounter these assumptions all the time—for example, the university student who told her lecturer, a medical doctor, that she did not want to participate in a small group discussion with other students because 'it would be a waste of time. I only want to hear from the lecturer who knows'. Or the high school philosophy teacher who hesitated to give his students his opinion in a debate about a case of euthanasia: 'Do I give my opinion … running the risk that twenty-two kids will change their vote because this is what the teacher thinks?' This teacher also found that his students thought the only way to

convince someone was to keep saying their opinion louder and louder, 'rather than searching for some evidence' (Lyons 1990, pp. 166–167). One junior high school student, addressing his small group, directed students to their group investigative task:

> 'You choose what to look at and I'll say what we found', seeing no connection between the two tasks (Kuhn 2005, p. 100).

Developing Skill in Inquiry

One path out of these dilemmas is knowing how to connect, read and evaluate evidence, an ability critical to developing understanding of the inquiry process. But to develop this ability, students must first be able to sustain observation; connect both observation and evidence to the central question of their investigation; and then write up what they have discovered, not just what they have done. In fact, data and conclusions are sometimes not linked, and students rarely connect what they discovered to their own knowledge (Kuhn 2005, p. 54). Some researchers in this area have argued for the necessity of moving towards more highly structured sequences of activities in support of the inquiry process, identifying and breaking down each step of the process, such as those listed here.

In the new MSocSc by portfolio programme, students acknowledged that they found many aspects of the research inquiry process to be new experiences—for example, defining and revising their research question, and reviewing relevant research and placing their project within that context of prior research. Some of these new experiences tested and others enhanced their own ways of knowing. While students attended classes in research design and execution, they were highly aware of how their projects, all rooted in the agencies in which they worked, created subtle differences in how they were viewed and how they viewed their projects. Participants were seen by colleagues and service users as researchers within their own agencies. They also began to make more direct connections between research and practice. As one participant commented:

When doing the research I began to realise that the knowledge I had acquired over the years in practice was very important and relevant to the research (Halton & Lyons 2006).

Questions about knowing became central for all and, in the end, a theme of the programme.

Outcomes: Practitioners' Views on Inquiry through Research and Reflection

Through this research, the authors wished to investigate participants' views of:

- knowledge
- the nature of that knowledge
- the process of their coming to know and understand through their participation in the programme.

Through focus group discussion, individual questionnaires and interviews, important information surfaced that the authors hope will help to inform and shape educational developments and learning practices on dedicated programmes for experienced professionals. This research documents the responses of participants to significant programme features that supported their learning throughout the two years, highlighting the following themes (described in more detail below) as outcomes of the reflective inquiry process:

- greater understanding of knowledge, knowing and coming to know
- improved links between research and practice
- new knowledge of practice
- appreciation of learning scaffolds
- development of a culture of reflective inquiry.

The contribution that the portfolio process and the course design made to supporting and extending their learning is highlighted in the participants' own words (all quotes below are taken from Halton & Lyons 2006). The successful completion of the programme by all students lends weight and credibility to the views expressed.

Greater Understanding of Knowledge, Knowing and Coming to Know

Participants varied in their approaches to the research projects. For example, one participant immediately felt a sense of the challenge, of not knowing even about practical things such as using the library. This person felt unsure and incompetent, but gradually 'felt challenged about my narrow interpretation of events' in the workplace and 'began to realise there were any number of ways to look at the same thing'. Others plunged into the complexities of practitioner research with a different perspective:

Practitioner research identifies, defines and supports new learning relevant to our specific field of inquiry. It is conducted to improve practice through better understanding … it is better informed by the experience and expertise of the researcher and is validated by its grounding in real-life, ongoing situations.

Another participant, a social work practitioner for almost 30 years, saw that:

Being in the field challenges one's knowledge base constantly, particularly if you are open to changing your approach based on learning on the job. Many of us have practice knowledge of the field that we know we operate from. We also know that to impose services and solutions is often useless unless one engages with the person or families involved in the research. Yet much research is carried out often by agencies who have little day to day knowledge of the lives of the people they are researching.

Improved Links between Research and Practice

As experienced and senior social work practitioners within their agencies, participants at the outset of the programme sought to make connections between

research and practice. In particular, their views of themselves as researchers of practice posed interesting questions and some challenges:

Practitioners lack the confidence and the sense that they have legitimate questions to ask in terms of research … [they still view research as] the occupation of academics and government departments and not practitioners … research is constructed and presented by academics and policy makers with little day to day knowledge of the lives of the people they are researching. They do not often ask the right questions … [Consequently] their research serves to estrange rather than engage participants and practitioners; … as a practitioner researcher, I sought to put the researched population central to the research process. In so doing I hoped that the research outcome would have a direct impact on the lives of the researched population. This was very important for me as a practitioner who was engaging in research.

A participant spoke of how his confidence developed over his participation on the course:

This course has helped me to develop my confidence in myself as a researcher. I now realise that I can do research on my practice and deal with the issues of objectivity and bias that before the course, and even at the start of the course, I found hard to understand and to reconcile … I now realise that research and practice are not the separate activities I always thought they were. I have learned that as a practitioner, I can engage in practice research that has validity. This has been a big learning for me over the last two years … I was so afraid of my own bias that when I was interviewing I stuck strictly to the questions on my interview guide. I did not ask follow up questions or even get the kids to elaborate on what they were saying. I was very conscious of my position as a researcher and the knowledge I had as a practitioner. I was afraid if I strayed from the questions at all I might corrupt the research data.

