The Experiences of Teaching Portfolio Preparation and Maintenance by Faculty

by

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Abstract

Teaching portfolios have been used by faculty in postsecondary institutions for summative and formative evaluations since the early 1980s (Knapper, 1995). Despite their proliferation, there remains much to be learned about the use of teaching portfolios and whether they are perceived as being effective for formative and/or summative evaluations. To expand on our understanding of teaching portfolio use by faculty, the researcher used a generic qualitative study (Caelli, Ray, & Mill, 2003) to explore the process in which faculty prepare and maintain a teaching portfolio and the perceived effect that teaching portfolios have on summative and formative evaluations. A theoretical framework of self-directed learning (SDL) (Brookfield, 1985; Garrison, 1997; Hiemstra, 1994; Knowles, 1975) was used as a guide to explore teaching portfolios. The results of the study reveal that teaching portfolios are a SDL activity that are prepared in many ways, used for a variety of purposes, and are perceived by faculty as having varying degrees of effectiveness for summative and formative evaluations. Drawing from the results of this study, five main conclusions can be made: 1) faculty teaching portfolios are a SDL tool; 2) a wide range of support and resources are found to be valued by faculty when preparing a teaching portfolio; 3) teaching portfolios vary in content; 4) teaching portfolios are initially prepared for numerous reasons and are used for a variety of purposes; 5) the effectiveness of teaching portfolios as a summative and/or formative evaluation activity vary among faculty.

There are a number of implications that can be drawn from these main conclusions. Firstly, as the process of preparing a teaching portfolio is a SDL activity, resources should be available for faculty who are preparing a teaching portfolio and clearly communicated to faculty. Secondly, study participants indicated a wide range of items they have used in their teaching portfolios. Faculty can use these items as a resource from which to choose the content of their

teaching portfolio from. Likewise, this study has concluded that teaching portfolios are used for a wide range of purposes – information that faculty may find useful when deciding if preparing a teaching portfolio is a useful endeavour. Lastly, the effectiveness of a teaching portfolio as a summative and formative evaluation tool is mixed, indicating that caution must be used when using them for various forms of evaluation.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Byron Matthews. The research project related to this thesis received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "A Study of the Experiences of Teaching Portfolio Preparation and Maintenance by University of Alberta Faculty," No. Pro00053249, June 9, 2015.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Overview

This thesis originated out of a desire to learn more about methods that are currently used by faculty to improve their teaching. As an instructor in a postsecondary institution, I am always keen to discover new ways to improve the learning experience that I provide to my students. Early on in my studies as a graduate, student I discovered teaching portfolios and since then, I have been motivated to learn more about how they are used by faculty and postsecondary institutions as a summative and formative evaluation tool. I believe that by exploring how others have used a teaching portfolio, it is possible to provide additional insights on how to use them effectively. Similar to most teachers, I endeavor to continuously improve as a teacher. Gaining insights on how to effectively use teaching portfolios is part of that process.

An assumption I hold, and one that underpins this study, is that teaching portfolios can have a positive effect on teaching and learning. Faculty in postsecondary institutions play a critical role in helping students form a world view. From leading a large lecture class, to facilitating labs and seminars, to supervising graduate students, to teaching online courses – the interactions between faculty and students are varied and immense. It is through these interactions that students learn to be engineers, scientists, doctors, artists, teachers – the list goes on. However, it is currently impossible (and may always be) to fully appreciate the effects of these interactions. We do know that some interactions may be beneficial while others are not. Regardless, it is of utmost importance that we strive to understand the complex relationships between students and faculty so that they are positive and beneficial. One way we do this as teachers is by reflecting on our teaching, and in doing so, evaluate our teaching. The use of

teaching portfolios has been viewed as an effective way to evaluate our teaching through formative and summative evaluation (Seldin, Miller & Seldin, 2010).

Context of the Study

The use of teaching portfolios is an established activity by teachers for summative and formative evaluation in colleges and universities both nationally and internationally (Seldin, Miller & Seldin, 2010). While there is a good body of research on how to use teaching portfolios, there is rather scant research on their perceived effectiveness by those who use them. Gaining further insights on how teachers perceive the effectiveness of teaching portfolios for formative and summative evaluation can make it possible to enhance teaching practices and, *de facto*, the learning process.

Most university faculty members develop their own teaching portfolios using some form of SDL. SDL is a form of learning that provides the learner with control of what is learned, how it is learned, and for what purposes. Supporting this notion, Heimstra (1994) indicated that SDL is a study form whereby individuals have primary responsibility for planning, implementing, and evaluating effort. Similarly, Garrison (1997) describes SDL "as an approach where learners are motivated to assume personal responsibility and collaborative control of the cognitive (self-monitoring) and contextual (self-management) processes in constructing and confirming meaningful and worthwhile learning outcomes" (p. 18). Although SDL may be expressed in a variety of ways and may have different outcomes, what is clear is that it is a form of learning whereby the learner has some degree of control in the learning process.

The use of self-directed teaching portfolios in postsecondary institutions across North America has been used since the 1970s (Knapper, 1995). Also known as teaching dossiers, the

Canadian Association of University Teachers (2007) provides the following description of teaching dossiers:

> A teaching dossier is a summary of an academic's major teaching accomplishments and strengths. It is to an academic's teaching what lists of publications, grants, and academic honours are to research. The teaching dossier is intended to provide short statements which describe the scope and quality of the academic's teaching. (p. 2)

Seldin, Miller and Seldin (2010) provide a similar description of teaching portfolios:

> [A] teaching portfolio is a factual description of a professor's teaching strengths and accomplishments. It includes documents and materials that collectively suggest the scope and quality of a professor's teaching performance. The portfolio is to teaching what lists of publications, grants, and honors are to research and scholarships. (p. 4)

While teaching portfolios have been used for many purposes, Urbach (1992) contends "the goal of a teaching portfolio is to describe, through documentation over an extended period of time, the full range of your abilities as a college teacher" (p. 71). Additionally, scholars have frequently noted that teaching portfolios are used for summative (Berk, 2005; Buckridge, 2008; Knapper, 1995; Redmon, 1999; Seldin, Miller and Seldin, 2010; Weeks, 1996) and formative (Kaplan, 1998; Reece, Pearce, Melillo, & Beaudry 2001; Retallick, 2000; Seldin, Miller and Seldin, 2010) evaluation of faculty. Based on these definitions, teaching portfolios can be understood as a means to document teaching activities and are used for numerous purposes.

Since their beginnings, the use of teaching portfolios at postsecondary institutions has expanded. Almost two decades ago, Seldin (2000) estimated that more than 1500 colleges and universities in the United States and Canada used teaching portfolios for various purposes. Around the same point in time, Knapper (1995) also indicated that teaching portfolios were

extensively in use for some time, stating that "today teaching portfolios are known on nearly every college and university campus in the United States" (p. 45). More recently, in Canada, Gravestock (2011) identified 18 Canadian postsecondary institutions that require teaching portfolios for tenure and another 11 that recommend them or accept them as optional sources of data provided by the instructor for tenure applications. With the current use and likely continued growth of teaching portfolios, it is important that we have a good understanding of how they are used and whether faculty believe they are effective for summative and/or formative evaluation.

Background and Existing Research

While teaching portfolios may be developed in many ways, Trevitt and Stocks (2012) indicate that they tend to consist of two main parts – documentation provided by the candidate as 'evidence' of their practice and a narrative commentary which offers a rationale for the approach evidenced. In other words, teaching portfolios contain *what* material is used by the teacher, *why* that material was chosen, and *how* the material was used. However, specific components of teaching portfolios can vary considerably (Corry & Timmins, 2009; Simpson, Morzinski, & Lindemann, 1994; Urbach, 1992), and are usually unique to the individual who creates the portfolio (Reece et al., 2001; Seldin, 2000; Seldin, Miller & Seldin, 2010), which can result in difficulties when they are used for various forms of evaluation. Additionally, Oermann (1999) suggested that the content depends on whether a teaching portfolio is used for formative or summative evaluation. These differences may influence the way teaching portfolios are used as a form of SDL, and their effectiveness for formative or summative evaluation may be questioned.

While many researchers have indicated that teaching portfolios can be used for summative evaluation (Berk, 2005; Buckridge, 2008; Knapper, 1995; Redmon, 1999; Seldin,

Miller & Seldin, 2010; Weeks, 1996) and/or formative evaluation (Kaplan, 1998; Reece et al., 2001; Retallick, 2000; Seldin, Miller & Seldin, 2010), there are some who question their effectiveness for these purposes (Dinham & Scott, 2003; Wolf, 1996; Wright, Knight, & Pomerleau, 1999). As such, postsecondary institutions may question the credibility of teaching portfolios for summative and/or formative evaluations. Additionally, faculty need to be provided with evidence that the time and effort they dedicate to preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio is time well spent. Most assuredly, care must be taken when determining the content, format, and purpose of the portfolio. There is general agreement among scholars that teaching portfolios can be an excellent form of summative and/or formative evaluation; however, this view is not universal.

Need for the Study

With possible problems inherent in teaching portfolio use, it would be beneficial for those using teaching portfolios to have an evidence-based understanding of how they are used and whether they are perceived by faculty as an effective form of summative and/or formative evaluation. Currently there is limited research exploring the experiences and perceptions of faculty when preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this qualitative research project was to gain greater insights into the experiences that faculty members in postsecondary education institutions have had preparing and maintaining their self-directed teaching portfolio for the purpose of teaching improvement.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following primary research question:

In what ways do faculty in postsecondary institutions prepare and perceive the use of teaching portfolios as an effective form of self-directed learning to improve their teaching?

Guiding the research question are the following sub-questions:

a. In what ways do faculty prepare and maintain their teaching portfolio?
b. How do faculty use support and resources to guide their teaching portfolio preparation?
c. What are the key components that comprise their teaching portfolios?
d. In what ways (if any) do faculty use teaching portfolios for summative and/or formative purposes?
e. In what ways (if any) do faculty perceive teaching portfolios as improving their teaching?

Theoretical Framework Guiding the Study

Houle's (1961) seminal work on SDL suggests that adult learners generally fit within the following three categories when describing their reasons for participating in learning activities: (a) goal-oriented, who participate mainly to achieve some end goal; (b) activity-oriented, who participate for social or fellowship reasons; (c) learning-oriented, who perceive of learning as an end in itself. The findings of this study indicate the participants exhibited characteristics of one or more of these categories when preparing and/or maintaining a teaching portfolio. While there is ample research exploring other methods of SDL, there is none that specifically describes teaching portfolios as a form of SDL. Using the research of Houle (1961) as a framework, this research will help to fill this gap.

Limitations

This study has limitations which generally fall into the following categories: (a) the generalizability of the findings; (b) the number of participants and participant demographics; (c) the accuracy of participant responses; (d) researcher bias related to the analysis of the data and subsequent conclusions.

Teaching portfolios are not used universally across or within postsecondary institutions. As such, research exploring teaching portfolio use is only applicable to faculty and institutions that currently use teaching portfolios or those who intend to use teaching portfolios in the future. The results of this study help to inform their use but are not meant to be used as prescriptive guidelines. While the findings of this study can assist postsecondary institutions and faculty alike, they cannot be generalized to all situations.

The number of faculty members who participated is another limitation of the study. Generalizations based on small sample sizes are potentially inaccurate and need to be interpreted as such. Likewise, the demographics of the study participants limits the transferability of the results of the study. Participant recruitment was intended to attract participants from all departments at the University of Alberta. However, it was likely that many faculty members were unaware of the study, and therefore did not have the opportunity to participate. Participant recruitment was facilitated through department chairs, so if a chair elected not to distribute the details of the study to faculty in their department, it is unlikely that those faculty would have been aware of the opportunity to participate. As such, the participants were not a representative sample of the University of Alberta faculty.

Another potential limitation of this study was the accuracy of the participants' responses. Specifically, some participants may have had biases – whether positive or negative – about

teaching portfolio use that is outside the normal populations' experiences. Therefore, the participants of the study, arising from those who volunteered to participate, may have consisted of those with strong opinions rather than a random sample which could have resulted in a different range of responses. Also, the participants of the study were asked questions that required them to recall experiences that were months or years in the past. As such, there is likely to be inherent inaccuracy of the responses.

Lastly, researcher bias was a limitation in the study as a result of the selection and wording of the interview questions, the analysis of the results, and the conclusions made in the findings. While there was a strong desire to limit biases through the use of traditional trustworthiness practices in qualitative research (see Chapter 4, Data Analysis), it was impossible to fully bracket researcher biases.

Delimitations

Delimitations of the study included the method of the data collection chosen and the participant selection process.

While the participant interviews elicited detailed and descriptive responses, the interviews were limited to 30 minutes to an hour. This decision was reached in the hopes that recruitment of participants would be more effective if the interviews were limited to an hour. It is possible, however, that longer interviews would have provided deeper insights into the process of teaching portfolio preparation and maintenance.

Another delimitation of this study was the participant selection process. Participant recruitment was facilitated by using a participant 'Letter of Invitation' (see Appendix A) distributed to University of Alberta department Chairs and Associate Chairs. This method of recruitment was chosen because it was an efficient way to connect with faculty members across

the University of Alberta in a short period of time. However, it is possible that a more extensive recruitment process (i.e. at other institutions) would have resulted in more, and diverse, participants.

Definition of Terms

This section provides descriptions and definitions of important terms that were used in this study.

Teaching portfolio

The Canadian Association of University Teachers (2007) describes teaching dossiers as "a summary of an academic's major teaching accomplishments and strengths. It is to an academic's teaching what lists of publications, grants, and academic honours are to research. The teaching dossier is intended to provide short statements which describe the scope and quality of the academic's teaching" (p. 2).

E-Portfolio

Barrett (2007) states that "an electronic portfolio uses technologies as the container, allowing students or teachers to collect and organize portfolio artifacts in many media types (audio, video, graphics, text)" (p. 438).

Summative evaluation

Summative evaluations are evaluations that are done at the end of an activity, process, or period of time in order to understand if goals or objectives were met (Mertens, 2010).

Formative evaluation

Formative evaluations are defined in this study as evaluations conducted "during the operation of a program to provide information useful in improving the program" (Mertens, 2010, p. 71).

Postsecondary education

Statistics Canada (2010) indicates that

> Postsecondary education refers to those whose highest level of educational attainment is an apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma (including 'centres de formation professionnelle'); college, CEGEP (Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel) or other non-university certificate or diploma; university certificate or diploma below bachelor level; or a university degree (bachelor's degree; university certificate or diploma above bachelor level; decree in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine or optometry; master's degree; earned doctorate).

Faculty member

Manning (2013) describes faculty members as individuals working in postsecondary education who have various titles (e.g. adjunct, clinical, research), are ranked as either assistant, associate, and full professor, and have teaching, research, and service responsibilities.

Tenure

The University of Alberta Faculty Agreement defines tenure as "an appointment to the academic staff without term, which may be terminated only by resignation, retirement, death, or in accordance with the terms of this Agreement" (University of Alberta, 2006, p. 2)

Self-directed learning

Knowles (1975) defines self-directed learning: "In its broadest meaning, "self-directed learning" describes a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes" (p. 18).

Organization of the Thesis

This chapter provided an introduction to the study, discussed the background and existing research related to the study, explained the need for the study, identified the study problem and related research questions, identified the theoretical framework guiding the study, stated the significance of the study, presented limitations and delimitations, and defined important terms used in this study. Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive review of the literature of SDL and teaching portfolios as they relate to this study. Chapter 3 presents the research paradigm of this thesis, explains the research framework guiding the study, discusses the study research design and methodology, describes the participants and participant recruitment process, and indicates the data collection and analysis processes. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. Chapter 5 provides a thorough discussion of the study findings and possible implications. Chapter 6 concludes the thesis by presenting researcher reflections and discussing recommendations for future research.

Chapter Two: Related Literature

Overview

The previous chapter provided a brief description of why I decided to do this research, introduced key concepts of the study, presented background and existing research related to the study, explained the need for the study, discussed the study's problem statement, and identified the research questions guiding this study. It also described the theoretical framework guiding the study and the need for the study. Chapter 1 also presented the limitations and delimitations of this study as well as definitions of terms. Lastly, the previous chapter outlined the organization of the thesis.

This chapter includes a review of the literature related to this study. SDL literature is explored, as is the literature of teaching portfolios. This chapter provides a discussion of the context in which this study is founded and provides the concepts guiding this study.

Self-Directed Learning Literature

Introduction

SDL has been extensively studied by numerous academics for decades. The complexities of SDL have provided a rich source of research questions that have been examined from numerous perspectives. However, there remains much to be explored in this area. In particular, the effectiveness of SDL has been underexplored with respect to various contexts. While it is difficult to understand how SDL is used in all contexts, it is useful to study in the specific contexts in which it is frequently used. The extensive use of teaching portfolios among postsecondary education faculty members as a form of SDL for summative and formative evaluation necessitates this as an area warranting further exploration.

The following review of the literature on SDL provides a summary of what SDL is and how it relates to the use of teaching portfolios by faculty. Lastly, this section of the literature review discusses why and how the work of Houle (1961) was used as the theoretical framework for this study.

History of Self-Directed Learning

Throughout history people have sought out ways to increase their ability to learn from the world around them. Learning occurs in numerous formats that involve other people including mentorships, discussions groups, and group classes. In many cases, individuals prefer another type of learning environment – one in which much of the control of learning lies in the hands of the individual. SDL is an example of this type of learning.

While most of us have at some time used SDL, it has only really been an area of research for less than a century. When referring to SDL, for example, Caffarella (1993) indicated that "the first contribution has its roots in the work of Houle (1961)" (p. 27). Numerous other scholars have since noted the significance of Houle's influence on the study of SDL. Hiemstra (1994) also notes that much of the groundwork on SDL was provided by Houles' research in 1961. Likewise, Brockett and Donaghy (2011) note that "Cyril Houle is frequently credited as having played a pivotal role in bringing self-directed learning (or self-education as he frequently called it) to the forefront of scholarship in adult education and learning" (p. 1). Research by Confessore and Confessore (1992) who surveyed experts on SDL indicated that *The Inquiring Mind* (1961) is one of "the most important works that, in the panel's judgement, should be read at the outset of one's introduction to the field of adult self-directed learning" (p. 17). When referring to Houle's book *The Inquiring Mind*, Guglielmino, Long, and Hiemstra (2004) stated that "one of the most influential research studies identified with self-direction in learning in the

United States was reported in 1961 by Cyril Houle" (p. 4). It is clear that Houle's research has had a significant effect on the study of SDL. However, research into this area of study did not end there; in fact, it has been ongoing for more than half a century.