The confidence-building that various participants associated with their course participation seemed to spread out within the agency, among fellow workers:

We know social workers do not value their experience in terms of knowledge creation. They do not see themselves as researchers and therefore their knowledge is seldom put out there in a public arena. Other professions are better than social work in this respect. When I was on the course I talked to my colleagues about what I was doing. I was involved in a type of role modelling. I think it gave them a confidence to think that they too could do the same. Research no longer seemed so remote and removed from their practice.

New Knowledge of Practice

A participant referred to the benefits of undertaking research and the contribution that this research made towards developing practice knowledge:

Doing the research project helped me to gain confidence not only as researcher of practice but it also helped me in practice by providing fresh insights and new knowledge. If I had not done this research and engaged the kids in it the way I did I may never have valued the knowledge the kids have that practitioners like me and service providers need to know.

The partnership that grew between the researcher and the researched was emphasised:

What was particularly striking was that the research itself had its own life. Instant answers were not expected. Service users engaged with me in partnership and owned the process much more.

The mystique that surrounds the research enterprise was something participants battled to overcome: 'Are research and practice completely different activities?' Some practical unforeseen challenges were represented:

There were a lot of practical issues and technical knowledge that I had to learn in order to complete the course. This was time consuming in a way that I had not fully considered prior to participating on the course. I also had to learn to do a proper literature review, using updated resources and new technology e.g. the library cataloguing system, interlibrary loan system, internet explorer, word processing and electronic journals.

Appreciation of Learning Scaffolds: The Reflective Portfolio, Peers and Public Presentations

Throughout the research, participants highlighted the importance of the portfolio and the learning journal in scaffolding and promoting their ongoing leaning and development throughout the course:

My attraction to this type of Masters programme was directly related to its use of the portfolio. I have been interested in reflective inquiry for some time now. As the portfolio was centrally located in this programme, it presented me with an opportunity to use it, while undertaking a piece of research. I found the whole idea exciting.

This participant described the research process as 'a journey, at times confusing and frustrating with a creative element'. She highlighted the learning journal as integral to the course and to supporting the reflective process:

Central to the portfolio process was the keeping of a diary (journal) where we wrote our thoughts and reflections on the research process and our learning journey as novice researchers of practice. In the journal I wrote down my doubts, thoughts, ideas and feelings as I was going along. I shared some journal entries in class.

The challenges experienced by a participant when completing the learning journal are highlighted in the following extract:

I found it difficult to get into writing a journal. I was very self-conscious writing it. I was not used to writing and putting my thoughts and feelings down on paper. It was challenging for me, even more so when I had to read it out to the others in the group [but] the learning journal provided me with a space to think about what I was doing. Peer group and the course facilitator were all a great help. They enabled and encouraged me to keep going and at times that was difficult with all the other demands on me.

Highlighting the emphasis the portfolio places on tracking the research process, a participant remarked:

The portfolio is a more holistic way of learning. The reflective process left me feeling *uncomfortable. At times nothing made sense. I had no answers and I found that space difficult. But as time went on I became more comfortable with not knowing.*

Nakkula & Ravitch (1998) refer to learners feeling 'thrown' and 'uprooted' by the reflective learning process. Participants also spoke of having to take risks in their research practice:

I had to learn to take risks. I didn't know what issues were going to arise in the interviews. To my surprise the groups were able to facilitate themselves and managed.

The portfolio process, which includes the learning journal and peer support, helped 'to bring the researcher, the researched, the research process and context all together'.

The peer group was identified as a place of safety and trust where their feelings of uncertainty could be contained and addressed. The peer support group promoted a connectedness between participants:

It helped to prevent the feelings of isolation that practitioners doing research often experience. Peer involvement meant that the research journey was not taken alone. It was supported and shared with the course facilitator and course participants, who were all professional practitioners.

The peer group process provided a place where they felt they could engage safely: The whole process of making my research questions public to my peer group helped me gain a greater sense of my own identity as a researcher. Peers were all practitioners who had knowledge of the practice and the practice context where my research was located. My confidence developed in sharing my research as the course progressed.

Confidence-building emerged as a continuous theme throughout the data. Moving beyond the familiar comfort zone of practice into an arena that was less familiar involved risk-taking:

I experienced the course and the research process as a risk taking endeavour. I was in unfamiliar territory, which as an experienced practitioner was an anxious space.

Development of a Culture of Reflective Inquiry

When asked to outline the main areas of learning, a participant remarked that the 'value of engaging in reflective inquiry when engaging in researching questions of practice was very important'. The same person stressed the importance for him of 'connecting my voice as a practitioner to my emerging voice as a researcher of practice'. Commenting further on his experience of the research process, he said:

I discovered that the process of reflection requires the practitioner/researcher to avoid the temptation of second guessing answers but instead to develop a culture/discipline in order to further their investigations. The development of this culture of reflection can effect [sic] and challenge some of the fundamental elements of an individual's practice. The use of reflective questioning enabled me as the practitioner researcher to unearth new aspects of my practice through uncovering new elements in the research. Reflective inquiry allows the practitioner/researcher to create new knowledge and re-create themselves within their professions.

Conclusions and Future Developments

The portfolio and research inquiry processes make several contributions to practitioners' ways of knowing. As course directors we identify the following as potential achievements of the inquiry process with the suggestion that these ought to be the subject of future systematic investigations and study. We believe participants in this programme:

- have achieved knowledge and understanding of the strategies of inquiry; the power of framing questions; the process of designing an interrogation; the significance of evidence, and the nature of adequate or inadequate evidence
- are aware of the kind of knowledge that can be acquired through inquiry
- have identified how new knowledge is shaping or can shape their professional practice
- have acknowledged that the reflective research inquiry process allows students to become aware of the process of inquiry at a meta-cognitive level—that is, of how they know how they know.

References

Argyris, C. 1990, *Overcoming Organizational Defenses: Facilitating Organizational Learning*, Allyn & Bacon, Boston.

Argyris, C. & Schön, D. 1974, *Theory in Practice*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Boyer, E. 1990, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Princeton NJ.

Dewey, J. 1933, *How We Think*, D.C. Heath, Boston.

Halton, C. & Lyons, N. 2006, Masters in Research by Portfolio Research Project: Unpublished research interviews and project papers, in possession of Carmel Halton, University College Cork.

Hofer, B. & Pintrich, P. (eds) 2002, *Personal Epistemology: The Psychology of Beliefs about Knowledge and Knowing*, Erlbaum, Mahwah NJ.

Kuhn, D. 2005, *Education for Thinking*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA.

Lyons, N. 1990, 'Dilemmas of knowing: Ethical and epistemological dimensions of teachers' work and development', *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 60, no. 2, pp. 159–180.

Lyons, N. 2002, 'The personal self in a public story: The portfolio presentation narrative', in *Narrative Inquiry in Practice: Advancing the Knowledge of Teaching*, eds N. Lyons & V.K. LaBoskey, Teachers College Press, New York, pp.87–100.

Loughran, J., Hamilton, M.L., LaBoskey, V.K. & Russell, T. (eds) 2004, *International Handbook of Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practice*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dodrecht, Boston and London.

Nakkula, M.J. & Ravitch, S.M. 1998, *Matters of Interpretation: Reciprocal Transformation in Therapeutic and Developmental Relationships with Youth*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Oxford American Desk Dictionary and Thesaurus 2001, Berkley Books, New York. Perry, W. 1970, *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years*, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York.

Rodgers, C. 2002, 'Defining reflection: Another look at John Dewey and reflective thinking', *Teachers College Record*, vol. 104, no. 4, pp. 842–866.

Schön, D. 1983, The Reflective Practitioner, Basic Books, New York.

Schön, D. 1995, 'The new scholarship requires a new epistemology', *Change*, vol. 27, no. 6, pp. 26–34.

Zeichner, K. 1999, 'The new scholarship of teacher education', *Educational Researcher*, vol. 28, no. 9, pp. 4–15.

Part Three: Common Themes and Way Forward

What Next for Teaching Portfolios in Ireland?

Jacqueline Potter
Trinity College Dublin
potterj@tcd.ie

Introduction

Ireland has seen significant changes to the third-level teaching and learning landscape in recent years—and there is more change to come. There has been steady expansion of student numbers at both third and fourth levels, with growth expected to increase further in the future. This has been coupled with agendas to widen participation and create an inclusive and accessible higher education system. There is a growing national focus on lifelong learning, including accrediting learning in settings outside the classroom and the campus, as well as acknowledging and crediting students' prior learning and knowledge. The higher education sector is becoming more diverse, both in terms of the students who study, the staff who teach and support student learning, and the curricula that are developed and offered. In parallel with these changes, it has been acknowledged that the professional development of staff is a vital component of any strategy designed to enable institutions across the sector to respond positively and proactively to change.

It is clear from the case studies in this book that portfolios are becoming increasingly widespread as one strategy in a suite of approaches to support the professional development of academics and teachers in higher education. There are many reasons for this. Portfolios enable systematic reflection on and questioning of teachers' practice. Teaching portfolios and portfolio courses can be usefully framed as vehicles for scholarly inquiry, as a means of support and structure for academic exploration and experimentation, and as a way to record and evidence changes in teacher understanding and actions. The creation of a teaching portfolio can be introduced to academic staff for continuing professional development, as part of a structured programme of learning or as a mechanism to evidence practice for institutional reward criteria. The case studies presented here all report on the positive impacts of portfolio development for academic staff, but there is still more systematic inquiry and research to be undertaken.

In particular, this research might focus on whether the learning insights gained by staff through the development of a portfolio lead to sustained and meaningful changes to their behaviour and actions, and whether these in turn positively impact on the student learning experience. Finding the answers to these questions will be no easy task. The interrelationship between teacher activity and learner achievement is complex, but as educational developers we need to be mindful that the relationship between teaching and learning is at the heart of our work, and that this should guide educational development work that centres on the development of teaching portfolios.

In this final chapter, we consider two questions:

- What is it about teaching portfolios and portfolio programmes that can create such a powerful experience for learning and development?
- What opportunities present themselves for the further development and use of portfolios by individuals and organisations?

Portfolios as Powerful Learning Tools

When teaching portfolios work well, they can lead to the transformation of beliefs and conceptions, to new learning and insights, and also to changes in practice. Such outcomes are most often seen when portfolios combine critical reflection, pedagogic inquiry and reflective writing, particularly in a peer-supported and collaborative learning environment (such as a portfolio programme). Individually, critical reflection, pedagogic inquiry and reflective writing can be novel and challenging activities for academics. Together, they represent a new suite of modes for working and learning, which requires sensitive support and guidance to create an atmosphere of trust and respectful collaboration among those new to portfolios.

Critical Reflection

Fundamental to the process of constructing a developmental portfolio—and a feature of the case studies in this volume—is the process of standing back from an experience of practice, and examining and analysing it critically with a view to better understanding what worked, why and how. Academics are not necessarily accustomed to or comfortable with holding their own work up to scrutiny and analysis. Nevertheless, this process can be aided by the use of prompt questions and models, such as those suggested by Kreber and Cranton (2000), which build on the distinctions between *content, process and premise reflection* proposed by Mezirow (1991).