The work done by Houle in 1961 sparked a line of research into SDL that has endured. In the decades that followed, Tough (1978) and Knowles (1975) explored the area of SDL and have also been considered leading scholars in the field ever since. Merriam (2001) highlights the influence of these pioneering SDL scholars and stated that "based on the pioneering work of Houle, Tough, and Knowles, early research in self-directed learning was descriptive, verifying the widespread presence of self-directed learning among adults and documenting the process by which it occurred" (p. 8). Over the last few decades, research into SDL became a significant area of study. For example, Brockett et al. (2000) note that "few topics have commanded as much attention in the literature of adult education, over the past several decades, as self-directed learning" (p. 3). Likewise, Brockett and Donaghy (2011) indicated that "since the early 1970s, self-directed learning (SDL) has emerged as one of the most influential areas of study and practice in adult education" (p. 1). Hiemstra (1994) also noted that SDL research and scholarship is significant and that it may be one of the most explored topics in adult education. Guglielmino, Long, and Hiemstra (2004) have noted that

> [S]elf-direction in learning has been one of the most active streams of inquiry in adult education research in the US in the past 40 years and the attention to self-direction in learning, both in the United States and internationally, is unlikely to diminish. (p. 11)

Mezirow (1985) highlighted the role of SDL research in our understanding of adult learning by asserting that "no concept is more central to what adult education is all about than self-directed

learning" (p. 17). Likewise, Garrison (1997) described the significance of SDL as a topic in the field of adult education, stating

> One important reason has to be the intuitively appealing desire to be in control of deciding what to learn and how to learn it. It also fits with the desire and need felt by most adults to continue to learn. These innately human characteristics are inherent in the concept of self-directed learning. (p. 19)

Caffarella (1993) reinforces the importance of research in SDL by suggesting that "the concept has an almost cult like quality to the extent that self-directedness is viewed as the essence of what adult learning is all about" (p. 25).

Although there is a clear consensus among scholars that SDL is an important area of study, there is no on one definition or description of SDL. Additionally, there are many contexts in which SDL is used that are not fully understood. One purpose of this study is to explore one of these contexts to expand our understanding of SDL.

Description of Self-Directed Learning

Research into the area of SDL has occurred for many decades and has explored the topic from a multitude of vantage points. As touched on above, there is no one description or definition of SDL that has been agreed upon by scholars. However, there are recurrent themes. . To better understand the impact of SDL, it is important to review some concepts relating to this area of study.

There is agreement among scholars that one key component of SDL is the amount of control the learner has over the learning environment. Hiemstra (1994), for example, noted that SDL includes any study form whereby the individual has the primary responsibility for planning, implementing, and evaluating the effort. Likewise, Brookfield (1985) highlights the importance

of individual control by indicating that "individual control over learning is often claimed to be the distinctive characteristic of self-directed learning" (p. 7). Garrison (1997) reinforces this position by stating that "the apparent need to "learn on one's own" has been a persistent theme in self-directed learning" (p. 19). Lastly, Guglielmino, Long, and Hiemstra (2004, p. 5) indicated that the following definition of SDL provided by Knowles (1975) is the best-known and most-cited:

> In its broadest meaning, "self-directed learning" describes a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. (p. 18)

This definition indicates that learners are responsible for much of their learning environment. It is reasonable to conclude that a significant degree of control of ones' learning is a necessary aspect of SDL.

Although research into SDL has provided us with a rich source of information to draw from, there still is uncertainty as to when this type of learning is best used. It has been well documented in the literature that SDL is a desired form of learning for adults. Guglielmino, Long, and Hiemstra (2004) stated, for example, that "it is the contention of the authors that learner self-direction is a universal human attribute; it is present in each person to some degree" (p. 1). However, it has also been pointed out that while SDL has its strengths, it isn't appropriate for all individuals or all learning situations. Supporting this notion, Guglielmino, Long, and Hiemstra (2004) suggested:

> … although certain learning situations are more conducive to self-direction in learning than are others, it is the personal characteristics of the learner – including his or her qualities of mind and behavior (personality) as well as acquired skills and abilities – which ultimately determine whether self-directed learning will take place in a given learning situation. (p. 1)

Brookfield (2009) also identified the importance of understanding each learner as they relate to SDL. Additionally, Brookfield (2009) noted the importance of collaborating with others while using SDL:

> [I]ndeed, a recurring theme of research in this area is the way learners move in and out of learning networks and consult a range of peers. The key point is that whether or not learners choose to be temporarily isolated from, or immersed within, peer networks is the learner's decision. (p. 2615)

Arising from the prior literature, SDL appears to be effective when the learners' characteristics and environmental factors are taken into account. In some instances learners may choose to learn independently, while in other situations collaboration and guidance with others may be preferred.

Although differences in learner characteristics and environmental factors need to be considered when using SDL, it has been suggested that SDL can be effective in a variety of situations. Guiglielmino, Long, and Hiemstra (2004) supported this assertion: "self-direction in learning can occur in a wide variety of situations, ranging from a teacher-directed classroom to self-planned and self-conducted learning projects" (p. 1). Brookfield (2009) also indicated that SDL does not need to be done in isolation and that, in fact, "learners can work in self-directed ways while engaged in group-learning settings, provided that this is a choice they have made

believing it to be conducive to their learning efforts" (p. 2615). There are clearly two key points to reiterate about Brookfield's position: 1) that SDL occurs in numerous settings and 2) the learner chooses what setting to learn in. Hiemstra (1994) also supported a similar position suggesting that the conditions for optimal learning occur when a learner's level of self-direction is supplemented with possible SDL opportunities. In other words, SDL is effective when the learner is aware of potential sources of support and has the power to choose from them.

In addition to being a preferential form of learning for many, SDL has numerous other benefits which have been identified in the literature. Firstly, it has been suggested that SDL can lead to a greater awareness of one's learning characteristics and preferences. Reinforcing this point, Garrison (1997) noted that "opportunities for self-directed learning, in turn, enhance metacognitive awareness and create the conditions where students learn how to learn" (p. 31). This increased awareness has the potential to improve other learning situations outside of SDL. Related to this aspect of awareness, Confessore and Kops (1998) suggested that "self-directed individuals reflect, assess, and evaluate rather than uncritically accept and internalize information" (p. 365). This process of learning, reflecting, and evaluating enhances self-awareness and can also contribute to improved learning. When looking at the broader effects of SDL, Caffarella (1993) summarized its benefits:

> [S]elf-directed learning has contributed to our understanding of learning by (1) identifying an important form of adult learning and providing us with insights into the process of learning, (2) challenging us to define and debate the salient characteristics of adult learners, and (3) expanding our thinking about learning in formal settings. (p. 27)

Essentially, SDL can enhance the learning opportunities of individuals, and research into SDL has expanded our overall understanding of adult learning.

Although there is a rich history of research related to SDL, there continues to be much we can learn. For example, previous research on SDL has tended to be qualitative in nature, limiting the generalizability of the findings. It is also important to explore SDL in various settings so we can improve our understanding of its effectiveness in various contexts. There are a multitude of frameworks from which to view SDL. One way has been to examine this process through the characteristics of the learners. For example, Houle's (1961) work provided one way to categorize learners based on specific learner characteristics. As this study builds on the work of Houle (1961), it is important to describe some of his research on adult learners as it relates to this study.

The Inquiring Mind

Although it is understood that SDL was occurring well before Cyril Houle began writing on this topic, it was not an area that had received much attention. While the impact of Houle's writings on our understanding of SDL is a matter of debate, there is general consensus that it was noteworthy. Brockett and Donaghy (2011) have noted that "Houle's greatest influence on self-directed learning" (p. 3) was from *The Inquiring Mind*. While many scholars have pointed out that Houle did not use the term 'self-directed learning' in *The Inquiring Mind*, research by Brockett and Donaghy (2011) indicated that may of the field notes and hand-written comments Houle made regarding his research for *The Inquiring Mind* made reference to SDL. Though, we will never know when these notes were made – perhaps they were added after his research was complete – Brockett and Donaghy (2011) suggested that Houle may have considered his research that led to *The Inquiring Mind* a study into SDL. In any event, *The Inquiring Mind* has influenced generations of SDL scholars and has had a substantial impact on the study into adult learning.

Literature related to SDL may now seem like it has reached its pinnacle and is, perhaps, now on the decline; though, this was certainly not the case in the 1960s. Rather, Houle (1961) noted that adult education studies at that time "all pursue a single general theme, the effort to discover the characteristics of those people who are served by one or more of the established institutions or associations" (p. 5). It was apparent to Houle that there was a lack of research into other forms of adult learning outside of formal institutions. This research gap prompted Houle to focus on an area that he believed needed to be explored. More specifically, when referring to the research contained in *The Inquiring Mind*, Houle (1961) noted that "the decision to focus the present inquiry on the individual was reinforced by the perplexing fact that no such studies have previously been undertaken, a gap which has been independently noted by other summarizers of the literature" (p. 9). With that in mind, Houle decided to learn more about continuing learners by having them reflect on their learning and discuss their thoughts and feelings on their learning.

Houle set out to gain a better understanding of why continuing learners feel compelled to seek out learning opportunities by having the learners themselves describe their behaviors. Houle did not choose to study the learning behaviours of "all continuing learners but on those adults who engage to an outstanding degree in activities which are commonly thought to be educational" (Houle, 1961, p. 4). The interviews consisted of 19 major questions and corresponding sub-questions. More specifically, Houle (1961) lists his major areas of inquiry as follows:

> These questions were designed to get at the following points: 1. Do continuing learners possess any particular characteristics which make them different from other people? 2. What were the factors that led them to become continuing learners? 3. What has been the history of their continuing education in the past? 4. How much education are they now

> undertaking and of what kinds? 5. How do they think society views continuing education? 6. How do they themselves view? (p. 83)

Once the interviews were concluded, "all cases were read and the major themes for analysis were identified" (Houle, 1961, p. 86). The results of this analysis are fascinating to say the least.

Results

Although Houle's study offered insight into continuing learners in a multitude of ways, its most significant contribution to adult learning was the categorization of three subgroups of continuing learners. Houle (1961) described these subgroups as follows:

> But while they were basically similar, they did vary in terms of major conceptions they held about the purposes and values of continuing education. As I pondered the cases, considering each one as a whole, it gradually became clear (after many an earlier effort at analysis had led nowhere) that within the group there were in essence three subgroups. The first, as they will be called, the *goal-oriented*, are those who use education as a means of accomplishing fairly clear-cut objectives. The second, the *activity-oriented*, are those who take part because they find in the circumstances of the learning a meaning which has no necessary connection, and often no connection at all, with the content or the announced purposes of the activity. The third, the *learning-oriented*, seek knowledge for its own sake. These are not pure types; the best way to represent them pictorially would be by three circles which overlap at their edges. But the central emphasis of each subgroup is clearly discernible. (pp. 15-16)

The specific characteristics of each subgroup were thoroughly described by Houle (1961) and, from this, it became clear that all continuing learners are not the same.

Learner Subgroups

One subgroup of continuing learners that Houle (1961) identified was goal-oriented individuals. While Houle indicated that the participants of his study were all different, those that were goal-oriented shared many characteristics and/or behaviors. Houle (1961) stated that "the continuing education of the goal-oriented is in episodes, each of which begins with the realization of a need or the identification of an interest" (p. 18). Adding to this, Houle (1961) indicated that "there is no even, steady, continuous flow to the learning of such people, though it is an ever-recurring characteristic of their lives" (p. 18). In other words, goal-oriented continuing learners are always looking for further learning opportunities, with each learning episode having a particular goal.

The activity-oriented continuing learners are markedly different from the goal-oriented learners. Firstly, Houle (1961) stated that "the activity-oriented take part in learning primarily for reasons unrelated to the purposes or content of the activities in which they engage" (p. 19). More specifically, Houle (1961) described activity-oriented people as those who are "course-takers and group-joiners" (p. 23) who

> … might stay within a single institution or they might go to a number of different places, but it was social contact that they sought and their selection of any activity was essentially based on the amount and kind of human relationships it would yield. (pp. 23-24)

The activity-oriented continuing learners are keen to learn but would prefer to do so in circumstances that provide social interactions. In fact, this social interaction is of higher importance than the learning itself. This is clearly different from the aforementioned goal-oriented learners and the third sub-group of continuing learners.

The last sub-group that Houle (1961) identified is the learning-oriented continuing learners. Houle (1961) describes learning-oriented individuals as those who cannot stop learning. In particular, for this group, "… the desire for learning may be so strong that it takes on an almost religious meaning" (p. 39). The learning-oriented participants described their desire to learn as pervading all aspects of their lives. In the words of Houle (1961) "for the learning-oriented, education might almost be called a constant rather than a continuing activity" (p. 24). It is almost as if learning-oriented continuing learners have little or no control over their desire to seek out learning opportunities. In short, learning-oriented continuing learners are driven by their desire to learn and enjoy the process.

While Houle (1961) delineates between the three sub-groups of continuing learners, he also makes it clear that all three groups have a number of characteristics in common. This is evident in the following description offered by Houle (1961):

> All of the people in the sample are basically similar; they are all continuing learners. They have goals; they enjoy participation; and they like to learn. Their differences are matters of emphasis. Most of them fit clearly into one or another of the three groups but none is completely contained thereby. (p. 29)

An important point to consider is that all continual learners share similar characteristics. While learners in each sub-group have a preferred style of learning and typically approach learning opportunities with different goals in mind, they also all have a strong desire to continually learn.

It is also important to note the limitations of Houle's (1961) findings. Firstly, Houle (1961) interviewed only 20 participants, which limits the generalizability of his findings. Additionally, Houle (1961) did not explore the reasons why each learner became involved with each individual learning opportunity. While he notes that learners in the three sub-groups share

common characteristics, the specific context in which this is evident is not explored. It is possible that some learning opportunities are designed to encourage the participation of one sub-group over another. This would be less than ideal if universal participation is desired.

Summary

The work conducted by Houle illustrates that individuals seek out learning opportunities for different purposes. As such, understanding why an individual is involved in a particular learning endeavor provides valuable information that can be used to foster an environment that is conducive to learning. Teaching portfolios are a form of SDL that have been used by faculty for various purposes, but there is no research that has described their use in relation to the continuous learner subgroups as described by Houle (1961). Why this is the case is unclear. This study seeks to explore the connection between Houle's (1961) subgroups and the reasons faculty use teaching portfolios. Ultimately, this information can be used to improve the learning environment in which teaching portfolios are prepared and maintained.

Teaching Portfolio Literature

Introduction

Teaching portfolios have been a method of evaluation that is intricately linked with professional development and have been used for several decades in North America (Trevitt & Stocks, 2013). Knapper (1995) noted that "their origins can be traced back to an initiative of the Canadian Association of University Teachers in the early 1970s" (p. 45). In the decades that followed, teaching portfolios became more commonly used by faculty and postsecondary institutions alike. Supporting this, Dinham and Scott (2003) stated that "in education, the use of the portfolio in initial teacher education, in the first years of teaching, in various leadership preparation programs, postgraduate university courses and in teaching awards, has become more

common" (p. 230). Seldin (2000) noted that faculty "are being held accountable, as never before, to provide indisputable evidence of the quality of their classroom instruction" (p. 37). With this focus on accountability and the increasing popularity of using teaching portfolios in postsecondary institutions, it is expected that teaching portfolios will continue to be used in the future.

Teaching portfolios are a form of SDL. Although their use has been studied by scholars, there is still much to learn about their effectiveness as a SDL for enhancing teaching practice. While there is extensive literature describing teaching portfolios, there is limited research exploring faculty perceptions on the experiences of preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio. In this literature review, I briefly describe the literature related to how teaching portfolios are described, teaching portfolio content, summative and formative uses of teaching portfolios, and whether they are considered effective for these forms of evaluation.

Teaching Portfolio Description

Teaching portfolios have been described in numerous ways. Reece et al. (2001) indicates that "a teaching portfolio serves to document a faculty member's commitment to and accomplishments relative to the scholarship of teaching" (p. 182). A similar description is provided by Weeks (1996) who stated "the teaching portfolio is one way of organizing the collation and presentation of evidence about teaching" (p. 71). Another useful description of teaching portfolios as provided by Wright et al. (1999) is as follows: "we understand a teaching portfolio (or dossier) to be a collection of evidence of good teaching practice, where teaching is seen as everything that faculty do to help students to achieve course and program goals" (p. 90). Oermann (1999) also noted the formative purpose of teaching portfolios by stating that they can be used "to assist in the growth and development of the teacher" (p. 224). While scholars may

describe teaching portfolios differently, it is clear that a key purpose is to present information about many aspects of teaching and serve as a means to improve teaching. However, there is little evidence-based information on how teaching portfolios are used most effectively.

Teaching Portfolio Content

The process of preparing a teaching portfolio can vary, with a few suggested ways to begin the process. Reece et al. (2001) stated that when preparing a teaching portfolio, "the first step is to explicate a teaching philosophy" (p. 182), which is described as "a statement of the faculty member's beliefs, values, and attitudes toward meeting the educational needs of students and toward fulfilling the missions of the department, college, and the university" (p. 182). Another description of a teaching philosophy was offered by Schönwetter, Sokal, Friesen and Taylor (2002): "a teaching philosophy statement is a systematic and critical rationale that focuses on the important components defining effective teaching and learning in a particular discipline and/or institutional context" (p. 84). Corry and Timmins (2009) also indicated that "the first phase of developing a portfolio requires the development of a philosophy of teaching" (p. 389). Lastly, Murray (1995) stated that "perhaps the only essential (at least when portfolios are used for formative purposes) ingredient for a portfolio is some sort of statement of beliefs (a philosophy of education) about the teaching and learning process" (p. 170). There is general consensus that a teaching philosophy statement is an essential component of a teaching portfolio; however, the remaining content can be much more varied.

Although teaching portfolios are unique to each individual faculty member (Oermann, 1999; Reece et al., 2001; Seldin, 2000; Seldin, Miller & Seldin, 2010), there are some guidelines that have been offered to assist in selecting the content. Berk (2005) suggested that there are three categories of components: a) a description of teaching responsibilities, b) a reflective

analysis, and c) evidence to support above claims. Similarly, Corry and Timmins (2009) indicated that a teaching portfolio usually consists of three parts including "an introduction to and description of a personal teaching philosophy. The second outlines and reflects upon entries (discrete teaching experiences) and the final section provides a reflection on the process so far" (p. 390). Likewise, Kaplan (1998) suggested

> [T]he portfolio should be more than a simple collection of documents. It also should contain reflective statements on the material included and on the faculty member's approach to teaching and student learning. The reflective portions of the portfolio help set the documents in context for the reader; the materials provide evidence to back up the assertions made in the reflective statement. (pp. 1-2)

While the aforementioned categories of content serve to guide the process of preparing a teaching portfolio, specific components may vary considerably.