Content *reflection* focuses on what is assumed or believed to be true. This is a useful place to start the reflective process, because it allows the articulation of assumptions and beliefs. On the other hand, it can be criticised as lacking validity if it perpetuates an inward-looking reflective process without recourse to a wider base of evidence and knowledge. *Process reflection*—which examines the effectiveness of practice—and *premise reflection*—which considers the underlying suppositions of practice—both address this issue by situating reflection on practice in relation to other evidence. Both approaches require such evidence to be examined and compared to other sources of knowledge. On teaching portfolio programmes, this comparison often takes the form of peers, facilitators and mentors talking and sharing views, perspectives and evidence bases.

In the introductory chapter, O'Farrell suggests that this process of sharing can underpin the development of a 'teaching commons' and describes how reflection can benefit from shared analysis. Subsequently, however, Hanratty and O'Farrell warn that this practice may be sabotaged if the assumptions and beliefs under discussion are not subject to deeper and more thoughtful analysis. Kuol and Moore

have discussed how important it is to include student voices in the evidence base for reflection on practice. Indeed, student voices are critical if reflection on teaching practices is to be meaningfully linked to student learning and learner outcomes.

I would also argue that without engagement with the scholarly literature, either theoretical or practice based, it is difficult to develop critical reflectivity and to ask meaningful questions about teaching. Indeed, if the development of teaching portfolios does not include an emphasis on the fundamental relationship between critical reflection and scholarly literature, the risk is that academics will not recognise the scholarly and inquiry-based nature of learning and teaching development. In turn, this could perpetuate the long-standing elevation of research over teaching that has characterised the academic experience for many staff.

The implications of this would be significant. It would not only impoverish potential outcomes of portfolio development in relation to personal growth, understanding and practice. In the longer term, it could sustain a false belief that personal teaching practice and the wider published literature base are not interconnected. Clearly this is not the case. Internationally, the number of higher education teaching and learning journals and conferences has expanded enormously in recent years. This has been fuelled in part by the increasing funding available for teaching and learning and the concomitant expectation of research into, and dissemination of, investigations of, the relationship between teaching practice and student learning. Indeed, at the time of writing, AISHE, the All Ireland Society for Higher Education, is announcing the development of a new e-journal for the dissemination of practices within the sector.

As higher education adjusts to a climate of continuous change, it has never been more important that practising lecturers are equipped to reflect critically on and interrogate their own practice, to engage with the experience and views of others, local peers as well as national and international colleagues, and to participate in the discourse on teaching and learning. Thus equipped, academic educators are well placed to become scholars of their own teaching and their students' learning.

Pedagogic Inquiry

The scholarly practices of most academic staff—that is, the way they ask and answer research questions—are framed by their disciplinary backgrounds. Although disciplinary knowledge bases and practices are constantly changing, they nevertheless provide structures and norms. These are enforced by the disciplinary community, through peer review and publication processes. Publications act as time-bound snapshots of current practice priorities and approaches, as well as reflecting to the wider world how knowledge is constructed, valued and shared by practitioners in the discipline. Learning and teaching in higher education is an emerging discipline, which draws on the discourses and practices of the many disciplines from which its scholars come. Although multidisciplinary, the learning and teaching practitioner's discourse is, as we have seen, often characterised by critical reflection, which requires the examination and analysis of multiple forms of evidence that are then considered together to enable practice-based change. Here I

discuss how this evidence might be collected, what forms it might take and how it might contribute to and enrich the evidence base for teaching and learning in higher education.

Throughout the case studies, I see a focus on collegial sharing and debate as a mechanism for bringing ideas into a wider forum, which is highlighted as an important component of the process of teaching portfolio development. Among the case studies, some authors argue for an inquiry-based approach to teaching portfolios for personal development as well as for more formal assessment (see Lyons, Halton & Lyons). Others consider that engaging in practitioner-based research into one's own practice can bring teaching and research together through the process of pedagogic inquiry (Hyland, Higgs & McCarthy; Kuol & Moore.) Although the reflections and evidence presented in this volume testify that it is personally enriching to reflect *a posteriori* on evidence collected before compiling a teaching portfolio, there is also an argument to be made for the collection of evidence and the interrogation of practice through experimentation as itself a fundamental component of developing a teaching portfolio. These two approaches, reflection-on-practice and reflection-in-practice, have been discussed by other authors in this volume and resonate with a common research distinction between inductive and deductive inquiry. Explicitly comparing these two binary models and relating them to disciplinary research paradigms may be a useful way of engaging academic staff from diverse disciplinary backgrounds with pedagogic practitioner inquiry and reflection.

There is a developing theoretical literature on how pedagogic inquiry situated within disciplines and responding to disciplinary perspectives and needs might be a fruitful approach to bridging the gap between research and teaching and between discipline-based academics and the scholarship of teaching and learning (see, for example, Healey & Jenkins 2006). Taylor Huber (2006) argues that the scholarship of teaching and learning might be enriched by disciplinary perspectives and methods as academics bring to it their own 'intellectual capital, habits of mind, and modes of collaboration that they have developed as professional scholars in their fields' (p. 73). Certainly it is my view that this is a rich area for further exploration and inquiry in its own right within the context of developing teaching portfolios. For example, we might start by considering how our portfolio structures and programmes constrain or encourage the links between participants' inquiry into their teaching practices and the research practices of their home disciplines.

Reflective Writing

For many academics, writing is a challenging process. This is the particularly the case for academics at the beginning of their careers, who have a variety of concerns about academic writing within their disciplines and who may find it difficult to integrate writing into their academic role (see, for example, McGrail, Rickard & Jones 2006). A lack of confidence in writing skills may be exacerbated both by a lack of time to write and the pressure to write for publication, which is inextricably linked to academic career progression, professional standing and research identity.

Reflective writing may present some of the difficulties academics experience with scholarly writing in the disciplines, as well as posing fresh challenges for those who have no prior experience of writing as a medium for learning—of writing to learn. The first challenge faced by many academics when they come to reflective writing is that they often have little prior experience of the craft of writing; they have not necessarily learned to write in their disciplines. Rather, academic writing is often perceived as something that is simply 'picked up'. If learned in any explicit way, it is usually through practice of the discipline rather than the consideration of underpinning skills.

Second, writing for a portfolio can be new and unfamiliar for many academics, quite different from the controlled authorship of more traditional academic written work. Academics may well be experienced and able in writing articles and books, course documents, student learning materials, papers for committees and so on, but these texts all have purposes and audiences outside the self. It can be uncomfortable for many to situate themselves as the 'voiced author' at the centre of their writing, which is itself focused on their views, their experiences, their affective responses and professional behaviours. Writing as an action that stimulates and encourages reflection on one's own practice (as well as recording the reflective process) can be an unsettling experience. This can occur, for example, when learning is 'slowed down' through the process of reflective writing, and the emotional content and emotional insights of the learning process are made explicit (Moon 2004.) Although participants on portfolio courses may share their writing with others—such as course participants, assessors and, in some cases, reviewers—the primary, sometimes sole and often most critical audience of the final written portfolio entry is the self. This is because the final written entry stands as a marker of the process of critical reflection and inquiry, as well as the personal development journey and growth of the author.

Therefore, when supporting academic staff with the development of teaching portfolios in the future, we may well need to focus on how we can best support them in reflective writing. In doing so, we will necessarily support participants as they 'write to learn' and 'learn to write', which few would argue are two crucial skills for both teachers and students in higher education.

The Future of Portfolios

Whereas some portfolios may be prepared for personal and professional development purposes, there are examples in this collection of the presentation of portfolio entries and teaching philosophy statements as part of a portfolio for assessment or for review for promotion and/or reward (for example, see chapters by Donnelly & Fitzmaurice; Murphy & MacLaren; Halton & Lyons). In this section of the chapter, I explore these issues: the diverse uses, audiences and multipurposing of portfolios, as well as the potential for technology to enhance the learning experience from portfolio development.

Portfolio Uses and Audiences

The diverse case studies in this volume demonstrate that there is no single approach either to the content or the structure of a teaching portfolio. In its most basic form, a portfolio can be construed as a collection of artefacts or work outcomes. For example, a teaching portfolio for promotion may comprise collated evidence, indexed or mapped against criteria, to enable a judgement of the quality and/or breadth of work. This may evidence professional practice but it does not necessarily enable the reader or assessor to identify whether learning has taken place. In contrast, a portfolio that demonstrates learning and personal development is likely to comprise written artefacts *about* evidence. These document lessons learned and changes to practice as a result of reflection, but may not necessarily include either the evidence used for reflection or evidence to substantiate claims of change. Somewhere in between is a range of other, hybrid portfolio models that enable and record professional teaching development. Several authors have attempted to describe the range and diversity of portfolio practices within higher education (see, for example, Baume 2003) but few have confidently put forward a comprehensive model. Most proposals usually focus on the purpose of the portfolio, although Baume (2003, p. 14) suggests a model that defines portfolio differences by structure, for example by time, by individual pieces of work, by topic or theme, or by learning outcome or assessment criteria.

What distinguishes the forms of teaching portfolios are their contexts and reader audiences—for example, institutional promotion committees, accrediting professional bodies, teaching and learning programme leaders. Like academic disciplines, these audiences set their own norms and paradigms to which their portfolio expectations are aligned. But a portfolio that fulfils the requirements of one context may render itself insufficient for another context or purpose. The other significant factor that determines the form of a teaching portfolio is the individuals' own expectations and aspirations. Indeed, one might expect and anticipate that each individual may wish to draw on and/or contribute to his or her teaching portfolio at different times in their professional development for different purposes. After all, professional development is complex, personal and experienced in many different ways (Akerlind 2006). As educational developers, we need to consider how we can best support academic staff to balance the different demands that will be placed on them as critically reflective writers and pedagogic scholars.

One important step we can take is to make clear our expectations and requirements of participants on the teaching portfolio programmes that we develop and design. This is particularly important when our programmes include an assessment component, in which case we need to be explicit about learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Where possible, however, we could also encourage participants to develop their own outcomes and criteria to maximise the use of the portfolio to meet personal learning goals. Outcomes and criteria could be developed by individuals or, perhaps, even more powerfully, by groups, such that the learning potential of collaborative reflection and inquiry could be harnessed. The explicit expectation to work creatively and collaboratively with colleagues might, as Moon (2004) suggests, provide motivation and ideas, and direct individual learning into new areas. It might also lend personal reflective inquiry more clarity and diversity of

purpose, and better support the potential of individual reflective inquiry to be more aligned to local (departmental, school) or institutional aspirations.

Technology and Portfolios

Perhaps what is most striking in the collection of case studies presented in this volume is the absence of examples of and references to the use of technology to support the development of teaching portfolios. Only the UCD case study by Geraldine O'Neill notes any formal use of technology. In this instance, participants are asked to share and respond to their colleagues' critical reflections online. There are several areas where judicious use and embedding of technology within teaching portfolio programmes could bring benefits.