A variety of specific components have been used in teaching portfolios, with some used more frequently. Buckridge (2008) notes that at Griffith University in Nathan, Australia

> [T]he portfolio is a prose document of about 2000 words which may make reference to a range of Appendices. These consist mainly of evaluation results (student surveys, student comments, peer reviews, etc.), but can include first-order teaching material (subject outlines, tutor manuals, laboratory resource books, etc.). (p. 120)

Another description of teaching portfolio content can be found in Dinham and Scott's (2003) study of teaching award winners in Australia in which the portfolios of 29 teachers were examined. The required teaching portfolio components of the award submissions included a cover page, table of contents, one-page career map, statement of professional beliefs and values, and evidence of professional accomplishment as related to the four broad domains suggested in

the standards framework (curriculum content; pedagogy; assessment and reporting) (Dinham & Scott, 2003).

In addition to the aforementioned examples, Seldin (2000) offers an extensive list of 28 different items that could be included in a teaching portfolio which he grouped into the following categories: 1) material from oneself, 2) material from others, 3) products of good teaching and student learning, and 4) the appendix. Lastly, the Canadian Association of University Teachers (2007) provides an even more exhaustive list of 41 different items that are categorized as follows: 1) teaching responsibilities and practices, 2) products of good teaching, 3) evaluating and improving one's teaching, 4) contributions outside the classroom, 5) information from students, 6) information from colleagues, and 7) information from others.

With such a broad range of content to choose from, it is helpful to note that, depending on the context, the content of a teaching portfolio is adjusted. Dinham and Scott (2003) noted that "teachers also teach in differing contexts – primary/secondary, city/country, art/science – which need to be recognized" (p. 232). Similarly, Urbach (1992) indicated that "different fields and courses lend themselves to different types of documentation" (p. 71). Finally, Seldin, Miller and Seldin (2010) indicated that:

> The items chosen for the portfolio are based on a combination of availability of supporting materials, the nature of the portfolio, the faculty position, the discipline, and the importance assigned by the faculty member to different items…differences in portfolio content and organization should be encouraged to the extent that they are allowed by the department and the college or university. (p. 10)

In addition to considering differences in teaching responsibilities, it is important that a teaching portfolio be prepared with intended use in mind. Supporting this point, Murray (1995)

stated that “a portfolio intended to impress a promotion or tenure committee needs to carefully present the best of one’s work. A portfolio intended to improve teaching may contain artifacts and reflections on problems one discovers in teaching” (p. 169).

The process of preparing a teaching portfolio can be a new experience for faculty. Seldin (1997) points out is the importance of a mentor who is experienced in teaching portfolio construction to guide the process. This will help to ensure the content of the portfolio is personalized by the instructor preparing it and that all relevant components are included.

With the many demands placed on faculty, it is important to identify how long the process of preparing a teaching portfolio may take. Seldin, Miller and Seldin (2010) claimed that the initial time investment is between ten and eighteen hours that can be spread over a number of days and recommend that the portfolio’s length be roughly eight to twelve pages, not including appendix materials. CAUT (2007) guidelines suggest that a teaching portfolio not be longer than three pages. These recommendations differ significantly and may confuse those who are seeking teaching portfolio guidelines to follow.

Faculty may teach hundreds of hours each year on top of the time devoted to other obligations, so the time and energy required to develop a teaching portfolio should be as effective as possible. As such, gaining further evidence-based insights on effective preparation and maintenance of teaching portfolios is needed.

Summative Use of Teaching Portfolios

The content of a teaching portfolio is one aspect that may influence effectiveness. The purpose for which it is prepared and how it will be used are also important. Many postsecondary institutions have chosen to use teaching portfolios as part of a summative evaluation process.

Summative evaluations can be thought of as evaluations that are done at the end of an activity, process, or period of time. The use of teaching portfolios for summative evaluations at postsecondary institutions are many and varied. Buckridge (2008) indicated that "portfolios have been prepared within three different institutional processes – confirmation of tenure, promotion at all levels, and participation in the award course, the Graduate Certificate in Higher Education (GCHE)" (p. 120). The teaching portfolios at Griffith University are, therefore, used as a summary of past success to evaluate whether or not an instructor should be promoted or acknowledged with an award. Dinham and Scott (2003) also noted that "the teaching portfolio performs the function of demonstrating one's capabilities and accomplishments, achieved through documents, artefacts and empirical evidence, judiciously selected and linked together in a theoretically sound and coherent fashion" (p. 231). Again, it appears the summative use of teaching portfolios to assess the past performance of an instructor occurs frequently. This is also identified by Klenowski, Askew and Carnell (2006): "portfolios are found in all phases of education and professional development for learning, assessment, promotion and appraisal" (p. 267). Knapper (1995) also noted the teaching portfolios are commonly used for award nominations – a specific type of summative evaluation. Lastly, Berk (2005) noted that "the teaching portfolio should be reserved primarily for summative decisions to present a comprehensive picture of teaching effectiveness to complement the list of research publications" (p. 57).

It is apparent that many institutions use teaching portfolios for summative evaluation – the results of which are often used for tenure decisions, promotional purposes or for the granting of awards or certificates.

Formative Use of Teaching Portfolios

In addition to their frequent use in summative evaluations, teaching portfolios are also used for formative evaluation. Formative evaluations are concerned with reflection and teaching development rather than assessment for awards or promotions. Through teaching portfolios, previous experience with teaching activities can be used as a catalyst to improve future activities.

The use of teaching portfolios encourages faculty members to use their experiences to help them improve their teaching abilities. Retallick (2000) summed up the process by describing it as learning through reflection. Dinham and Scott (2003) have also noted that "self-reflection plays an integral role in the development of the portfolio" (p. 231). This aspect of self-reflections is also noted by Weeks (1996) who stated that "compiling a portfolio is a process – a process involving research, evaluation and reflection on practice" (p. 72). This instructor-centred ownership of the portfolio is also supported by Dinham and Scott (2003) who suggested that "the portfolio should be considered essentially formative, in that the owner/developer of the portfolio should be looking forward as well as considering the past and the present" (p. 232). Kaplan (1998) noted that due to the self-reflective component, "the portfolio is well-suited to helping faculty examine their goals for teaching and student learning, and compare those goals to the reality of their praxis" (p. 2). The importance of self-reflection on the formative evaluation process stimulated by teaching portfolio use is also supported by Knapper (1995), Murray (1995), Reece et al. (2001), Seldin (2000), and Seldin, Miller, and Seldin (2010). There appears to be widespread support of teaching portfolios as a formative evaluation tool due to – among other things – the reflective component associated with their use.

Teaching portfolios have been described as an effective formative evaluation tool partially as a result of how they are individualized by each faculty member. Supporting this

point, Burns (1999) highlights the importance of faculty ownership of the portfolio: “a teaching portfolio is an organized collection of the professor’s work, the content of which varies according to what the professor chooses to include in the collection, and according to whose method of portfolio construction the professor follows” (p. 132).

For teaching portfolios to be an effective component of the formative evaluation process, they need to be reflective, personalized, instructor-driven, and contain both theoretical and practical components. They should be prepared with the intent of improving teaching performance resulting in an enhanced student experience.

Benefits of Teaching Portfolio Use

There are different benefits of using teaching portfolios such as stimulating the improvement of teaching abilities or as a tool to evaluate teaching. More specifically, instructors who use teaching portfolios may reflect on current practices, identify areas in which they could improve, and highlight areas in which they excel. Additionally, teaching portfolios offer a way to showcase their accomplishments in a comprehensive and organized format.

Scholars have indicated that teaching portfolios can be effective for faculty development. When discussing teaching portfolios for developmental use, Buckridge (2008) stated that “without doubt, the portfolio, separated from all pressure to make claims and defend, can be an excellent mechanism” (p. 123). In addition, Dinham and Scott (2003) pointed out the practical benefits of portfolios including “highlighting one’s professional strengths and weaknesses and strengthening one’s teaching skills” (p. 237). Seldin (2000) also noted “the very process of preparing a portfolio encourages the professor to reconsider teaching activities, rearrange priorities, rethink strategies, and plan for the future” (p. 43). Lastly, Seldin, Miller and Seldin (2010) stated

> For most faculty, teaching portfolios actually improve their performance. Experience suggests that if a professor is motivated to improve, knows how to improve, or knows where to go for help, improvement is quite likely. (p. 8)

The perceived benefits aside, Dinham and Scott (2003) also pointed out that through the creation of a teaching portfolio, "there were also more emotional or affective responses to do with satisfaction, value derived, enlightenment, the creation of a lasting 'special' document and inspiring others" (p. 237). In other words, there is a belief the development of a portfolio creates a connection, or a bond, between the instructor and their courses. It is believed this type of connection is essential for faculty to be passionate about their work. Faculty members and postsecondary institutions alike should then see this as beneficial.

Teaching portfolios have also been noted by scholars as a way to assess teaching. Murray (1995) noted that "teaching portfolios provide professors and chairpersons with a means to assess and improve teaching. Moreover, portfolios provide faculty and chairs with the means to recognize and reward good teaching while still promoting the values of the discipline" (p. 164). This is an important point to consider as it is often difficult for administrators to adequately assess teaching. Supporting this notion, Urbach (1992) stated that "it is unusual for members of faculty committees or administrators, in most universities, to have personal knowledge of your teaching behavior in the college classroom, laboratory, or studio" (p. 73). Addressing this difficulty in assessing teaching, Knapper (1995) stated "the use of dossiers also affords an all-too-rare glimpse into the typically private domain of the classroom, and in this sense portfolios are particularly useful in facilitating peer reviews of teaching" (p. 53). Teaching portfolios are perceived as a tool that can be used to provide evidence of teaching effectiveness to administrators responsible for evaluations.

Lastly, if the process of creating a portfolio includes an acknowledgement of the institutional objectives, then faculty may be more aware of their role within the broad aims of the institution. Buckridge (2008) observed "there is reason to hope that as staff represent their teaching in this way, their practice will follow suit. In addition, they will increasingly engage (at least rhetorically) with the institution's strategic goals" (p. 122). It is possible, that teaching portfolios may be a benefit to the institution based on the rationale that it is often difficult for an institution to communicate its vision and goals to its faculty. Specifically, teaching portfolios could potentially foster this process.

The perceived benefits of using a teaching portfolio as part of a postsecondary institution's evaluation process are many. Based on the literature, teaching portfolios may have the potential to offer an avenue whereby faculty can critically reflect on their teaching skills and philosophy with the intent to improve teaching effectiveness. Additionally, it is possible that portfolios may allow faculty to develop a connection with the courses they teach, sparking the passion and motivation needed to inspire their students. From an institutional perspective, teaching portfolios may help faculty understand the goals of the institution and align their teaching to help reach those goals.

Alongside the perceived benefits of teaching portfolio use, it is also important to review the literature with respect to the possible concerns of their use.

Concerns of Teaching Portfolio Use

Considering that teaching portfolios can be used for both summative and formative purposes, there are bound to be concerns with their effective use. Buckridge (2008), for example, noted that while developmental portfolios are useful for describing teaching capacity and providing direction for improvement, summative portfolios include what has been done –

indicating areas of success and areas that need to be improved. Murray (1995) also highlighted the potential problems associated with using teaching portfolios for summative and formative evaluation and stated that "if the promise of the portfolio rests in their ability to improve the quality of teaching, administrators would be well advised to avoid using portfolios for summative evaluation" (p. 170). This is an important concern with teaching portfolio use. If they are to be an integral part of continual professional development, one may wonder if they can also be effectively used concurrently for summative evaluation.

Concerns with the nature of the teaching portfolio have also been pointed out by Trevitt and Stocks (2012) who suggested that teaching portfolios may only provide information that assessors want, rather than an authentic description of teaching reflections. This poses the question of whether a teaching portfolio can be authentic if it is used as a summative evaluation tool. Trevitt and Stocks (2012) also noted that authenticity may suffer if faculty preparing a teaching portfolio feel that their teaching values and approaches may be different from those of the assessors. McLean and Bullard (2000) also observed the issue of authenticity as a central concern when judging teaching portfolios. For portfolios to be effective in improving teaching, it is essential that instructors are open, honest, and authentic in their representation of themselves.

Even if there is a process that ensures the authenticity of teaching portfolios, there may still be a significant issue with objectively comparing portfolios from different faculty members. It is difficult to use an evaluation method that requires documentation that is inherently different from one person to the next. This issue of consistency, when comparing and evaluating teaching portfolios, has been addressed in the literature. Trevitt and Stocks (2012) noted, for example, that there is no consistent set of assessment criteria that can be used by assessors; rather, they

have to judge submissions on a case by case basis. Centra (2000) supported this position and noted that "how best to assess the information has not yet been addressed adequately" (p. 87). Another issue with teaching portfolio assessment is that the person who prepares their portfolio may be the expert in the subject areas they teach – therefore it is often difficult to effectively critique their portfolio. Wright et al. (1999) clearly described this problem when he stated that "there is a lack of good research evidence about their impact, partly because the diversity of forms and purposes means that simple judgments about their value are impossible" (p. 92). This diversity poses a very real problem when teaching portfolios are used by institutions to compare the teaching performance of faculty who teach different courses or in different program areas. It is essential to understand that not all teaching portfolios are alike and, by their very nature, will be difficult to compare. From this vantage point, the literature indicates that a framework for teaching portfolio development and evaluation – one that allows for personalization and that an institution can work from –is essential.

A framework is a good starting point but is not without potential problems. A framework would have to align with the institution's goals and objectives and, as such, would influence the content of faculty teaching portfolios. As pointed out by Trevitt and Stocks (2012), this type of pressure may force faculty to meet externally imposed standards which "can lead to the construction of the 'performative self' which is 'a fabricated, socially constructed self'" (p. 250). This is a less than ideal situation if one is concerned with the authenticity of a teaching portfolio – a situation that has been noted in the literature. When Buckridge (2008) analyzed teaching portfolios at Griffith University in Australia, she concluded that "the philosophy of teaching section has tended to standardise around the institution's explicit values, as expressed in generic or 'educational' terms" (p. 122). This theme of formatting teaching portfolios to adhere

to institutional goals was also observed by Dinham and Scott (2003) who highlighted the pitfalls of this adherence: “common consensus is that too much prescription can hinder innovation, reflection and an individualized response and thus any benefit derived” (p. 231). Conversely, Murray (1995) suggested that “it is important for departments to agree on an overall structure of what a portfolio should contain” (p. 169). There is clear disagreement among scholars about how an institution should guide teaching portfolio preparation and assessment.

Lastly, Wright et al. (1999) has noted that faculty may find preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio to be a burdensome and time-consuming process. If faculty are required to prepare a teaching portfolio and perceive them to be an ineffective use of time, they may resent their preparation as a burdensome activity.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 provided a review of SDL and teaching portfolio literature as they relate to this study. The literature that was reviewed provided the foundation from which this study was designed and the data collected. The following chapter explains in detail the methods by which this study was conducted

Chapter Three: Methods

Overview

The previous chapter included literature reviews of SDL and teaching portfolios as they relate to this study. Chapter 2 provided the background on which this research is based and included a history of SDL, various descriptions of SDL, and the ground-breaking research of Houle in 1961. It also reviewed the empirical and theoretical research related to teaching portfolio content, summative and formative uses of teaching portfolios, and possible benefits and concerns of teaching portfolios by postsecondary faculty.

The purpose of this study was to gain insights into the experiences that faculty members in postsecondary education institutions have had preparing and maintaining their self-directed teaching portfolio for the purpose of teaching improvement. This chapter describes the research paradigm guiding the study, the methodology, a description of the participants and how they were recruited, data collection and analysis methods, and, finally, limitations related to the findings of this study.

Research Paradigm

Teaching portfolios are a SDL activity which have been used by faculty for summative and formative teaching evaluations. Although there are some elements that may be common between portfolios, typically they are personalized by each faculty member. As such, the experience of preparation and maintenance of a teaching portfolio will be unique to each participant. As these experiences, and the interpretation of them, are constructed differently by each participant, a constructivist paradigm was used to frame this study.

Mertens (2010) indicated that one of the key assumptions of a constructivist paradigm is a desire of the researcher to understand the world through the experiences of others. The

constructivist paradigm assumes that reality is socially constructed and that individuals will have a different perspective of the world around them based on their own unique experiences (Mertens, 2010). Additionally, Mertens (2010) noted "the researcher's goal is to understand the multiple social constructions of meaning and knowledge" (p. 18). Caelli, Ray, and Mill (2003) suggested that "humans construct knowledge out of their somewhat subjective engagement with objects in their world" (p. 2). In other words, for some problems there are no right or wrong answers – solutions need to reflect the complex reality of each person's experiences. This study explored the experiences of faculty members who have prepared and maintained a teaching portfolio. The results of this study reflect the fact that each participant had different experiences preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio, which influenced their perceptions of the influence of teaching portfolios.

Methodology

The study was designed to elicit in-depth responses from the participants regarding their experiences preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio as a self-directed activity for the purpose of teaching improvement. To elicit in-depth responses, the researcher interviewed participants individually, asking them semi-structured questions. As such, generic qualitative research methodology was well-suited for this study.

Generic qualitative research is used to "discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved" (Merriam, 1998, p. 11). Caelli et al. (2003) described generic qualitative studies as

> … those that exhibit some or all of the characteristics of qualitative endeavor but rather than focusing the study through the lens of a known methodology they seek to do one of

> two things: either they combine several methodologies or approaches, or claim no particular methodological viewpoint at all. (p. 2)

Additionally, Caelli et al. (2003) noted that in generic qualitative research "the focus of the study is on understanding an experience or an event" (p. 2). The purpose of this study was to provide insight into faculty conceptions of the process of preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio which fits well with a generic qualitative research methodology.

Generic qualitative research is used when a particular qualitative research methodology does not correspond with a study (Merriam, 1998); yet, it is essential that the researcher follows established processes that are used in other forms of qualitative research. It is the responsibility of the researcher to establish to the reader the merit of a particular study so that it can be evaluated appropriately (Caelli et al., 2003). Mindful of this, this study follows the recommendations of Caelli et al. (2003) for ensuring credibility in generic qualitative research. These guidelines indicate that generic qualitative research address four areas: "1. the theoretical positioning of the researcher; 2. the congruence between methodology and methods; 3. the strategies to establish rigor; and 4. the analytic lens through which the data are examined" (Caelli et al., 2003, p. 5).