The use of virtual spaces to create, structure and design portfolios is an obvious starting point with a range of international experiences and projects from which lessons could be drawn (for example, in the UK, the e-portfolio projects funded by JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) and in the USA, the Portfolio Clearinghouse website). Virtual spaces could offer personal areas to collate evidence, reflective writing and to explore and develop ideas. They could be developed as a repository for materials, including teaching evidence, written artefacts and reflections on teaching practices. Perhaps most powerfully for learning, the online environment might also be explored as a shared space for online discussion, collaborative writing and review and as a shared repository.

These developments could offer benefits at the local level for participants and colleagues creating teaching portfolios as part of a specific portfolio programme. At this level, within institutions or within teaching portfolio programmes, the online environment might help individuals to maintain contact outside structured hours, to discuss and to develop individual or collaborative inquiry. Contact with others might be extended within programmes and institutions to a wider community—for example, by connecting past and current participants on the same programmes within institutions (thus enriching the mentoring schemes that are a part of so many of the programmes described in this volume). Online spaces such as these might be even more powerful, however, if they brought together, in a virtual teaching commons, individuals from the wider community of academics and teachers to reflect on, explore and inquire into their teaching practices in diverse settings.

I see the most value in a virtual teaching commons where it connects without boundaries, enabling individuals and participants across portfolio programmes in diverse institutions to make contact and to establish and develop their own communities. There is, after all, an increasing number of academic practitioners in Ireland who are engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning through reflection, inquiry and writing. Of course, this is an exciting idea to visualise but perhaps more challenging to develop in reality. Nevertheless, this volume stands as testimony to the willingness of educational developers across Ireland to come together to share their practices, to learn from and with each other—both in supporting the professional development of their colleagues and in enhancing the learning opportunities and experiences of students in higher education.

Although it may be a small conceptual step for educational developers to bring together our academic educator colleagues to learn together from across our institutions, it would indeed represent a big step in many other ways for our learners, for our institutions and for us to create a national teaching commons. There would be many practical details to be considered. But the foundations for success in such a project are already in place. There exists a spirit of respectful collaboration among those who design and develop teaching portfolio programmes; there are national funding mechanisms and expectations for institutes of higher education to collaborate to enhance teaching and learning; and there are the testimonies from individual educators on the value of and benefits to their personal beliefs and practices from engaging in reflective inquiry into their teaching practices with their colleagues.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have explored some of the recurrent features of teaching portfolios and participation in teaching portfolio programmes that have emerged from the case studies presented in this volume. I have considered how they contribute to the professional development of teachers in third-level education and considered what might be the next steps in the future development and use of portfolios for professional development within and across institutions. Developments to support academic staff learning and professional development through the use of portfolios have been widespread across the national higher education sector, and the case studies here provide a rich demonstration of the benefits accrued through collaborative inquiry and critical reflection into teaching practices. These developments have opened up new prospects for future approaches and raised questions for further inquiry and debate to support the professional development of teachers in higher education. It has never been more important in Irish higher education to explore these next steps. As a committed and collegial community of educational developers, we must surely develop and move forward with a shared vision for exemplary, collaborative practice based on respect for the needs and aspirations of the individual learners, educators and institutions we serve.

References

Akerlind, G.S. 2006, 'Academic growth and development: How do university academics experience it?', *Higher Education*, vol. 50, no. 1, pp. 1–32.

Baume, D. 2003, *Supporting Portfolio Development*, LTSN Generic Centre Continuing Professional Development Series, Number 3, Learning and Teaching Support Network, York.

Healey, M. & Jenkins, A.J. 2006, 'Strengthening the teaching–research linkage in undergraduate courses and programs', in *Exploring Research-Based Teaching* [New Directions in Teaching and Learning, no. 107], ed. C. Kreber, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, pp. 45–56.

Kreber, C. & Cranton, P.A. 2000, 'Exploring the scholarship of teaching', *Journal of Higher Education*, vol. 71, no. 4, pp. 476–496.

McGrail, M.R., Rickard C.M. & Jones, R. 2006, 'Publish or perish: A systematic review of interventions to increase academic publication rates', *Higher Education Research and Development*, vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 19–35.

Mezirow, J. 1991, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

Moon, J. 2004, *A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning*, RoutledgeFalmer, New York and London.

Taylor Huber, M. 2006, 'Disciplines, pedagogy, and inquiry-based learning about teaching', in *Exploring Research-Based Teaching* [New Directions in Teaching and Learning, no. 107], ed. C. Kreber, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, pp. 69–78.

Biographies of Authors (Alphabetically)

Orison Carlile

Orison Carlile (BSc, MA, PhD) is an independent educational consultant in higher education who has developed and delivered masters-level programmes in education for the Open University, the University of Hull, Mater Dei and the Limerick, Tralee and Waterford Institutes of Technology. Before becoming an academic, he spent eighteen years as a secondary teacher and ten as a school principal. He maintains an interest in the secondary sector through the MA in Management in Education, for which he is responsible in Waterford Institute of Technology, and through a range of in-service workshops he delivers to staff and managers of voluntary secondary and VEC schools. He has spoken at conferences, presented seminars to university academics and teachers in Ireland, Poland, China and Russia and is involved in a project on creativity, with partners in NUI Maynooth and the Lev Tolstoy Pedagogical University of Tula near Moscow. His research interests include learning theory, reflective practice, teaching competence, educational management, learning outcomes and national qualification levels. In association with colleagues Anne Jordan and Annetta Stack, he is currently writing a book for the Open University Press entitled Approaches to Learning: A Guide for Educators.