Theoretical Positioning

According to Caelli et al. (2003), "theoretical positioning refers to the researcher's motives, presuppositions, and personal history that leads him or her toward, and subsequently shapes, a particular inquiry" (p. 5). Chapter 1 describes key aspects of the researcher's theoretical positioning as it relates to this study. Additionally, it should be noted that the selection of a constructivist research paradigm on which this study is founded is not only relevant to the study itself but also is consistent with the researcher's world view. In advance of

this study, the researcher presupposed that the results of the study would show the experiences of the participants in preparing and maintaining their self-directed teaching portfolio to be similar in some aspects, but also vary, from participant to participant. It was this uncovering of the different experiences of the participants – and perceptions of these experiences – that was of importance. The reasons for this motivation were twofold: 1) to gain insights on how teaching portfolios can be used effectively; 2) to add to the body of knowledge of teaching portfolio preparation and maintenance so others could enhance the use of their teaching portfolio. The methods chosen for this study were selected with these motivations in mind.

Methods

In addition to describing the theoretical positioning of the researcher, Caelli et al. (2003) noted that the methods of generic qualitative research need to be fully explained by the researcher. It is the hope of the researcher that the reader of this study feels fully informed as to the methods used to explore the experiences of faculty while preparing and maintaining their self-directed teaching portfolio. These methods are described in detail throughout this chapter, as are the reasons for why the researcher chose the methods.

Rigor

The approaches that guide generic qualitative research need to be rigorous (Caelli et al., 2003, p. 7). While what constitutes rigor in qualitative research may be debated, Caelli et al. (2003) suggested that "qualitative researchers need to 1) articulate a knowledgeable, theoretically informed choice regarding their approach to rigor, and 2) select an approach that is philosophically and methodologically congruent with their inquiry" (p. 7). The methods used to recruit participants, compile data, interpret data, and present and discuss results have been

explained in detail, are established qualitative research approaches, and are valid for answering the research questions of this study.

The Analytic Lens

Caelli et al. (2003) have suggested the analytic lens includes the "interpretive presuppositions that a researcher brings to bear on his or her data" (p. 8). This study was designed to elicit information about preparing and maintaining a self-directed teaching portfolio. The process of analyzing the data gathered in this study was completed in a number of steps. It was the desire of the researcher to analyze the data by reviewing the interview recordings and transcripts multiple times to minimize the possibility of missing relevant data or misinterpreting data. Additionally, the data analysis was reviewed by the researchers' supervisor to ensure that the interview transcripts and the data analysis were consistent and bias was minimized and assumptions bracketed.

Study Site

The research site for this study was a large research-focused Canadian University.

Prior to participant recruitment, the study was reviewed and approved by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta, including a review of the study recruitment material (see Appendices A & B), participant consent form (see Appendix C), and interview questions (see Appendix D).

Participant Recruitment

Participant recruitment for this study consisted of a few steps. The first step was to compile a list of contact information of university Chairs and Associate Chairs. This information was gathered through the university website. Subsequently, the department Chairs and Associate Chairs were informed of the study via email (see Appendix A) and were asked to support

participant recruitment by distributing a letter of invitation email to faculty members in their department (see Appendix B). Department Chairs and Associate Chairs who agreed to assist in participant recruitment forwarded an email invitation to faculty in their department. Faculty interested in participating were asked to contact the researcher directly for more information or to participate in the study. Lastly, a time and location to complete the interview was agreed upon by the participant and the researcher.

Participants

While participant recruitment was a convenience sample at the researcher's institution, there were some aspects of purposive sampling within the sample selected. Participants were required to be faculty members of the university who have prepared a teaching portfolio. As the purpose of the study was to explore the use of teaching portfolios by faculty, it was necessary that all participants met these two requirements. The use of purposive sampling was chosen by the researcher in order to attract participants for whom the use of teaching portfolios by faculty is likely to happen (Mertens, 2010). The study site was chosen as the recruitment site for a number of reasons: 1) it is a comprehensive postsecondary institution with varied and diverse faculty from which to recruit participants; 2) according to Gravestock (2011), teaching portfolios are an optional source of information that can be provided by faculty for promotion and tenure applications at the institution; 3) the geographic location of the institution was desirable by the researcher who is currently studying at the institution.

Data Collection

The method used to collect data was a single private semi-structured interview (Mertens, 2010) between January 22 and April 24, 2016. The interview consisted of open-ended primary and sub-questions which focused on three areas: 1) participant demographics; 2) teaching

portfolio preparation and maintenance; 3) perceived benefits of teaching portfolio use. Mertens (2010) indicated that interviews are purposeful "when you want to fully understand someone's impressions or experiences" (p. 352). Additionally, Mertens (2010) noted that interviews allow the researcher to "get a full range and depth of information" (p. 352). The purpose of using open-ended questions was to elicit as much information as possible. The use of teaching portfolios is multi-faceted, and it was an objective of the researcher to gather as much data as possible describing the experiences of teaching portfolio use. As a result, semi-structured interviews were the method of data collection selected.

Prior to the interview, interested participants were emailed a participant consent form (see Appendix C) describing the study and their role as a participant. The participants were informed that reading and signing the form indicated they were giving informed consent to participate in the study. Additionally, the participants were informed that they were free to refuse to answer any (or all) interview questions, to quit the interview at any time, or to withdraw from the study altogether if they chose; however, once the data had been analyzed, they could not have their information removed. The participants were asked to sign the consent form and return it to the researcher prior to the interview or to contact the researcher for more information.

The interviews took place in quiet spaces at the University of Alberta and were scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time between the participants and the researcher. The interviews averaged 28 minutes and were recorded using a digital voice recording device for later transcription.

Data Analysis

The participant interviews were transcribed by a third party and then returned to the researcher. Subsequently, the researcher reviewed the transcriptions to ensure accuracy and

revised transcriptions that included errors in spelling or omissions. Once the interview transcriptions were completed, they were returned to the participants for verification of transcription accuracy. The participants were informed that if they would like to make any changes, they needed to do so prior to a pre-determined date; otherwise, the researcher would assume the transcription is accurate.

Interview transcriptions were analyzed using a two-step process described by Mertens (2010). The first step was to prepare the data for analysis. During the first step, the researcher became well-acquainted with the data through the following process: 1) the interview process itself; 2) listening to the interviews a second time prior to transcription; 3) listening to the interviews a third time while verifying the content of the transcriptions. While Leavy and Hess-Biber (2006) suggest that the researcher should do the transcriptions themselves, a third party was selected to transcribe the interviews in the interest of time.

The second step of the analysis process consisted of what Mertens (2010) described as the "data exploration and reduction phase" (p. 425). During this phase, the researcher reviewed the transcriptions and coded the data into similar categories. The categories generally followed the structure of the interview questions themselves, however, there were instances whereby participants provided information while answering one question that pertained to a different question. As a result, the researcher ensured that all data was categorised according to the codes. Additionally, quotes were selected which the researcher identified as being representative of responses in the categories. These quotes were used in the 'Results' and 'Discussion and Implications' chapters to strengthen conclusions presented by the researcher.

Lastly, once the data had been analyzed and coded by the researcher, it was forwarded to his thesis supervisor for review.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in this study was addressed in a few ways. Firstly, the researcher ensured that the transcriptions matched the participant responses in the interviews. Secondly, the researcher provided the participants with the opportunity to clarify or revise any responses from the interviews through the verification of transcription accuracy process. Additionally, the results of the data analysis conducted by the researcher were confirmed by his supervisor. Lastly, the information presented in the 'Results' chapter was presented with numerous quotes illustrating the responses made by the participants rather than rephrasing, paraphrasing, or summarizing in the researcher's own words.

Generalizability

Mertens (2010) stated that generalizability "refers to the researcher's ability to generalize the results from a sample to the population from which it was drawn" (p. 4). Although it would be ideal to be able to generalize results fully across similar populations, this is not possible. The results of qualitative studies cannot be accurately applied to other settings, populations, or other periods of time (Patton, 1990). However, it is reasonable to conclude that if the research methods of a study are sound and credible, then the results will have value with respect to insights that are transferable to other settings.

This study is most transferable to similar populations in similar contexts: postsecondary faculty in a research-intensive university who maintain a self-directed teaching portfolio or who are planning to prepare one, and postsecondary institutions who use teaching portfolios for summative and/or formative evaluations. Mertens (2010) noted that if the researcher provides the reader with a full description of the context in which the research took place, then the reader can decide whether or not the results are transferable to their situation. In line with a generic

qualitative research method, it is the hope of the researcher that this study is presented with "enough detail about the study, the approach, and the methods needs to be included so that the reader can appropriately evaluate the research" (Caelli et al., 2003, p. 4) and to gain insights to other similar situations.

Chapter Summary

This chapter described the research paradigm, methodology, and study site of this study. Chapter 3 also outlined the process by which the participants were selected and how the data were collected and analyzed. Through this aforementioned process, the researcher was able to collect sufficient data to inform the study research questions. Lastly, this chapter discussed objectivity and generalizability concerns related to the results of the study.

Chapter Four: Results

Overview

The purpose of this study was to gain insights into the experiences that faculty members in postsecondary education institutions have had preparing and maintaining their self-directed teaching portfolio for the purpose of teaching improvement. This study was designed to gather information regarding the experiences of postsecondary faculty while preparing and maintaining their self-directed teaching portfolio. Additionally, it was a goal of the research to gain insight into how faculty perceive the effectiveness of teaching portfolios for summative and formative evaluation. The previous three chapters introduced the study and described its goals and significance, presented relevant literature on SDL and teaching portfolios, and, lastly explained the methods used by the researcher in order to answer the research questions.

This chapter presents the data gathered by the researcher through the participant semi-structured interviews. It is organized in the order of the questions that the participants were asked, which were grouped in the following categories: 1) participant demographics; 2) teaching portfolio preparation and maintenance; 3) teaching portfolio effectiveness. The data are presented as a summary of the responses for each question, the individual participant responses for each question as interpreted by the researcher, and quotes which have been selected by the researcher that represent themes of participant responses.

Participant Demographics

There were a total of 21 individuals who participated in this study. Participants were comprised of faculty from a variety of different academic departments including Dentistry, Nursing, Chemical and Materials Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Family Medicine, Psychiatry, Fine Arts

and Humanities, Drama and Theatre, Philosophy, Human Ecology, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, Physical Education and Recreation, Public Health, and Physical Therapy.

Participant university teaching experience was varied, ranging from 5 years to 37 years. The mean number of years of experience was 23.4 years. Most participants (15 out of 21 participants) had taught at more than one institution with many (11 of 21 participants) having taught at three or more institutions.

A third (or 7) of the participants indicated that they have had formal teacher training. This experience was diverse, ranging from the completion of two teaching-related courses in graduate school to a PhD in education. Two thirds (or 14) of the participants stated that they have had no formal teacher training or preparation; however, almost all of those with no formal training (12 of 14 participants) indicated that they had informal training. There was a wide variety of types of informal teacher training described as workshops, sessions, brown bag lectures, mentorship by senior colleagues, swim instructor experience, courses through extension, peer support, teaching squares, seminars, teaching assistant experience, training courses in a previous career, new professor orientation, festivals of teaching and teaching symposia, faculty development courses, department faculty development, conferences, Centre for Teaching and Learning courses. Only two participants indicated that that they have had no formal or informal teacher training.

A third (or 7) of the participants were currently in a teaching stream; one participant indicated they were in a research stream. One other participant stated they were in both. Most participants indicated their workload consisted of a variety of responsibilities with the most common being a 40/40/20 (research/teaching/service) split. The following were the other workload splits that were indicated by the participants: 40/40/20 (teaching/administration/research), 40/40/20 (research/teaching/leadership), 40/20/20/20

(administration/teaching/research/release for professional practice), 50/50 (research/teaching), 75/25 (research/teaching), (Teaching/research/service), administrative.

As the data indicate, participant demographics were diverse, inclusive of a wide range of departments represented by the participants as well as teaching experience and formal or informal teaching training.

Teaching Portfolio Preparation and Maintenance

The participants were asked a series of questions intended to explore their teaching portfolio preparation and maintenance. While the responses were varied, there were a number of instances when common themes emerged.

The participants responded that they had initially prepared their portfolios ranging from two to 32 years ago. There were a variety of ways in which the participants were introduced to teaching portfolios. A little over half of the participants (11 of 21 participants) first learned of teaching portfolios due to summative evaluation requirements of annual reviews, promotions, tenure applications, job applications, and award applications. The remaining participants first learned of teaching portfolios through colleagues, workshops, brown bag lectures, and various teaching centre events.

The reasons faculty prepared a teaching portfolio were diverse. Two thirds of the participants (or 14) indicated that they prepared a teaching portfolio as a requirement for annual reviews, promotion, tenure, job application, or award nomination. Hence, the initial impetus for the majority of participants to create a teaching portfolio was for summative purposes. As Participant 7A stated, “because I wouldn’t have gotten tenure otherwise, so bottom line is it’s a requirement, if you don’t have it, your application would be denied.” Similarly, Participant 5A noted that “it was mostly in connection with the tenure decisions.” While the connection

between tenure decisions and teaching portfolio preparation was evident, the participants also indicated that there were other forms of summative evaluation that initiated their teaching portfolio preparation process. For example, participant 2A responded that "so it was really FEC [faculty evaluation committee] driven and faculty requirement driven."

There were a number of participants who stated that they decided to prepare a teaching portfolio for formative reasons. Some participants noted that they prepared their teaching portfolio in order to become a better teacher or to serve as a model to assist their students. For example, one participant (13A) prepared their teaching portfolio "mainly to have a model I guess for my students what a possible portfolio could look like."

In addition to the assortment of reasons stated for preparing a teaching portfolio, there were a wide range of differences in the amount of time the participants spent on preparing their teaching portfolios. The range of time was from roughly two hours to 200 hours. Roughly two thirds of the participants (13 of 21 participants) indicated they spent enough time preparing their teaching portfolios while the remaining participants stated that they could have spent more time preparing theirs.

The responses of the participants unmistakably indicated that the reasons for preparing a teaching portfolio are varied, as is the amount of time it took to do so. Similarly, the guidance and resources available to participants to support this process was varied.

Teaching Portfolio Preparation Guidance and Resources

Faculty use a range of resources and guidance to support the process of preparing a teaching portfolio. In particular, a significant number of participants (9 of 21 participants) noted that they used advice from colleagues. Participant 7A stated

> I'm trying to remember back then and I think I probably went to some colleagues who had been through the process. Um, one in particular who was a retiring professor who was very strong on the teaching side of things and I just pretty much asked him what do you think the requirements of a teaching portfolio would look like and he, I think he was the one who would have given me that advice.

Colleagues also supported the initial teaching portfolio preparation process by providing examples from which to follow. Over one third of the participants (8 of 21 participants) indicated that these examples were beneficial. Participant 10A noted that they "looked at many other teaching dossiers or portfolios from colleagues as well, colleagues here but also at other places." Likewise, Participant 17A stated that they "just had to look at the others who did the same thing and to look at their documentation I guess or documents and I just, looked at their format and then prepared mine according to."

Workshops were also an important support mechanism for preparing a teaching portfolio. Eight of the participants indicated that they attended a workshop to assist them with their teaching portfolio. Participant 13A described the workshop attended as follows:

> The workshop was helpful, it was pretty well attended, I guess, for some of those workshops, there were maybe 30, 40 people there, so lots of discussion about what it should look like and some examples of what other people had done and I guess some of my other colleagues in my department had gone up from promotion prior to me and so I had seen what their dossier what their whole package looked like for promotion and so I had a multiple sources of support I guess. .

Written resources were also viewed as helpful in preparing a teaching portfolio. Participant 9A explained the value placed on the written resource:

> I don't think I could have done, put it together as well, had I not had that quite detailed pamphlet on here's some things to think about for this section. You know they had a really good outline of common sections to include in a portfolio and common content for each of these different sections. And, I actually use that pamphlet now when I teach the graduate students about creating a teaching portfolio because it's, from my perspective, a great resource.

Participant (19A) described using "a terrific handout that listed all the possible ways you could organize a teaching dossier, so it had, it was three columns wide, about 8 point font and it was a four sided handout, and it was terrific, it listed everything you could possibly imagine."

While the participants indicated that they believed the resources they used were beneficial, they did provide a number of suggestions to make the teaching portfolio preparation process more effective. A number of participants noted the importance of starting their portfolio early in their career. As Participant 2A recommended:

> I would institute a professional development component in the faculty that enabled young professors to understand this. And an important aspect of that would be preparation of a teaching dossier, in the context of becoming a professor, being competitive applying for advanced fellowships and faculty positions and then for the promotion and tenure process. Starting early and letting people know what it looks like it can frame up their approach and it makes life a lot easier for them down the road.

The value of preparing a teaching portfolio early in one's career was also explained by Participant 6A:

> Knowing ahead of time like when you started on faculty that you needed to do that would have been helpful or knowing about it even as a resident because then you have to

> accumulate names of people you've supervised or projects you've supervised or people you've taught and all the evaluations or feedback you don't necessarily still have it, right, so not knowing that until three or four years into being on faculty, then you are scrambling to go back and try and find stuff. So, having a template from the get go and just then a file folder that you can just shove stuff into would have been helpful.

It would appear that the earlier faculty begin preparing a teaching portfolio, the easier the process is and the more beneficial it will be.

Participants also indicated that a well-developed mentorship process would have been beneficial. Participant 9A described this process as follows:

> But wouldn't it be nice if you could just have kind of a mentor, that you could check in with once and awhile about it. Like if nobody is really going to look at these, you know other than yourself, it's nice actually to have a mentor and a kind of a checklist of how you are doing, it's like a checkup on how's your portfolio doing and what are you learning from it and you know that kind of thing. I think that could add some motivation and relevance to having a teaching dossier for more than just a personal reason.

This process of interaction with a mentor was also suggested by Participant 20A who stated

> [I] needed ongoing assistance in developing it rather than just stay, say here's a how-to session telling you about it and then that relationship ended, I needed, I wanted something more, even like a series of things where, here's some information, go away produce something come back, we'll review that and talk about how to improve.

Participants also recommended other resources that would be of benefit for the teaching portfolio preparation process. Participant 11A suggested "The only thing I would change things like at U of A main campus, they should have some very accessible resources for people especially in

different departments, because I also find through my own research, I've noticed the portfolios can be quite different. Between the disciplines." Support resources should be diverse accounting for the variation in teaching portfolio content and uses. One participant (20A) described in detail their recommendations:

> I think that, it would be nice if the university had a method for faculty to build or house their teaching portfolios online, that was consistent, and that provided a framework for people who didn't know what to include so I know that there are documents available to look at, at center for teaching and learning in terms of developing a teaching dossier and what you should include, but if every faculty member had that website space set up and designated and a support person to be able to help them create their teaching statement or their philosophy statement and their, like what do you work on statements, if they had that ability to go and just put it in and it would be housed online for people to be able to update I think it would streamline the annual performance review process, I think it would elevate the scholarship of teaching for faculty across the board and I don't know that it would actually be that big of an investment of time or money on the university's part. So I think that would be a big bang for whatever buck that it'd cost.

While it seems apparent that participants see value in a wide range of support, it may be advantageous for institutions to draw from existing resources rather than creating their own. Along these lines, Participant 15A stated "I think people need to know what resources are out there in the electronic world that they can use, just to communicate that." Lastly, one participant (14A) recommended that the preparation and maintenance of a portfolio is a partnership between faculty and administration/chairs. Although teaching portfolios can be a very personal document, they should be prepared with comprehensive support and resources.

Teaching Portfolio Content

The participants were asked to list the components of their teaching portfolios. There were considerable differences in the components that the participants included in their teaching portfolios. However, most participants included components that could be placed in the following categories: teaching philosophy, teaching responsibilities, professional development, evaluations, service, and research.

Over two thirds of the participants (16 of 21 participants) indicated that their teaching portfolio included a description of their teaching philosophy. Interestingly, another two participants stated that they had a similar section; however, they had used a different heading. These headings included a "teaching passion statement" or "vision".

The following components identified by the participants were grouped into the 'teaching responsibilities' category: history of teaching, teaching responsibilities, course list, details of specific courses taught (lectures, duration, student demographics), position responsibilities, teaching activities, course outlines/syllabi, sample examinations, sample paper topics assigned to students, clinical teaching (operating room, bedside, classroom formats), undergraduate teaching. post-graduate trainees, teaching other health professionals, examples of lesson plans, examples of specific lectures, examples of exams, graduate student details, teaching list (university courses and teaching outside the university), teaching materials (course syllabi, assignment descriptions, class manuals, examples of assignments), courses taught, course descriptions, examples of student work, examples of unique lesson plans, assessments, sample tests using different methodologies, different teaching methodologies used, links to YouTube lectures, important teaching resources used, something representative from every course taught (i.e., learning objectives).

In addition to the ‘teaching responsibilities’ category, the participants noted items that were in their teaching portfolios that the researcher has placed in a category labeled ‘professional development.’ The following items were included in this category: presentations and workshops facilitated (slides included), plenary talks, analysis of teaching, letters of accolades, new course development, course development, course changes, continuing education, how feedback from students is used, processes of development of teaching style, improvements in patient care (clinic coordinator), professional development (conferences or workshops attended), scholarship related to teaching (grants, publications related to teaching and learning), teaching scholarship activity, publications related to education, abstracts that have been presented, faculty development workshops presented, journal reviews done, educational grants received, list of continuing education taken related to teaching (workshops, seminars, conferences).

Another category in which to group teaching portfolio content is ‘evaluations.’ The items that the participants listed that are included in this category were as follows: teaching information (i.e., end of course student evaluation), student feedback, summative activities, peer review papers, peer reviews/evaluations, student assessments over years (improvements in knowledge), peer observations (letters from senior colleagues who have observed classes), student reviews/evaluations, sample written student evaluations, other components that are included in the annual report, global survey, changes in student satisfaction of a course/courses over the years, student feedback, comments from students, cards from students over the years, peer consultation report.

There are many components that could be included in a teaching portfolio that are categorized as ‘service’. These items were as follows: service to the department and profession, service in the faculty and outside (i.e., committees), additional teaching outside the university,

papers about education (distance education, blended learning), teaching contributions (what kind of teaching impact and contributions made beyond the formal classroom) - workshops, scholarship of teaching articles written, workshop evaluations from workshops given.

Another category of items that are sometimes included in a teaching portfolio is 'research.' The participants indicated the following 'research' items included in their teaching portfolios: research philosophy, publication list, grants, research statement.

While many of the components of a teaching portfolio could be placed in the aforementioned 'teaching responsibilities, 'professional development,' 'evaluation,' 'service,' and 'research' categories, there were items that did not fit neatly into any of these categories. Regardless, it is important to note the following items that the participants indicated they included in their teaching portfolios: curriculum vitae, selected lecture notes that have been effective, learning resources that others have used, experiences of courses taught, teaching awards, letters and notes (thank-you notes from students, community partners), honors (invitations to speak at graduation, banquets, awards from professional associations), community outreach (speaking engagements at schools, etc.), miscellaneous (special projects or anything that does not seem to fit anywhere else), teaching awards, thank-you notes from a variety of people, information graphics illustrating research interests and teaching philosophy (flipped classrooms, blended learning, gamification of learning / in e-portfolio), philosophy of mentoring (i.e., interaction with grad and undergrad students), examples of student interaction that reflect philosophies, who I am and what I do, video clip demonstrating what is done in the course (e-portfolio), description of what has been done to try and address student feedback to make those courses better, focus and planning for upcoming year, questionnaire for students to assess

teacher, field notes of teacher interaction with students in workplace setting, impact on student development.

Faculty choose which items to include for a variety of reasons. When asked to identify why the participants selected particular components, many of them indicated that they chose the components of their portfolios based on templates or examples they were provided. For example, participant 21A explained that their components were "based on other peoples' examples." Another participant (15A) reflected that their teaching portfolio components came from examples: "probably it came from the literature I'd say." In addition to using the literature or colleagues' examples as resources to guide component selection, workshops were also identified as a resource that was used.

Summative evaluation requirements can dictate which components are included in a faculty teaching portfolio. A number of the participants indicated that they chose the components because they were required as part of a summative evaluation process. Participant 2A noted that "they were components of a formal faculty evaluation." Similarly, Participant 11A responded:

> I guess it would have seemed that those are the things that get asked most for in terms of faculty evaluation each year, your annual review on tenure stream and for my tenure documents and for my professorship promotion, all of those things, that's the kind of stuff they're looking for.

While some faculty use an external resource to guide them in their component selection process, others choose components based on personal preference. One particular participant (7A) described the process as being based on personal preferences along with the advice of colleagues. Participant 5A stated that "even a faculty member who didn't know me could look at

the portfolio and make a pretty good judgment about whether I've been a successful teacher." In other words, they were components that would, together, effectively demonstrate abilities as a teacher.

To sum up, the participants identified a varied and extensive list of components that comprised their teaching portfolios. The reasons explained for why such components were selected were numerous. Some components were requirements of summative evaluations, and others were recommended by others, while some faculty choose components for personal reasons.

Teaching Portfolio Components Perceived as Beneficial

There were a wide variety of components of a teaching portfolio that may have a perceived positive impact on teaching. Specifically, almost a third of the participants in this study (6 of 21 participants) stated that the development of a teaching philosophy was beneficial to their teaching. One participant (2A) noted, "writing a teaching philosophy piece is very useful for me." Participant 7A described the process of developing a teaching philosophy as follows:

> I think just at the end of the day trying to develop a teaching philosophy. That really was a good self-reflective exercise that made me go back and see what am I trying to do here, what are the standards that I want to live by, what the non-negotiables for me, and so that definitely actually influenced the way I teach and although, I mean, because I have a teaching degree, I mean, I had thought about it, but I had never actually formalized it until that dossier was required at which point in time it was a very good exercise for me to go through because I think it enabled me to focus my efforts and ultimately take those, take those criteria into the classroom. You know in a formal manner, as opposed to just show up and teach type of thing.

While some participants identified what they perceived to be the benefits of developing a teaching philosophy, other participants noted that developing a teaching philosophy was an enjoyable process. Specifically, Participant 4A noted "the fun part is the teaching philosophy. That one I found was the fun to do. Yeah I enjoyed doing."

In addition to writing a teaching philosophy, the reflective component of a teaching portfolio and various forms of student feedback - including written student comments, student evaluations, and course evaluations – were also perceived as beneficial to teaching. When discussing what component was most beneficial, Participant 5A stated, "I find the written student comments most helpful because I feel they speak to me directly and if there was an issue or a problem, I can diagnose it more readily from student comments." Likewise, Participant 9A found the course evaluations particularly helpful and responded that "it would definitely be the course evaluations and the reflections. Most definitely, that's when I get the, I'd say most concrete black and white evidence of my teaching." As with Participant 9A a number of other participants noted the importance of reflection as part of the teaching portfolio preparation and maintenance process. Participant 19A stated that "so part of what was discussed in the teaching portfolio was reflecting on what went well and what went badly at the end of every course." The process of self-reflection was identified by Participant 1A as being beneficial as well and responded that "so that sort of self-reflection. But absolutely doing that self-reflection." Lastly, Participant 16A described specific situations in which reflection has had a beneficial effect on their teaching: "you put yourself in the position of writing down a teaching dossier, why didn't I do, why have I never done a YouTube video or a flipped classroom and so on."

There are many components of a teaching portfolio that faculty perceive as being beneficial for their teaching. The components indicated were diverse, as were the components the participants indicated as being the least helpful.

Teaching Portfolio Components Perceived as Being Least Helpful

There were numerous different components that the participants indicated were least helpful. One participant (7A) noted that "once I have my end of course evaluations I look at them for 20 minutes at the end of the year and I never look at them again so I mean it was strictly for our evaluative people to look at it and go okay this is a decent teacher." Another participant (8A) also expressed that student feedback was non-beneficial, stating "anonymous student feedback. It's useless. Sorry, next to useless, because there are too many anomalies so you can have a high ranking or a low ranking and it has limited or it may not have a lot to do with the quality." Lastly, Participant 15A described teaching evaluations provided by students as follows:

> Teaching evaluations, they're all the same. I've gotten really high teaching evaluations, as far as I am concerned they can stop doing them. The [end of course evaluations], forget those for me. I had to do them by policy but they gave me nothing. Whether I get 5 or 4.9 or 4.8, it doesn't really matter, it's the variation of the class, how big it is how small it is, useless.

As these quotes illustrate, participants identified student evaluations of teaching to be beneficial components of their teaching portfolios while others clearly indicated the opposite.

It is worthwhile to highlight that one participant believed that the least beneficial component of their teaching portfolio was their teaching philosophy. This participant (21A) stated that "oh, my philosophy. Total waste. I would never read it when I see other people's philosophy. I actually don't read it; I see people's tenure applications. I don't read it." This is in

stark contrast to the prevailing view in the literature (and some of the responses of the participants in this study) that a teaching philosophy is a valued component of a teaching portfolio.

In addition to student feedback and teaching philosophy, participants noted a variety of other components they perceived as being non-beneficial. These components could be categorized as administrative information that is descriptive but may not lead to improved teaching and included the following: a list of continuing education courses, articles reviewed, grants received, conferences attended, examples of syllabi, course descriptions, committee work, and the numbers of patients treated in a clinic. Participant 2A summarized these activities as

> I guess sort of the nuts and bolts, it is just an inventory of activities. Yeah, that wasn't helpful for me in my teaching. But it was necessary and certainly let me have an objective vision of how much teaching I was doing.

Teaching Portfolio Uses

Teaching portfolios are frequently used for summative evaluations. All of the participants indicated that they had used their teaching portfolio for summative evaluation on at least one occasion. Participant 1A noted that "it was more to really provide evidence on why I should be promoted." Likewise, Participant 8A stated that their teaching portfolio was only used "two times, tenure and promotion, that's it." While tenure and promotion were commonly cited teaching portfolio uses by the participants, other uses were also identified. Participant 10A explained that they had used their teaching portfolio "for tenure, for promotion, for awards, for mentoring others certainly in how they do it. Yeah, it's been used in grants. Yeah all kinds of things." Another participant (19A) indicated that they used their teaching portfolio for

"applications, its great source of data for grant applications, so grant applications, awards, and job applications."

A number of participants responded that they had used their teaching portfolios for award and job applications. Participant 5A stated that "I've won some teaching awards and it's been used for those. I've also used parts of it when I've changed jobs, so when I moved to the University of Winnipeg, I had to supply my teaching portfolio before the interview." When reflecting on how they have used their teaching portfolio, Participant 4A indicated it was used for a variety of purposes:

> So I'm going to use it for promotion now because I am eligible for promotion and I have used it for awards. It's more for me that I have used it. Honestly. Yeah, but I have to use for our work, for example, if I am even applying for grants, I get information from there. There is a lot of things.

Likewise, Participant 9A described in detail the uses as follows:

> Number one use of it has been personal growth. The second use of it though has been to have documentation available to put on annual reports, you know what I accomplished, what my achievements were this year, and so that would be a second thing, because that's a regular thing every year. But I have also used it to pull together a promotion package. I've also used it to put together a teaching award package. So once again, everything is there. I also use it as a teaching tool because I get all of our undergraduate students to do a professional portfolio…What I love about this portfolio is that it does, it tracks everything, it gives me a place to keep everything together and the benefit of that for me has been when I had to compile my package for promotion, wholly smoke, it took me no time at all because everything was in there. It's already compiled, you take things, but

> you don't have to scramble through filing cabinets full of stuff. You have all of the relevant information right there and then you just have to pull in current letters from, of support from people, that's all. So, yeah it's just this great central repository of stuff.

While the participants responded that they used their teaching portfolios primarily for summative evaluation, one participant (12A) discussed at length how it was used formatively:

> There have been some situations when the actual process of writing out the portfolio, even if it was for some sort of administrative means, curiously enough gave me some ideas as to what I wanted to do for the next year. So, in that sense I would say that while I wasn't forgetting what I was doing, the actual writing of the portfolio gave me time to kind of meditate and contemplate on, "What's the next thing that I want to do with this?" If I hadn't been writing them out, it might not have occurred to me or it might have occurred to me too late to do anything about it where I'd be standing in the classroom the next year thinking, "Oh, I could've done this, but I'm obviously not going to be able to do it now because I'm in mid-semester or something." I think in that sense sometimes just the opportunity to reflect and to be forced to reflect so to speak is not a bad thing.

The participants of this study identified numerous ways in which they have used their teaching portfolios. While not all participants used their portfolios in the same manner, a significant portion used it for summative purposes. Additionally, a number of participants described how they had used their teaching portfolio formatively.

Teaching Portfolio Format

Teaching portfolios may be prepared as a hard copy or online as an e-portfolio. A significant majority of the participants of this study (17 of 21 participants) indicated their teaching portfolio was in hard copy format rather than an e-portfolio. A few participants use e-

portfolios and one participant indicated they have both a hard copy and e-portfolio. Almost two thirds of the participants who currently have a hard copy portfolio (11 of 17 participants with a hard copy teaching portfolio) responded that they would consider creating an e-portfolio. Participant 2A expressed such support of e-portfolios by stating, "I'd be pleased to do that because I think it would be very useful for students who are looking for courses to be able to evaluate the professor and see whether the ideas were modern, interesting, and so on." Another participant (14A) also would consider creating an e-portfolio and described the reasons, stating "I'd favor the public, I'd favor the transparent, I think that's what makes it organic and meaningful so I would welcome that."

There are a variety of resources and support that would assist faculty in creating an e-portfolio. One participant (1A) indicated a website template would be helpful:

> Well, if the website was already there, I mean if I look at what an e-class website is, but even just if you have the tabs already set up If the tabs were set up and you could put CV goes here, Qualitative Analysis of Teaching goes here, yeah and then just put things in folders that would be great.

A few other participants stated that they would want assistance with formatting in other ways. For example, Participant 2A indicated a willingness to create an e-portfolio "if the service was provided in terms of assistance given somebody to give the file to have it uploaded and some guidance on format." Participant 12A stated that they would want more assistance and responded:

> [F]rom a support standpoint, I basically would want to write the thing up and I want somebody else to take care of all of the process of getting it up online and that sort of thing or have it fully automated.

Likewise, Participant 6A would want “someone to do it for me. Make it happen.” A couple of participants suggested that a seminar or a workshop would be helpful. Participant 9A described how they would find this useful:

> I would need a whole kind of little workshop on how do I go about this. And you know I would really want to, in that workshop, know what the benefits of this would be because I am the age I am, I like hard copy of things. I still like reading books, you know like, actual books. So you know it would, you’d need to really tell me how this would be an advantage to me.

Another participant (18A) described in detail the resources and support that they would want:

> So, yeah, if I had a tool to possibly use and some degree of support I think I am reasonably able to use some of that (online e-port sites) myself but at least some degree of support and probably the biggest factor would be time in my schedule to get creative with that, I would love to do that actually…If there was an existing program then again, I can just plug in things or I can add things or, that would be prime, because whether it's created I guess in house or somebody in here whether was it, I don't have the skills to create something like that on the computer I need some existing software type of program that I could use and then it would I guess usually what I find is if I can have somebody at least show me, or give a course that shows how to use it, at least how to initiate, how do you put thing into it, the ground rules of it for the most part I could work with it from there so some degree of training around the software, and at least a resource if I had questions I could go to them and say, how do I do this, or wanted to do this, is that possible. Some kind of help access would probably be sufficient.

E-portfolios are not a desired teaching portfolio format for all faculty. Although most participants who currently do not have an e-portfolio would consider creating one, there were a few who would not. Those participants who indicated they have no desire to create an e-portfolio generally explained that they either didn't want to spend the time on it or they didn't want the information in their portfolios to become public. When asked if they would consider preparing an e-portfolio, Participant 16A stated "no, I only do something if I have to, so if there's an award that in applying for and this is the requirement then yes." Another participant (3A) also expressed concern with e-portfolios:

> There's a certain level of privacy that I'd like to maintain to be able to have certain level of distance between myself and the students, so there's a level of professionalism there. I'd put down what classes I've taught. I perhaps talk about how I'm doing teaching and stuff, but this is a lot of extra information, a lot of extra work in doing it and I don't get any benefit for doing it.

Participant 12A explained that they would be afraid that others will use the information that is online as their own (i.e., other faculty members will use the information in their own grant proposals). While Participant 4A also had privacy concerns with a public document:

> [I] would like to have an e-portfolio that I can control. If I want it public, I can click and it goes public. Or I want, yes, having the option. To share, yeah or that's another option that I only share with the selected client.

Lastly, Participant 5A suggested that teaching portfolios should not be public and that "those documents, at least to my mind, are for the teacher and for others in the profession who need them for evaluation purposes or who could benefit from their guidance."

In addition to the privacy concerns expressed by some of the participants, two other participants indicated that they would not want to create an e-portfolio for different reasons. Participant 17A simply said that they did not want to spend time on it, and Participant 21A did not see the value in it.

The responses of the participants indicate that there is mixed support for the preparation of e-portfolios. Additionally, it is clear that a variety of support and resources would be desired if such a task were to be undertaken.

Teaching Portfolio Maintenance

Teaching portfolios are maintained in a variety of ways. The participants of this study responded that they updated their teaching portfolios ranging from never to frequently. However, most of the participants indicated they update their portfolio roughly once per year. Participant 14A stated "I think there's kind of a major look at it once a year and a minor refresher tweak, half way through the year." Similarly, Participant 19A responded that they updated their teaching portfolio "once a year, when I have to do my annual report, unless something comes up that's compelling halfway through the year." Another participant (4A) said they updated their teaching portfolio more frequently – at least every month or two months. Participant 10A also expressed that their portfolio is updated frequently and that items are added or updated throughout the year.