Joseph Coughlan

Joseph is a member of the Faculty of Business at the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). He lectures on undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at the DIT and has designed a range of modules for post-experience students in the areas of corporate finance and mathematics. A qualified accountant, he has a PhD in Industrial and Business Studies from the University of Warwick in the field of organisational performance measurement. Research interests in education currently include internationalisation of higher education in Ireland; learning in a multicultural context; and the effect of characteristics at entry into higher education on final performance.

Roisin Donnelly

Roisin has worked for the past seven years in the Learning and Teaching Centre at the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), where she has been involved in designing and delivering continuous professional development opportunities (both short courses and accredited programmes) for academic staff in third-level learning and teaching. She delivers e-learning pedagogy workshops and consultations as part of the Institute's e-learning training programme as well as regularly tutoring on international online courses for academic staff development. She has a range of publications reflecting her teaching and research interests, including designing teaching portfolios, academic professional development, and evaluation of postgraduate teacher education programmes. She is continuing her research in higher education through a Doctorate of Education (EdD) where her research specialism is e-learning pedagogy.

Marian Fitzmaurice

Marian is a member of staff of the Learning and Teaching Centre at the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). She lectures on the postgraduate programmes that the Centre has developed for staff in third level who wish to pursue further study and research in learning and teaching in higher and further education. She has also played a part in designing and delivering continuous professional development workshops for academic staff and undertakes consultations with academic staff as part of the Institute's commitment to teaching excellence. She has a range of publications reflecting her teaching and research interests, including teaching in higher education as a moral practice, pedagogic practices in higher education, teaching in a multicultural context, writing teaching portfolios, and issues in curriculum design. She is continuing her research in higher education through a Doctorate of Education (EdD).

Carmel Halton

Carmel Halton has been a lecturer in the Department of Applied Social Studies at University College Cork for over 20 years. Over the last seven years, she has occupied the position of Director of Social Work practice. In that capacity, she has developed closer links between social work practitioners, employers and educators. The Masters in Social Science Research programme is one initiative that has arisen from her collaborative activities. Carmel has worked with Nona Lyons for many years and they designed and delivered this programme together. This chapter represents their mutual concern to document and publish research on teaching and learning outcomes.

Orla Hanratty

Since graduating with a Bachelor of Education from Trinity College Dublin in 1994, Orla has worked in second-level, third-level education and professional development. She completed an MSc in IT in Education (Trinity College Dublin) and her dissertation was based on the use of reflective teaching portfolios in higher education. She joined Trinity College Dublin as an Academic Developer in 2005 and is currently involved in the development and delivery of programmes for lecturers and postgraduates involved in teaching. Her interests include supporting non-traditional students, developing reflective teaching portfolios and supporting postgraduates with responsibility for teaching.

Bettie Higgs

Bettie Higgs has been a lecturer in Geology in University College Cork (UCC) since 1987. Since 2002, she has also coordinated activities supporting teaching and learning in the University. She is now employed half-time in the newly formed Teaching and Learning Centre, Ionad Bairre, as Academic Coordinator for Support for Teaching and Learning, and half-time in the Geology Department. She is an associate lecturer for The Open University, and a 2005 Carnegie Scholar of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Jean Hughes

Jean Hughes, BSc, MBA is Head of Learning Innovation (Teaching and Learning) at Dublin City University (DCU), where she is responsible for the professional development of academic staff in their teaching roles. She is also responsible for the Learning Technology support team in DCU. Having started her career in information technology in industry, she moved to higher education in 1992. She held various roles including Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Head of Department and Head of School in the Institute of Technology sector, before moving to her current role in 2005. She is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Education with Queens University, Belfast and her research interests include reflective practice, managerialism in higher education and various student learning areas.

Áine Hyland

Áine Hyland was Vice-President of University College Cork (UCC) from 1999 to 2006 and Professor of Education from 1993 to 2006. During her term as Vice-President, she was a tireless advocate of the scholarship of teaching and learning and constantly emphasised the importance of ensuring parity of esteem between teaching and discipline-based research. In her role as Chairperson of the Academic Council's Staff Enhancement and Development Committee during that period, she obtained targeted funding of almost €2 million from the (Irish) Higher Education Authority for various projects to support teaching and learning. She also gained UCC Academic Council approval for a Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and Masters in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, which have proved to be very popular among faculty from all disciplinary areas. Before her retirement in September 2006, she was involved in preparing a submission (which was subsequently successful) for funding of €3 million from the Irish government's Strategic Innovation Fund, for a National Academy for the Integration of Research and Teaching and Learning, to be led by UCC.

Anne Jordan

Anne Jordan has taught in Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) since 1981. Her primary degree was in Philosophy and she has also lectured in this subject at TCD. She has a doctorate in adult education and has worked extensively in this field. She was responsible for developing one of the first adult access courses in Ireland for adult returners and the first educational guidance service for adults. She is currently co-ordinator of WIT's Masters in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education for Lecturers (MALT) programme. One of her current research interests is in creativity and critical thinking. Together with colleagues from WIT's School of Education, NUI Maynooth and the Lev Tolstoy Pedagogical University in Tula, Russia, she is developing a set of modules on creativity in higher education. She and her colleague Dr Orison Carlile will deliver one of these modules in Russia in 2007. In association with two colleagues from WIT, she is currently writing a book entitled Approaches to Learning: A Guide for Educators, to be published by Open University Press in 2007.