A number of participants responded that they updated their teaching portfolios only when necessary. Participant 3A stated that they did so "during the major events. So, the teaching philosophy, I'll be readdressing as I'm writing my application for promotion but that's about it." Likewise, Participant 2A responded that their teaching portfolio was updated "at least once a year because [faculty evaluation] happens once a year." A similar response was provided by

Participant 12A who stated that their teaching portfolio was updated "minimally probably once a year because I'm doing it for the annual report if for nothing else." A few other participants also noted they only updated their teaching portfolios out of necessity when applying for a new job (Participant 11A), for promotion (Participant 21A), or when needed for an award (Participant 17A).

Teaching portfolios may change when being updated by adding or removing components. Many participants stated that they have added or removed components while updating their portfolios; however, there were differences in what was added or removed. One participant (2A) noted that their portfolio is altered depending on what it is used for. They described these different processes: "the historical portfolio contains everything I've done, but the annual report is usually activity for the year so there are two versions going on. One's incorporating my CV and one's the annual report." Similarly, Participant 5A discussed how their portfolio is adjusted contingent on use:

> Yes, depending on what I wanted to use the portfolio for -- if you're being considered for an award, you don't want the Full Monty as it were, which could fill several boxes. So you have a digest version: usually a summary of your scores, a few peer evaluations, and so on.

While a few participants described how they added or removed components depending on what they were using their teaching portfolio for, other participants responded that the content of their portfolio changed as they developed as teachers. Participant 12A described this process in detail:

> Yeah, absolutely. That goes in with what I was saying before. Since it's a moving window, it has to be flexible when you're learning new things. I don't think there's ever

> been a year when I haven't done something a little bit different. I usually find that there's a couple of sentences on my teaching philosophy that I always keep because they're really at the core there and I believe that. But, the rest of it changes quite a bit.

A similar reflection was offered by Participant 14A who responded:

> A teaching portfolio for me now is extremely different in terms of what's in there because of when I've stopped teaching and what I'm doing now, I am doing way more mentoring and I 'm doing way more faculty development, and I'm doing way less direct undergraduate teaching like the big classes and less direct resident teaching so that's obviously going to be reflected in what I have to say in my teaching portfolio.

There were some participants who stated the components of their teaching portfolios have stayed the same; however, many indicated the content within some components has been changed. Participant 11A illustrated this point, stating "not components. Well, I've changed sections, like removed or added what's in a section for sure." Likewise, Participant 18A noted "I haven't added or changed the components they've gotten bigger with more information."

The process of maintaining a teaching portfolio is unique to each faculty member. While some have left their teaching portfolios virtually untouched since they were first prepared, others are continually updating content and have removed or added components over the years.

Teaching Portfolio Encouragement

Encouragement to prepare and maintain a teaching portfolio varies from department to department. The majority of participants (15 of 21 participants) indicated that faculty members in their department are encouraged to prepare or maintain a teaching portfolio. However, among these participants, there was variation as to how this encouragement occurs. A number of participants noted that teaching portfolio encouragement in their department is intricately linked

to the faculty evaluation process. Participant 2A noted "they are formally encouraged to do that because it is enshrined as part of the Faculty Medicine in Dentistry, Faculty Evaluation Committee process." A similar response was provided by Participant 5A: "we use that as the basis for comment on whether the candidate should be tenured or promoted." Likewise, Participant 7A described how teaching portfolios in their department are encouraged as part of summative evaluation processes and stated that they are encouraged "only for the purpose of promotion and if they went out for a teaching award. Otherwise, no they would not be encouraged."

Although many participants stated that there was no departmental encouragement to prepare a teaching portfolio, a few indicated that components of a teaching portfolio were encouraged. Interestingly, one participant (9A) stated that the faculty in their department "are encouraged but because it's not required, there's not much incentive." It would seem that participants of this study work in departments where teaching portfolios are more valued as a component of summative evaluation over formative.

Teaching Portfolio Effectiveness

Teaching portfolios have a varied level of influence on teaching. The process of reflection that is a part of preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio was identified by some of the participants as being a catalyst for change. Participant 1A noted that over time their teaching portfolio helped them reflect on their teaching, which was perceived as making the course better. Participant 12A responded similarly, stating "as I said, each year that I'm doing this, the process of writing out the portfolio has been a good time for me to reflect on, Okay, what worked and what didn't?" Another participant (9A) explained how this process of reflection "has been this on-going commitment to the reflecting, to the looking at feedback

constructively, because if you've got to write reflection about something, you have to be contextualizing it and be constructive about it." It appears that for some of the participants the process of reflection associated with teaching portfolios was perceived as being beneficial.

The process of developing a teaching philosophy was also indicated by some of the participants as having an effect on their teaching. One participant (7A) acknowledged the impact of preparing a teaching philosophy: "developing a teaching philosophy that reminded me of what I wanted to do and why I was wanting to do it." Another participant (10A) reflected on how developing a teaching philosophy influenced teaching practice:

> Actually having to work on, regularly, on your teaching philosophy, changes the emphasis of what you do in the classroom. I believe that you can't, you can't examine what you're doing in the classroom without it having an effect, hopefully.

The effect of developing a teaching philosophy was also described by Participant 20A who indicated that it was helpful in ensuring that the actions as a teacher are in line with the teaching philosophy. For many participants, it would appear, the process of writing and developing a teaching philosophy resulted in a perceived positive effect on their teaching.

Lastly, one participant (4A) specifically identified areas of teaching that their teaching portfolio has affected. This participant reflected that it helped improve teaching by being a stimulus to use more technology, videos, podcasts, and to be more interactive.

While many (15 of 21 participants) of the participants perceived their teaching portfolios as having a beneficial effect on their teaching, this view was not consistent among all participants. A few (2 of 21 participants) participants shared that they were unsure as to the effect that teaching portfolios had. Participant 8A indicated that some components (data gathering part, peer to peer discussion) lead to improvements but this information doesn't

necessarily need to be in a teaching portfolio. It was stated further that effective teaching may come naturally to some people, eliminating the need for a teaching portfolio. Additionally, other faculty members may just naturally try to continually improve their teaching and, likewise, do not need a teaching portfolio to do so. Another participant (13A) noted that the process of initially preparing a teaching portfolio helped but currently there are other preferred avenues for professional development. Lastly, Participant 16A noted that it is difficult to measure teaching improvement and what influences teaching improvement.

A few participants responded that their teaching portfolio did not influence their teaching. One participant (21A), when asked if their teaching portfolio affected their teaching, stated "No. It's quite clear, I just use this to develop my portfolio because it's required for my tenure application so that was the beginning and the end of it." Another participant (17A) also concluded that their teaching portfolio did not affect their teaching, stating "teaching effectiveness has to come from within the teacher and is not the result of a teaching portfolio. It may have a positive effect on some people but it's hard to say." Lastly, Participant 6A stated that "I would say probably not. Hmm, because I don't do it very regularly, right."

The influence that preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio has on teaching is ambiguous. While some faculty believe that their teaching portfolio has had a positive effect on their teaching, others do not. There is also doubt as to the ability to measure changes in teaching and/or to determine the causes of those changes.

Do Teaching Portfolios Improve Teaching?

Teaching portfolios are used for different reasons. Some faculty may not value them personally while still recognizing that they may be beneficial for others. The participants of this study were asked if they believed that teaching portfolios improve teaching. This is different

from another question that asked if teaching portfolios influenced *their* teaching. While some (9 of 21 participants) of the participants believed teaching portfolios improved teaching, many of them (10 of 21 participants) were unsure if they did.

The participants who indicated teaching portfolios improved teaching stated so for different reasons. The value of the reflective component of teaching portfolios was noted by many participants. Participant 1A believed they improved teaching "because of that reflective component." This sentiment was also described by another participant (5A) who noted that "anytime we get a chance in our busy lives to reflect on what we do, we benefit from it and that's true for teaching as well." One participant (20A) indicated that continual reflection on teaching and using that reflection to make changes to teaching is very helpful. It was also noted that it helps keep faculty accountable to themselves and their students.

The structure of a teaching portfolio can also have a positive effect on teaching. Participant 4A responded by stating "they structure you. It's like a guideline for being a good teacher." One participant (18A) described this guiding process in detail:

> If you're already doing all that stuff, then you're just documenting it or putting it in this place where you can record it, but I think for a lot of our people, particularly as they get into this and start doing that, it actually helps them realize that there are components that are missing. In other words, maybe the scholarship side of the teaching, maybe engaging in mentorship, there is a whole bunch of other areas around teaching that I think a portfolio helps you realize – that if you really want to be considered as a well-rounded teacher and making contributions to education those are the areas you should be looked at.

The development of a teaching philosophy was also identified as having a positive effect on teaching. Participant 10A suggested that "working on your teaching philosophy and examining what you're doing in the classroom will have a positive effect on your teaching."

While many of the participants (9 of 21 participants) indicated that they believed teaching portfolios improved teaching, others were not convinced. Problems associated with measuring teaching improvement and what influences teaching improvement were identified as possible difficulties in assessing the value of a teaching portfolio (Participant 16A).

It was also noted that teaching portfolios may only improve teaching if the reasons for their preparation are intended for such a purpose. Participant 12A explained:

> Assuming that the person writing them wants that. If your only purpose of doing it is, "I need to write a paragraph every year just to keep the administrators happy," if you aren't going through some sort of reflective process or thinking about what it is that you're doing, if you don't have a teaching philosophy so to speak, then it probably doesn't do that much good.

A similar response was offered by Participant 15A who also suggested that their use may determine their value. If it is being used to improve teaching, then it can be a good tool; if it is just for a teaching award or tenure, then it is not. Hence, if faculty are forced to create a teaching portfolio for administrative purposes, it may devalue their formative effects.

Teaching portfolios may not, in themselves, improve teaching; however, they may be a catalyst for improvement by initiating a process that may improve teaching. This effect was described by Participant 11A:

> I think conscious pedagogy and research improves teaching, and I think a lot of teachers actually don't do that at all. So, it is possible that through doing a portfolio they might be encouraged to do that, but for me pedagogy and research has improved my teaching.

Teaching portfolios may encourage faculty to evaluate their teaching and, as such, stimulate change.

Faculty motivation may also have an effect on the value of teaching portfolios. One participant (3A) noted some professors only do the minimum to improve their teaching because they are more concerned about their research (and this view is reinforced by senior management). However, this participant (3A) noted further that others take their teaching more seriously and will benefit from a teaching portfolio. Similarly, Participant 9A highlighted the effect of competing priorities and stated that "there will be people who, like you were saying, I don't have time for this because I've got so much research work to do." The potential for teaching portfolios to improve teaching is linked with the environment within which they are used.

Two participants responded that they did not think they improved their teaching. Participant 8A noted that preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio is not important when one is aware of one's own strengths and weaknesses. This participant continued by stating that teaching portfolios take time that one might not have, or time that is better spent elsewhere (8A).

The perceived ability of teaching portfolios to improve teaching is mixed. Although some study participants believed teaching portfolios improve teaching, others were not convinced. It is difficult to determine with any certainty the exact effect teaching portfolios have on teaching.

Teaching Portfolios for Formative Evaluation

Support for teaching portfolios as a tool for formative evaluation is variable. The majority of the participants (16 out of 21 participants) indicated that they think teaching portfolios are effective for formative evaluation; however, there were a wide range of reasons provided for this belief. The reflective aspect of preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio may be particularly beneficial in influencing perceived changes in teaching. Participant 18A noted the formative effects of a teaching portfolio "particularly if they got into that reflective piece as an instructor…that to me is really about that cycle of improving teaching, right?" Participant 13A also described in detail how reflection has influenced how they have used a teaching portfolio:

> I think as you go through the process of developing portfolio, if it takes you a few week or a few months and you spend some time on it before maybe you have a class that you're teaching a term, and you're developing that over the term, thinking about that portfolio, thinking about and reflecting on your teaching in the term that you're teaching maybe you're going improve things or try new things within that term because you're thinking about how your teaching has gone and what feedback you've received, so I think it would be useful for both for and advance of the feedback.

Teaching portfolios may be effective for formative evaluation but only in particular circumstances. Participant 19A reflected:

> It depends on how you do it, the way that I've tackled it has been more about data archiving than reflection so that's a different take on the story, so my particular version is not designed for formative feedback, so no. But if you've included the reflections it would absolutely be a part of you formative assessment feedback, so it really hinges on the pieces that you decide to include.

The formative value of a teaching portfolio may hinge on how faculty integrate them in their teaching development. As Participant 12A stated, "there's nothing that I'm writing in the statement that I didn't know already. It was more that I had to integrate it a little bit and take time to think about it."

Teaching portfolios may provide structure for faculty to reflect on their teaching. Participant 5A noted that "a teaching portfolio forces even those who teach a lot to monitor the job they're doing in the classroom." Another participant (10A) described teaching portfolios as a framework for faculty to explain what they do, why they do it, and how they do it. Participant 10A continued by suggesting that teaching portfolios also provide flexibility for faculty from different departments. In other words, teaching portfolios facilitate SDL by providing a framework for evaluating their teaching.

Support for teaching portfolios as an effective tool for formative evaluations was not unanimous among the study participants. The limited use of student evaluations for evaluating teaching was noted by Participant 7A: "[the] only thing that affects me formatively is every year I look at my [student evaluations] and I go ok am I doing a decent job with my teaching and you know we move on." Participant 8A echoed this sentiment:

> It's really not important. What's important is that in the workflow you think about the work that you do and try to do better every day, and you know if you can gather data that can help you to do that. Right, and that is not the same as preparing a document because it is something you do innately or sometimes it's an innate thing and I don't think preparing documents about it helps.

Lastly, Participant 21A offered that teaching portfolios may be effective as a formative evaluation tool, but they were not for them.

It would appear that teaching portfolios may be effective for formative evaluations, but this is not a perception held by all faculty. Additionally, the reasons faculty perceive teaching portfolios as effective or not are varied.

Teaching Portfolios for Summative Evaluation

Teaching portfolios are perceived as effective for summative evaluation by most participants of this study (17 of 21 participants). A teaching portfolio provides a framework to explain teaching practice, as well as why and how it is being done. Participant 4A stated "it provides all of the evidence" for evaluation and Participant 14A noted it provides transparency of teaching practices. This aspect of providing evidence of teaching effectiveness was explained as follows:

> I would think that a portfolio would be a way you can demonstrate teaching effectiveness or certainly the process you have gone through in your teaching to look at teaching improvement so I think it is a component of evaluation for teaching for sure as a summative component. (Participant 13A)

Another participant (5A) described how teaching portfolios can be effectively used for tenure and promotion decisions:

> Well, I think they are very useful for tenure decisions. I've never felt I could in good conscience support someone for tenure or promotion whose teaching is weak, or who hasn't provided evidence of being a good teacher (or else that they are working hard to address any problems that have been identified).

The practicality of using a teaching portfolio for summative evaluations was also identified by a few participants (2 of 21 participants). Participant 2A explained "it's a place where you can incorporate that information, integrate it, and gather it together. Without a

teaching portfolio, the information is scattered around and there is no incentive to put it together." Teaching portfolios can be a "great repository it's quick and easy to pull that information up and put it into the reviews, applications, promotions etcetera" (Participant 18A). As such, faculty members may find teaching portfolios useful in organizing information that could be used for a variety of summative evaluations.

Two participants indicated they were unsure if teaching portfolios were beneficial for summative evaluations and others said they may be beneficial depending on how the institution uses them. The validity of teaching portfolios as a summative evaluation tool was questioned due to the accuracy of their content. A concern was that "people can write anything down on paper and it doesn't actually mean anything" (Participant 11A). It is possible that the truthfulness of a teaching dossier's content could be questioned.

The process of evaluating teaching dossiers – particularly across disciplines – could be problematic (Participant 12A). Additionally, participant 12A observed the amount of time that an institution takes to review them, rather than focusing on student evaluations, is important. The focus of research-intensive universities where research and publications are, in some contexts, considered more important than teaching may limit the amount of time and resources an institution dedicates to teaching portfolio evaluations (Participant 3A). As Participant 7A expressed, "I really do question the validity of it, because I don't think it's particularly valued, which is sad, but that's the way I look at it." It is clear that for some participants, it is necessary that teaching portfolios are valued by an institution for them to be seen as effective for summative evaluation.

The difficulty with assessing a teaching portfolio was noted by some participants (3 of 21 participants). Participant 3A suggested that "it would actually have to be put into a mode that

you can actually compare different people and that's a very difficult thing to do." Additionally, evaluators need to be trained to understand the differences inherent in a personal document such as a teaching portfolio. As Participant 9A describes,

> I think you have to have a trained eye to look at teaching dossier for summative purposes, you need that trained eye to look at what are the indicators of growth, what are the indicators that you are committed to teaching and are getting better at it.

The importance of training teaching portfolio evaluators was best described by Participant 12A:

> I'm not sure if the average administrator would know how to read them. I'm not entirely sure...there's a little bit of an element there for it to be effective, it has to be effective in the sense that the administration can actually evaluate it properly. I'm honestly not sure who's actually doing that or how good they would be at it...I think there's the potential for it. But, I think the other problem is – and I'm sure this is a major issue when you're talking about evaluating it for professional means – is that you're talking about comparing people across a whole bunch of disciplines and different classes and different class sizes. I know that if I was sitting on the other side of the table, I would really want something quantitative. That doesn't mean that I'm going to completely buy into the teaching evaluations because there's obviously issues with that. But, it's going to have to be, if you're looking at people's teaching statements, it's going to be incredibly subjective. If somebody told me, "The difference between you getting an extra half increment is going to be based on your teaching statement," I'd be bothered by that…So, I think in theory it could have tremendous potential, but I'm not sure in practice if it does.

Lastly, one participant (8A) noted that teaching portfolios are beneficial for more significant summative evaluations like tenure and that annual evaluations currently don't need

the quantity of information that is in a teaching portfolio. Perhaps faculty would find value in guidance as to what to include in their teaching portfolios so that they do not get burdened by creating one that includes content that will not be used for evaluation.

Are Teaching Portfolios an Effective Use of Time?

There is varying agreement among faculty that preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio is an effective use of time. Two thirds (14 of 21 participants) of study participants stated that they believed it was an effective use of time, with a variety of reasons given for such responses. For example, some participants believed that they were an effective use of time because of how they can be used to guide teaching. To this point Participant, 4A stated "Oh yeah. Yeah of course, it will give you so much guidance and so much organization that you really need it." Additionally, a few of participants (2 of 21 participants) responded they were an effective use of time due to their administrative benefits. Participant 19A suggested they were an effective use of time as it helps with filing and organizing information. A similar sentiment was provided by Participant 10A:

> Yes, because you are going to need it along the way and if you don't prepare it as you go along, it's going to take you longer to do it, when you have to have it…So, it's much easier and so much more effective and beneficial if you are working on it regularly.

It was noted by one participant (12A) that the amount of time devoted to their teaching portfolio was not excessive and that "I guess I'd say yes because I don't feel like I ever really had to spend a lot of time on it."

Although many participants (14 of 21 participants) responded that they thought teaching portfolios were an effective use of time, others offered different opinions. A number of participants indicated that some aspects of the teaching portfolio were an effective use of time

but not all. Participant 18A believed the reflection part is a valuable use of time, but other components (list of courses taught, student evaluations, conferences attended, courses taken) were not as valuable as they are only used for summative evaluation.

A few participants suggested that teaching portfolios are an effective use of time if used in the right context. One participant (14A) believed that they are an effective use of time as long as the person who writes it and the person reviewing it work in partnership. Participant 6A noted the importance of support: "it would be nice, like I said, if you had a bit more support of good ways to prepare or good ways to do it and then I think it would be helpful for us to maintain." Likewise, Participant 2A was hesitant to state they were an effective use of time and noted "it can be. I think it depends on how much guidance or how to the extent to which one understands what a teaching portfolio should do." Lastly, one participant (17A) suggested it is a more effective use of time when it is done properly over time rather than one point in time. To these particular participants, teaching portfolios are an effective use of time only if they are used in the right environment.

While most participants (14 of 21 participants) indicated they thought teaching portfolios were an effective use of time, a notable number (6 of 21 participants) of participants did not believe so. One participant (3A) believed that in the current state of the University, teaching portfolios were not an effective use of time. This participant explained that research is valued more than teaching and only relevant when there is a problem with one's teaching. However, this participant also explained that teaching has an impact on thousands of students and should be valued more. Two participants (7A and 8A) responded that they were not an effective use of time and they were necessary only for tenure or promotion. Lastly, another participant (13A)

responded that they were an effective use of time, but offered the following explanation for this response:

> For me, personally probably not, given the other avenues that I have for reflection and discussion with my colleagues that are probably more valuable in a group setting, there certainly is value in reflection and thinking about that on my own, but whether the time invested to continually sort of go back to that and think about it maybe for some people it would be a good investment for them, and for me I think I would prefer the other avenues that I have.

There were no consistent responses by the participants when asked if teaching portfolios were an effective use of time. While most (14 of 21 participants) participants indicated that they believed they were, many thought they were only an effective use of time in the certain contexts, and a few (6 of 21 participants) participants stated they were not an effective use of time.

Would You Recommend a Teaching Portfolio to a Colleague?

When asked if they would recommend preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio to a colleague who does not have one, the majority (15 of 21 participants) of participants indicated that they would. The reasons given for these responses were varied. A few (4 of 21 participants) participants explained that they would recommend them as they can serve to help them get a job or get promoted. Participant 5A stated "in my profession, for sure, because I don't know of any institution that wouldn't consider teaching as a major criterion, not just for tenure and promotion, but for being hired in the first place." Two other participants (7A and 15A) would recommend them as they help in tenure preparation.

In addition to recommending teaching portfolios for summative purposes, the participants provided a number of reasons they recommend them for formative purposes. Participant 3A describes this as follows:

> My research will have impact to a small community maybe, but my bigger impact will be for the people of the undergraduates, teaching engineers that go out to work. While doing that teaching portfolio, developing a philosophy, developing mechanisms for assessing your own performance and continuing to develop that, will allow you to influence how you teach and how well you teach and the performance of those people in their careers.

One participant (13A) would recommend teaching portfolios for their summative and formative benefits. This was described as follows:

> Well, I would think if that person does not have sort of access to the teaching networks or resources and groups that are available in some departments or some institutions, and maybe you're a newer teacher and you're looking for ways to improve and one of the things you would need to think about to improve and to demonstrate your teaching abilities I would think it's a worthwhile investment and I think certainly for anybody that is trying to demonstrate to somebody else what you do as a teacher and processes that you've gone through, I think that is valuable to have a portfolio.

Some participants gave other reasons for recommending a teaching portfolio to a colleague. Participant 2A described how a teaching portfolio can improve the student-teacher relationship and can assist in mentoring students. This was explained as follows:

> If you have a reputation as a good professor who is interesting, accessible, and has a dynamic interactive style, then students seek you out. And some of those students are the brightest and best and they want to come and do graduate studies or undergraduate

> projects. And that just helps the whole thing move forward, so it increases the capacity for mentorship.

Two participants (6A and 18A) explained that they would recommend preparing a teaching portfolio as they can be helpful as a simple repository of critical information. Finally, one participant (9A) responded that they would recommend teaching portfolios and added "I think I would like to see everybody have them."

Although most participants responded that they would recommend preparing a teaching portfolio to a colleague who does not have one, there were some alternative responses. One participant responded that they would only recommend it if it was necessary for tenure, and a few others stated they would recommend one only in particular circumstances. Participant 12A described who they would recommend teaching portfolios to:

> I would say for somebody who's junior, I would strongly recommend it. But, if you're a senior professor, I don't think you're going to change as an educator. You're either already a good teacher or you're not. Chances are if you're not a good teacher, it's probably because you don't care. Having one at that point I don't think would make any difference. In that sense I would say it probably depends on career stage.

Similarly, participant 16A responded that they would not recommend teaching portfolios to all colleagues but would for Ph.D. students. They explained this position as follows:

> Well I basically don't tell my colleagues what to do but if you rephrase that as like a Ph.D. student then I'd say yes because they'll need it for their job interviews, they need to think about their teaching and they'll need it to maybe even guide their, you know, their teaching, so yeah for them it's definitely a good idea.

Lastly, one participant (8A) responded that they would not recommend preparing a teaching portfolio to colleagues unless they are coming up for tenure and gave this reasoning for their response: “there is way too much stuff to do and I would say that would fly in the face of the new strategic plan for the University.”

It appears that faculty would, for the most part, recommend preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio to a colleague who does not have one. However, the context in which this recommendation would occur varied among participants.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the results from the study were presented, beginning with participant demographics, continuing with interview data related to teaching portfolio preparation and maintenance, and then ending with teaching portfolio effectiveness. The results were presented as to paint a picture of the varied experiences faculty have when preparing and maintaining their self-directed teaching portfolio.

The results answered the research questions presented in chapter 1 by providing insight into the experiences faculty members have had preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio. It is clear that teaching portfolios are prepared in many ways, have varied content, are used for a variety of purposes, and are valued to varying degrees as a tool for summative and formative evaluations.

In the following chapter, the results of this study will be discussed in relation to the literature review in chapter 2 as well as the implications of these results.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Implications

Overview

The previous chapters introduced the study and presented key aspects of this research. There was also thorough discussion of relevant literature on faculty teaching portfolio use and SDL. Various components of the research methods used in this study were explained and, finally, the results of this study were presented at length. This chapter discusses these results and identifies some implications.

The purpose of this qualitative research project was to gain greater insights into the experiences that faculty members in postsecondary education institutions have had preparing and maintaining their self-directed teaching portfolio for the purpose of teaching improvement. The participants were asked a series of questions that explored the process of preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio as well as the perceived influence that teaching portfolios have on teaching. This chapter discusses the results of the study and presents some implications of these results. This study has reinforced some of the literature on teaching portfolio uses, content, and effectiveness while also providing new insight into self-directed teaching portfolio preparation and maintenance. As a result, the findings of this study can be used to inform faculty teaching portfolios as a SDL activity.

Teaching Portfolios as a Self-Directed Learning Activity

The importance of SDL as a topic for study in adult education has been noted by many scholars (Brockett & Donaghy, 2011; Brockett, Stockdale, Fogerson, Cox, Canipe, Chuprina, & Chadwell, 2000; Caffarella, 1993; Garrison, 1997; Guglielmino, Long, & Hiemstra, 2004; Mezirow, 1985). It has been suggested that SDL can occur in a wide range of situations, including “self-planned and self-conducted learning projects” (Guiglielmino, Long, & Hiemstra,

2004, p. 1) and has been described as a study form in which an individual has control over planning, implementing and evaluating the effort (Hiemstra, 1994). This study supports the assertion that teaching portfolios are a SDL activity.

Numerous academics have indicated that individual control of the learning process is a key feature of SDL (Brookfield 1985; Garrison, 1997; Hiemstra, 1994; Knowles, 1975). The participants in this study often noted that they used numerous sources of support when preparing and maintaining their teaching portfolios. While participants indicated that they used guidance from colleagues, attended workshops, followed the examples of others, or used other resources or sources of support when preparing and maintaining their teaching portfolio, they did so as they desired. One such example of seeking out support from colleagues was provided by participant 7A who stated that "I think I probably went to some colleagues who had been through the process was". Similarly, another participant (13A) described a workshop which offered a variety of resources and teaching portfolio examples from which they could draw from when preparing their own teaching portfolio. This aspect of SDL whereby "learners move in and out of learning networks and consult a range of peers" (Brookfield, 2009, p. 2615) appears to be an essential component of teaching portfolio preparation and development. Additionally, participants clearly showed patterns of "diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes" which have all been noted by Knowles (1975, p. 18) as key aspects of SDL. This is evidenced in the wide range of instances in which participant teaching portfolios were updated. Participants indicated that their teaching portfolios were revised depending on their particular needs – sometimes regularly, at times sporadically, or for specific uses.

In addition to the importance of support from colleagues and other resources noted by study participants, so too was the freedom to decide what would be the final product of their learning experience. The participants regularly indicated that the format, components, and specific content of their teaching portfolios were, in most part, decided by themselves. Participant 7A indicated the content of the teaching portfolio was based on personal preferences. Another participant (5A) noted that the content of their teaching portfolio was based on a desire to demonstrate successful teaching. Additionally, participants also indicated many ways in which they updated their teaching portfolio by removing, adding, or revising components – a process that varied between participants. The participants regularly indicated that the format, components, and specific content of their teaching portfolios were, in most part, decided by them. This study provides ample evidence that the preparation and maintenance of a teaching portfolio by faculty is a SDL exercise, and it also sheds light on when this is most likely to elicit the most effective results.

The results of this study indicate that teaching portfolios can be an effective form of SDL. The data also indicate that there are conditions whereby this is more likely to occur. The participants of this study indicated that various sources of support and resources were essential to the preparation and maintenance of their self-directed teaching portfolios. As such, it would appear that there should be a wide range of support mechanisms in place for faculty who are preparing a self-directed teaching portfolio. Faculty should be made aware of these resources and should have the ability to use the ones that they perceive to be most beneficial.

Teaching Portfolios and Self-Directed Learners

The research of Houle in 1961 has been considered particularly influential on the study of self-directed learners by many scholars (Brockett & Donaghy, 2011; Caffarella, 1993;

Confessore & Confessore, 1992b; Guglielmino, Long, & Hiemstra, 2004; Hiemstra, 1994). In particular, Houle's (1961) research resulted in the categorization of self-directed learners into three categories when describing their reasons for participating in learning activities: (a) goal-oriented, who participated mainly to achieve some end goal; (b) activity-oriented, who participate for social or fellowship reasons; (c) learning-oriented, who perceive of learning as an end in itself. The results of this study reinforce the findings of Houle (1961). Study participants provided a variety of reasons for preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio. Two thirds of the participants stated that they decided to prepare their teaching portfolio for award nominations, job applications, annual reviews, for promotion, or tenure process. This would suggest that these participants had, for the process of preparing a teaching portfolio, demonstrated characteristics of the goal-oriented learners as described by Houle (1961). Additionally, there were other participants who exhibited goal-oriented characteristics but in different ways. These participants explained that they prepared their teaching portfolios as a way to improve their teaching. The goal for these participants may not be summative in nature, but the goal of improved teaching skills and abilities is the reason for teaching portfolio preparation. In contrast, none of the participants stated that they prepared their teaching portfolios as a learning experience as an end in itself or for social reasons. It appears that faculty teaching portfolio preparation is done, primarily, for goal-oriented reasons.

These results have implications for faculty and postsecondary institutions who intend to use teaching portfolios for summative and/or formative evaluation when viewed through the lens of Houle's (1961) work. It is essential that faculty are aware of the various uses of teaching portfolios as an end goal of teaching portfolio preparation. This may motivate goal-oriented faculty to prepare a teaching portfolio. However, it is important to note that Houle (1961)

explained that while his participants generally fit within one of his three categories of continual learners, they also exhibited characteristics of the other two categories. As a result, it may be advisable for postsecondary institutions to provide teaching portfolio support and resources intended to attract learners who may be activity-oriented or learning-oriented.

Teaching Portfolio Preparation and Maintenance

The importance of providing support for faculty who are preparing a teaching portfolio has been noted by Seldin (1997). Seldin (1997) indicated that it is important to provide mentorship for those preparing a teaching portfolio in order to guide its construction and to ensure all relevant components are included. This study asked participants to reflect on the support and resources that were available to them as they prepared their teaching portfolio. The participants responded that they had accessed a wide variety of support and resources when preparing their teaching portfolio. They also identified which sources of support and resources they found helpful, as well as recommending possible resources that may assist other faculty who are in the initial stages of preparing a teaching portfolio. While it is difficult to conclude which sources of support are most valuable based on the results of this study, it is clear that a wide variety of resources are valued by faculty when preparing a teaching portfolio.

It is important postsecondary institutions provide varied support for faculty who are preparing a teaching portfolio. This support should come from written resources, examples, workshops, mentorship, teaching portfolio research, etc. Additionally, faculty should be aware of these resources so they can choose which ones they would like to use to assist them in preparing their self-directed teaching portfolio.

Teaching Portfolio Content

Scholars have noted that the content of teaching portfolios can vary significantly between faculty (Burns, 1999; Corry & Timmins, 2009; Simpson, Morzinski, & Lindemann, 1994; Urbach, 1992) and is dependent on whether the portfolio is prepared for formative or summative evaluation (Murray, 1995; Oermann, 1999). Additionally, teaching portfolio content is usually unique to the faculty member who prepares it (Reece et al., 2001; Seldin, 2000). The results of this study reinforce these positions as demonstrated by the responses of the participants.

Participants indicated that they used a wide variety of components for their teaching portfolios, that these components were most often selected by the participants, and, in some cases, the content of their teaching portfolio changed depending on usage. There were vast differences in the components that the participants included in their teaching portfolios; however, most participants included components that could be placed in the following categories: teaching philosophy, teaching responsibilities, professional development, evaluations, service, and research. This information adds to the body of research on teaching portfolio content by supporting the literature of other scholars (Berk 2005; Buckridge, 2008; CAUT, 2007; Corry & Timmins, 2009; Dinham & Scott, 2003; Kaplan, 1998) who have already created similar lists of possible teaching dossier components. It also adds to our knowledge of teaching dossier content by establishing that faculty have used components that are either different or titled differently than what was has been indicated by other scholars.

It is noteworthy that existing literature suggests that a faculty member's teaching philosophy be included in a teaching portfolio (Corry & Timmins, 2009; Murray, 1995; Reece et al., 2001; Seldin, 2010). While a majority of participants (18 of 21 participants) had included a teaching philosophy statement (or something similar but titled differently) in their teaching

portfolio, not all participants stated they had a teaching philosophy. This differs slightly from the existing literature and may indicate that the inclusion of a teaching philosophy statement is not perceived as a relevant component of a teaching portfolio.

Teaching portfolios are a SDL activity in which faculty have the agency to select the content of their teaching portfolio. The implications of these findings are that faculty may now be aware of more items from which to choose from to personalize their teaching portfolio. This may enhance faculty teaching portfolio use as a form of SDL.

Teaching Portfolio Uses

Scholars have indicated that teaching portfolios have been used by faculty for numerous summative reasons, including confirmation of tenure (Buckridge, 2008), promotion (Buckridge, 2008; Klenowski, Askew, & Carnell, 2006), award applications (Buckridge, 2008; Knapper, 1995), and teaching assessments (Klenowski, Askew, & Carnell, 2006). Additionally, the literature has noted that teaching portfolios can also be used for formative purposes (Dinham & Scott, 2003; Kaplan, 1998; Klenowski, Askew, & Carnell 2006; Knapper, 1995; Murray, 1995, Reece et al., 2001; Retallick, 2000; Weeks, 1996). Seldin, Miller and Seldin (2010) have stated that "by far, though, the two most often cited reasons for preparing teaching portfolios are to provide evidence for use in personnel decisions and to improve teaching performance" (p. 6). The results of this study confirm this, and indicate that faculty use teaching portfolios for various summative and formative purposes.

All of the participants indicated that they had used their teaching portfolio for summative purposes, such as annual reviews, promotion, tenure, job application, and/or award nomination. Participants also noted that they used their teaching portfolios for a variety of formative reasons. It is important that faculty are aware of the many uses of teaching portfolios.

The Perceived Effectiveness of Teaching Portfolio Use

Many scholars have indicated that teaching portfolios are effective for summative evaluation (Berk, 2005; Buckridge, 2008; Knapper, 1995; Weeks, 1996). Seldin, Miller and Seldin (2010) support the use of teaching portfolios for faculty summative evaluation:

> The portfolio provides evaluators with hard-to-ignore information on what individual professors do as teachers, why they do it, how they do it, and the outcome of what they do. And by so doing, it avoids looking at teaching as a derivative of student ratings. (p. 6)

This perspective is also echoed by Murray (1995) who noted that teaching portfolios provide chairpersons and professors with the information needed to assess teaching. The majority of participants of this study (17 out of 21 participants) agreed that teaching portfolios can be an effective tool for summative evaluations. The reasons given for this position support much of the aforementioned literature on teaching portfolios for summative evaluations – that they provide a framework for faculty to provide evidence of their teaching.

While much of the literature on the summative use of faculty teaching portfolios suggests they are effective for such uses, it is not unanimous. Scholars have questioned the authenticity of teaching portfolios used for summative evaluation and have suggested that it is possible for faculty to provide information that may not be true to one's teaching (Bullard, 2000; Trevitt & Stocks, 2012). Additionally, there have been concerns in the literature that it may be difficult to assess faculty teaching portfolios as there is a lack of consistent criteria from which to assess them (Centra, 2000; Trevitt & Stocks, 2012) and, due to the diverse nature of teaching portfolios, it is very difficult to compare different teaching portfolios (Wright et al., 1999). Lastly, Wright et al. (1999) indicated that some faculty may find preparing a teaching portfolio a time-

consuming and burdensome task. These concerns were echoed by some of the participants of this study.