Nyiel Kuol

Nyiel Kuol is the Coordinator of Formative Teaching Evaluation in the Centre for Teaching and Learning at the University of Limerick (UL). Nyiel has worked in the Centre since 2002, focusing primarily on the coordination and analysis of students' evaluations of teaching. She has a special interest in researching the area of faculty reaction to students' feedback on teaching.

Nona Lyons

Nona Lyons, who holds a doctorate in developmental psychology from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, is a Visiting Research Scholar at University College Cork where, for the last six years, she has been coaching faculty and students in creating reflective teaching portfolios. Her current research is directed towards examining and documenting the results of these efforts and what portfolio-makers claim they are learning from the process, especially their awareness of themselves and their students as knowers, of what they know and how they know it. An important part of her work is the collaboration she has enjoyed with members of the Department of Applied Social Studies, especially her work with Carmel Halton on the Masters in Social Science Research programme. Lyons is the editor of *With Portfolio in Hand: Validating the New Teacher Professionalism* (1998) and co-editor of *Narrative Inquiry in Practice: Advancing the Knowledge of Teaching* (2002).

Iain MacLaren

Dr. Iain MacLaren (Mac Labhrainn) is the Director of NUI Galway's Centre for Excellence in Learning & Teaching (CELT) and has extensive teaching and research experience in higher education. He also has strong interests in issues of educational technology, reflective practice and higher education policy issues. His undergraduate degree and PhD were in Astrophysics and, over the last 20 years, he has gradually migrated towards a focus on teaching and learning. He has recently co-edited books on inquiry-based learning, academic staff development in e-learning, and civic engagement and higher education.

Marian McCarthy

Marian McCarthy is currently seconded from her post as lecturer in the Education Department, University College Cork (UCC). She is now Programme Coordinator of the certificated courses in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education that are run by the newly formed Teaching and Learning Centre, Ionad Bairre. Marian has been involved in supporting teaching and learning initiatives in UCC since 1995. She is influenced in particular by the work of Project Zero at Harvard, where she is a member of the Summer Institute Faculty, and by the work of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Ivan Moore

Ivan Moore became an independent educational consultant in 2003, after completing five years as Director of Learning and Teaching at the Universities of Wolverhampton and Portsmouth. He began his career in higher education as a lecturer in Engineering at the University of Ulster where, over ten years, he developed extensive experience in teaching students before becoming Assistant Director of Educational Development. Ivan has over 50 publications in education and has provided consultancy support to over 75 HE institutions, including the UK Higher Education Academy. His current consultancies include Manchester (Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, CETL), Nottingham Trent (CETL and Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning, FDTL), Sheffield (FDTL), Loughborough (Engineering Subject Centre and CETL), DCU (reflective portfolios), UCD (student evaluation) and the UK Engineering Council (assessing graduate output standards). Ivan also has extensive experience in change management at a senior institutional level. His particular interests are in developing strategies for learning and teaching, promoting inquiry-based learning, fostering innovation, and student assessment. Much of his development work involves him in supporting both staff and student groups in maintaining reflective journals.

Sarah Moore

Sarah Moore is Dean of Teaching and Learning at the University of Limerick, also fulfilling a teaching and research role within the Kemmy Business School. She is responsible for the continued development of teaching and learning strategies at the University of Limerick. She has published books and articles in the areas of academic practice, student development and learning dynamics.

Timothy Murphy

Dr Timothy Murphy is a Researcher at the Centre for Excellence in Learning & Teaching (CELT) at NUI Galway, where he has previously worked for the Open Learning Centre and as a lecturer in Education. He holds a Doctorate in Education from Teachers' College (Columbia University) in New York. He has strong interests (and publications) in civic education, as well as academic staff development.

Ciara O'Farrell

Dr Ciara O'Farrell is an Academic Developer at the Centre for Academic Practice and Student Learning in Trinity College Dublin. She holds a PhD in English from University College Dublin, and her biography of Abbey Theatre playwright Louis D'Alton was published by Four Courts Press in 2004. Her current research and practice interests are in learning and teaching, and include academic writing, collaboration, mentoring, portfolios, research-based teaching, evaluation, and assessment practices.

Geraldine O'Neill

Dr Geraldine O'Neill is a Senior Lecturer in Educational Development in the Centre for Teaching and Learning, School of Education and Lifelong Learning at University College Dublin (UCD). She is Director of the Graduate Diploma in University Teaching and Learning programme. Her work and research interests are in the areas of student assessment, problem-based learning and student evaluation. Having worked in the past in the School of Occupational Therapy at Trinity College Dublin and more recently in her educational role at UCD, she has a particular interest in the area of the professional development of the student group. The literature on the reflective practitioner approach has been a significant influence on her work, and this approach has translated into her work on teaching portfolios. She was the main contributor to and organiser of the UCD Centre for Teaching and Learning's webpages on teaching portfolios:

http://www.ucd.ie/teaching/teachingPortfolio.html

Jacqueline Potter

Dr. Jacqueline Potter worked as a lecturer and senior lecturer in Environmental Biology in the UK for ten years, during which time she held a range of School and University posts in quality enhancement and academic development. She joined Trinity College Dublin as the Academic Development Manager in the Centre for Academic Practice and Student Learning (CAPSL) in 2006. Her area of interest is in supporting and researching 'what's happening and working' when learning takes place, among students, academics and within institutions. Current and recent research includes projects on writing for learning within undergraduate curricula; student conceptions and experiences of research during final year projects; and institutional and individual approaches to education for sustainable development.

Notes

Notes

HEA
Higher Education Authority
An tÚdarás um Ard-Oideachas

AISHE