Study participants suggested that the value of teaching portfolios for summative evaluation may be limited by the accuracy of their content. The limited ability of an assessor to verify the content of a teaching portfolio may result in faculty providing false or omitting potentially damaging information. In addition to concerns regarding the truthfulness of teaching portfolio content, a few participants indicated that evaluating teaching portfolios objectively may be problematic. Time constraints may not allow for assessors to be adequately trained to evaluate teaching portfolios – particularly across disciplines - or to assess them thoroughly even if they are trained. Given that teaching portfolios are used extensively for summative evaluations, including tenure applications at numerous universities across Canada (Gravestock, 2011), it is important that these two points are addressed.

The implications regarding the effectiveness of teaching portfolios are numerous. While there is general agreement in the literature, including the results of this study, that teaching portfolios can be effective for summative evaluation of faculty, this may be contingent on a few key factors. Firstly, the validity of the content of faculty teaching portfolios used for summative evaluation needs to be considered. Postsecondary institutions would be wise to develop a process whereby teaching portfolio content can be verified. Secondly, the process whereby a teaching portfolio is evaluated should be standardized by the institution. This can be accomplished by developing a rating system that assessors can use and by making teaching portfolio content consistent for summative evaluations, campus-wide. Supporting this point, Seldin, Miller and Seldin (2010) noted

> [P]ortfolios being used for personnel decisions such as tenure or promotion include certain items along with those chosen specifically by the professor…if certain items in the portfolio are standardized, comparisons of teaching performance (three finalists from different disciplines competing for university teacher of the year, for example) becomes possible. (pp. 6-7)

Although the use of teaching portfolios for faculty summative evaluations has challenges, there are avenues by which these evaluations can be made more effective.

In the literature there is mixed support for teaching portfolios as an effective tool for summative evaluations. The data in this study shows similarly mixed support, given certain contexts. While this study confirms many of the concerns in the literature, it presents a view that, for the majority of faculty, teaching portfolios are effective for summative evaluations. Additionally, it appears that there may be ways in which some of the aforementioned concerns can be alleviated.

Teaching Portfolios for Formative Evaluation

Teaching portfolios can be used for formative evaluation (Kaplan, 1998; Reece et al., 2001; Retallick, 2000). In fact, Seldin, Miller and Seldin (2010) suggested "there is no better reason to prepare a portfolio than to improve performance" (p. 8). Other scholars have also suggested that teaching portfolios can be effective for faculty formative evaluation (Buckridge, 2008; Dinahm & Scott, 2003; Seldin, 2000). While the results of this study revealed there are mixed views on the effectiveness of teaching portfolios for formative evaluation, overall, most participants in this study were supportive of the use of teaching portfolios for formative evaluations. While the reasons for this support are various, it appears that the reflective process associated with teaching

portfolio use, and the development of a teaching philosophy statement, have a perceived positive influence on the formative development of faculty teaching.

The reflective process that occurs with teaching portfolio use has been noted by many scholars as being particularly beneficial (Dinham & Scott, 2003; Kaplan, 1998; Knapper, 1995; Murray, 1995; Reece et al., 2001; Retallick, 2000; Seldin, 2000; Weeks, 1996). Seldin, Miller and Seldin (2010) explained how this occurs:

> It is in the very process of reflecting on their work and creating a collection of documents and materials that professors are stimulated to reconsider policies and activities, rethink strategies and methodologies, revise priorities, and plan for the future. (p. 8)

Participants of this study frequently described how their teaching portfolios were a catalyst for reflection. The reflection that occurs through the preparation and maintenance of a teaching portfolio allowed faculty to revisit what they had done well and areas in which to improve, and then to use these insights to make improvements. This leads to what one participant appropriately termed the "cycle of improving teaching" (Participant 18A). This process of reflecting on teaching stimulates change and, ultimately, has a positive effect on teaching.

Teaching philosophy statements have been noted by scholars as being a key component of a teaching portfolio (Corry & Timmins, 2009; Murray, 1995; Reece et al., 2001; Seldin, Miller & Seldin, 2010). The development of a teaching philosophy statement was also noted by some study participants as a component of teaching portfolio preparation that has a positive formative effect on teaching. Preparing a teaching philosophy statement encouraged faculty to connect their beliefs about teaching with how they interact with their students and is sometimes used as a catalyst for change. Although not all participants indicated that their teaching portfolios included

a teaching philosophy statement, faculty who are in the initial stages of preparing a teaching portfolio would benefit from spending the time developing a teaching philosophy statement.

There are some scholars who question the effectiveness of teaching portfolios for formative purposes (Dinham & Scott, 2003; Wolf, 1996; Wright et al., 1999). Although the preparation and maintenance of a teaching portfolio may positively affect teaching, the results of this study indicate that this is inconclusive. There is a possibility that teaching improvements may not occur through the use of teaching portfolios, and it may be possible to see a greater effect on teaching through other formative methods. It is difficult to measure a cause and effect relationship between teaching portfolio use and the influence on teaching, so caution must be used if stating any definitive outcomes of teaching portfolio preparation and maintenance. This may hold to be an indefinite concern as teaching portfolios are a SDL activity that are by nature very different from one faculty member to the next. As such, assertions as to their effect are bound to be fraught with difficulties.

Teaching portfolios may not be effective for formative evaluation if faculty produce one for summative purposes only and are not using them to reflect on their teaching. As such, it is fair to question whether they can have a positive effect on teaching if they are merely a requirement for an award, yearly evaluations, tenure applications, or other summative evaluations. As a SDL activity, teaching portfolios may have a greater positive effect on teaching when internal motivation is a main reason for their preparation rather than to fulfil an obligation.

While uncertainty exists as to the value of teaching portfolios as formative evaluation tool, it is useful to note that 16 of the 21 participants of this study indicated that they perceived teaching portfolios as effective for formative evaluation. This effect may vary among faculty

members and is impossible to measure with a high level of accuracy; however, it cannot be discounted. There is agreement among most study participants that teaching portfolios can improve teaching and should be encouraged as a SDL activity.

Chapter Summary

Continuing from the results presented in chapter 4, this chapter discussed the main conclusions of this study: 1) a wide range of support and resources are found to be valued by faculty when preparing a teaching portfolio, 2) teaching portfolios are a SDL activity that vary in content, 3) teaching portfolios are initially prepared for numerous reasons and have a variety of uses, and 4) the effectiveness of teaching portfolios as a summative and/or formative evaluation tool vary among faculty. The implications of these conclusions were also discussed. In the next and final chapter, researcher reflections will be presented as well as possible avenues for future research in this area.

Chapter Six: Reflections and Recommendations

Overview

This study was conducted from my desire to explore how faculty prepare and maintain teaching portfolios for professional development and/or for summative evaluations. As a college instructor, I am always searching for ways to become a better educator and to have a more meaningful impact on my students. Soon after I began my post-graduate degree, I discovered teaching portfolios and began creating my own. I found that preparing a teaching portfolio, in my perception, affected my teaching in a positive way. However, I was still not satisfied with my teaching portfolio – there must be a way to use it more effectively, I thought. I conducted a literature review of teaching portfolio use by faculty and was surprised to find that there was limited research on the topic. Particularly, there was minimal research exploring the process by which faculty prepare and maintain a teaching portfolio or the perceived effect a teaching portfolio has on teaching. This perplexed me – why would there be so little literature on a tool that was used so frequently for faculty summative and formative evaluations? This lack of research exploring teaching portfolio use prompted this study. I sought to learn more about the use of teaching portfolios to satisfy my own desire to improve my teaching and to inform others to do the same.

This generic qualitative study was designed to address a gap in the literature describing teaching portfolio preparation and maintenance. I sought to gather data on the process of preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio by interviewing faculty so that they could share their experiences and perceptions. SDL theory was used to help frame how teaching portfolios are used by postsecondary faculty with the objective of providing a more complete description of teaching portfolios as a summative and formative evaluation tool. I assumed that, as a form of

SDL, faculty teaching portfolio use would be varied and so too would be the perception of their effects. These experiences and perceptions, I hoped, would answer my research questions and would narrow the gap I found in my literature review.

The results of my study indicated that the process of creating a teaching portfolio by faculty exhibit the characteristics of a SDL process. Additionally, faculty prepare teaching portfolios for a variety of reasons; however, many do so for what Houle (1961) would describe as "goal-oriented" reasons. As a self-directed learning activity, faculty teaching portfolios are prepared in various ways, contain a multitude of components, and are used for numerous summative and formative evaluations. The perceived effect that teaching portfolios have on teaching is inconsistent as well: some faculty perceive them as very beneficial while others question the effect they have.

There were a number of conclusions and recommendations that were made based on the results of this study. Faculty teaching portfolios are a SDL activity that vary in content and are prepared using a wide range of support and resources. Teaching portfolios are also prepared for numerous reasons and have a variety of uses, and the effectiveness of teaching portfolios as a summative and/or formative evaluation tool vary among faculty. These conclusions were used as a basis to form suggestions that could be used to improve the effectiveness of teaching portfolios for summative and formative evaluation.

Recommendations for Future Study

The proliferation of teaching portfolios as a tool used for summative and formative evaluation necessitates that we have a full understanding of how they are used and to what degree they affect teaching. As the preparation and maintenance of a teaching portfolio is a SDL process resulting in a product of varying content and format, it is difficult to explore their use in

all contexts. However, it would prove beneficial to study their use in more detail through an examination of disciplinary differences. The results of such a line of research could provide additional insights into how teaching portfolios are used within and across the disciplines.

Another line of research that would prove beneficial would be the exploration of how assessors evaluate teaching portfolios for summative purposes. Teaching portfolio literature and the results of this study indicate that there is concern as to how teaching portfolios are evaluated. Research into the training of assessors and teaching portfolio evaluation processes could inform the summative use of teaching portfolios. It is likely that the results of this research could improve how teaching portfolios are evaluated and, in turn, reassure faculty that teaching portfolios are a valid tool for summative evaluation.

Lastly, a more in depth study of the support and resources used by faculty when preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio would prove fruitful. Participants of this study indicated that they used a variety of resources while preparing their teaching portfolio and noted that many of them were quite helpful. However, these results only touch the surface of the importance of these resources – the bigger question of *why* they were valuable is still to be determined. A fuller understanding of how faculty can be assisted when preparing a teaching portfolio could certainly be used to improve their value and, as a result, the effectiveness of teaching portfolios for formative and summative evaluation.

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Appendix A: Department Chair Email

(Date)

Dear (name of department chair)

This letter is to inform you of a research study I will be undertaking as part of my master's program and to request your assistance in the recruitment of potential research participants. The following is a brief description of the research study and the participant recruitment involvement I am requesting of yourself.

- The **purpose of this study** is to add to the body of knowledge regarding the preparation and maintenance of teaching portfolios by university faculty members.
- **Research participants** will take part in confidential one-on-one interviews which should take approximately 30-60 minutes. Interview questions will explore the experiences that faculty members have had preparing a teaching portfolio, maintaining a teaching portfolio, and whether or not they think that their teaching portfolio has enhanced their teaching abilities.
- Due to your access to confidential contact information I am requesting your assistance in the participant recruitment process. **I hope that you would be willing to forward this email and the attached "Letter of Invitation" to faculty members of your department for their consideration.** Subsequently, any interested faculty members can contact myself directly for more information or to participate in the study.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Byron Matthews
University of Alberta
Faculty of Education
Department of Educational Policies
Masters of Education Student
bwmatthe@ualberta.ca
780-242-6866

Thesis Supervisor
Heather Kanuka
Heather.kanuka@ualberta.ca
University of Alberta
Faculty of Education
Department of Educational Policies
Professor

Appendix B: Letter of Invitation

(Date)

Dear Potential Study Participant,

I'm a master's student in the Educational Policy Studies department in the Faculty of Education. I would like to carry out a study that involves interviewing approximately 30 faculty members exploring faculty experiences with the preparation and maintenance of a teaching portfolio.

I realize that there are many demands on your time and that you may not be able to commit to this at this time. However, the study would greatly benefit from your participation and sharing of your experiences. Information collected in the interviews will be compared and contrasted in order to enhance our understanding of the effectiveness of preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research is to add to the body of knowledge regarding the preparation and maintenance of teaching portfolios by university faculty members. Currently there is limited research exploring the experiences of faculty members when preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio. This study will provide an in depth analysis of these experiences of a number of University of Alberta faculty members from a variety of backgrounds. The results of this study will be primarily used in support of my masters of education thesis but will also be used for conference presentations and scholarly publications.

Data Analysis: Interview transcriptions will be analyzed using the constant comparison method in Grounded Theory, followed by looking for themes and topics that emerge (with debriefing with my thesis supervisor). Following an initial analysis, the themes and topics will be returned to you for a member check for verification of content. You will then have one month to review the content, to approve it and return it to the researcher, or to request revisions. Once the approved transcriptions have been returned their content will be analyzed in order to find similar or contrasting responses.

Here are some other details of the study:

- Interviews will consist of 25-40 semi-structured questions.
- Interviews will take approximately 30-60 minutes.
- Interviews will be scheduled at your convenience.

Participation in this study does not involve any risks greater than those encountered in everyday life. You are free to refuse to answer particular questions, to quit the interview, or to withdraw from the study altogether prior to submitting the interview data. Once the data has been submitted it cannot be remove as all identifying personal information will be removed so that it is anonymous. Data will be stored on a password-protected hard drive in a secure office. The data will be retained for five years, per University policy. There is no remuneration or compensation for participating in this study.

If you are willing to participate in this study please contact myself directly (bwmatthe@ualberta.ca) to arrange a date and time for this interview with me. At the onset of the interview, I will ask you to read the description of the study and sign a consent form.

Thank you for considering my invitation to participate. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant, or how this study is being conducted, you may contact the University of Alberta's Research Ethics Office at 780-492-2615. This office has no affiliation with the study investigators.

Sincerely,

Byron Matthews
bwmatthe@ualberta.ca
University of Alberta
Faculty of Education
Department of Educational Policies
Masters of Education Student

Appendix C: Participant Consent

Study Title: A study of the experiences of teaching portfolio preparation and maintenance by University of Alberta faculty

This consent has two parts. The first part is a description of the study and your role as a participant. The second part is the consent itself. Reading the description and signing the consent to participate indicates that you are giving your informed consent to participate in the study. If you would like more information about the study or the consent process please feel free to email me bwmatthe@ualberta.ca

1. Description of the study

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this research is to add to the body of knowledge regarding the preparation and maintenance of teaching portfolios by university faculty members. Currently there is limited research exploring the experiences of faculty members when preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio. This study will provide an in depth analysis of these experiences of a number of University of Alberta faculty members from a variety of backgrounds.

Research Design

Selection of study participants. Approximately 30 faculty members of the University of Alberta who have prepared a teaching portfolio will be interviewed for the study.

Recruitment of study participants. Participation in the study is voluntary. Participants will be invited to participate via an email invitation distributed by University of Alberta department chairs. Department chairs will be informed of the study via email and will be asked to support the study by distributing the participant request email to faculty members in their department. Interested participants will be asked to contact the researcher directly for more information or to participate in the study.

Data collection and analysis.

- The study will require you to participate in a one-on-one interview with the researcher prior to July 1st, 2015.
- The interview will consist of 25-40 open-ended questions and will take approximately 30-60 minutes to complete.
- The interview will take place in a quiet, private room at the University of Alberta.
- You will be asked to email the researcher with dates and times that are convenient for you to do the interview. Interview date, time, and location will be then confirmed by the researcher. If you need to reschedule the interview for any reason you will be able to do so as long as it is prior to July 1st, 2015.

- Only you and the researcher will be present during the interview.
- The interview will be recorded using a digital voice recording device for later transcription by the researcher.
- The transcriptions will be returned to you within one month following your interview for verification of content. You will have one month to review the transcription, to approve it and return it to the researcher, or to request revisions.
- You will be provided with the results of the study after all the interviews have been completed and analyzed. It is anticipated that this will occur prior to the end of 2015.

Reporting of the results. The results of this study will be primarily used in support of my masters of education thesis but will also be used for scholarly presentations and academic publications. The results will also be provided via email to all individuals who have participated at the end of March, 2016.

Risks. Participation in this study does not involve any risks greater than those encountered in everyday life.

Freedom to withdraw. Participants are free to refuse to answer any (or all) questions, to quit the interview, or to withdraw from the study altogether. Once data has been analyzed the participant cannot have his or her information removed.

Other Considerations

Data will be stored on a password-protected hard drive in a secure office. The data will be retained for five years, per University policy. There is no remuneration or compensation for participating in this study.

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta.

2. Consent

By participating in the study, in no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time prior to the data analysis. Your continued participation should be informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Your signature below indicates that you would like to participate in the interview, and will constitute your consent.

Signature of Research Participant Date

Witness Date

Appendix D: Interview Questions

Part 1: Demographics

1) What department do you work in?
2) How long have you been teaching in a university? Where else have you taught? How long?
3) Do you have any teacher training or preparation? Was this formal or informal? Credit or non-credit?
4) Are you currently in a teaching-stream or research-stream?

Part 2: Teaching Portfolio Preparation and Maintenance

1) How did you first learn about teaching portfolios?
2) When did you first prepare a teaching portfolio?
3) Why did you decide to prepare a teaching portfolio?
4) What forms of guidance or resources (ie. workshop, mentorship) were available to you when you first prepared your teaching portfolio? Was this helpful? What would you change to make the process more effective?
5) How much time did you spend on preparing your teaching portfolio? Was this enough time? Why/Why not?
6) What components does your teaching portfolio consist of? Why did you choose them?
7) Which components do you find most helpful?
8) Which components do you find least helpful?
9) What purposes have you used your teaching portfolio for? (ie. summative evaluation, formative evaluations, awards, grants, job applications)
10) Is your teaching portfolio online or a hard copy? Why did you choose that format?
    Sub-Question "4A": (If the participants teaching portfolio is a hard copy) Would you consider preparing an e-portfolio?
    Sub-Question "4B": (If the participant answers NO to 4A) Why not?
    Sub-Question "4C": (If the participant answers YES to 4A) What forms of guidance or resources would you want to assist you in preparing an e-portfolio?
11) How often do you update your teaching portfolio?
12) Have you added or removed components while updating your teaching portfolio? Why?
13) Are faculty members in your department encouraged to prepare or maintain a teaching portfolio? In what ways?

Part 3: Teaching Portfolio Effectiveness

1) Has the process of preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio affected your teaching? In what ways/Why not?
2) Do you think teaching portfolios improve teaching? In what ways/Why not?
3) Do you think teaching portfolios are effective for summative evaluation? Why/Why not?
4) Do you think teaching portfolios are effective for formative evaluation? Why/Why not?
5) Do you think teaching portfolios can be effectively used for both summative and formative evaluation? Why/Why not?

6) Do you think that preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio is an effective use of time? Why/Why not?
7) Would you recommend preparing and maintaining a teaching portfolio to a colleague who does not have one? Why/Why not?