In preparation for the Teaching Dossiers workshop, below are 2 Teaching Portfolios AND the Pre-Workshop activity.

Teaching Portfolios copied from:
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TEACHING PORTFOLIO

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Spring 1996

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Statement of Teaching Responsibilities and Strategies

As an instructor for a university-required course in public speaking, I encounter students with varying degrees of apathy and apprehension. This challenges me to present a course in which students can learn, improve, and ideally enjoy. As a full-time instructor at Eastern Illinois University and as a graduate teaching assistant at Southern Illinois University, I have had full responsibility for the classes I teach. I prepare my own syllabi. I write and deliver lectures. I design and prepare tests. I create and facilitate in-class activities, and I plan and evaluate class assignments. Though textbooks change and certain mandated assignments change among institutions, the basic foundation for a public speaking course remains the same. Appendix A shows the syllabus for the course I am currently teaching. The goal of the class is to increase students' competence and confidence in creating, organizing, and delivering messages in public settings. My responsibility, therefore, goes beyond conquering communication apprehension. My mission is to teach skills and methods that create well-reasoned, well-researched argumentation and explanation. I am responsible for teaching students skills needed to deliver an oral presentation, manage speech anxiety, work with groups, and listen critically.

Presentation

I teach basic presentational skills involved in speaking in front of an audience. This area includes voice, gesture, and eye contact. Students are expected to give three to four graded oral presentations. Additionally, I have students give several impromptu speeches over the course of the semester. These give the students experience and practice in quick thinking and public performing.

My students also view videotapes of speakers from speech classes at other institutions. This allows the class to see what is effective and what is not effective in similar speaking situations.

They get an opportunity to evaluate and critique others, which in turn causes them to look more closely at their own performances..

Speech anxiety and audience adaptation

One of the most noted fears among adults in our society is that of speaking in front of an audience. My responsibility is to make students aware of the commonality of this fear. Further, my charge is to teach them how to cope with speaker apprehension. The impromptu speeches help with this task. We also discuss how nervousness can generate positive energy in a presentation. I find the best strategy in managing speech anxiety is to develop an appreciation and awareness of the sensation. Everyone experiences uneasiness, and in the public speaking course, everyone can empathize. Students in this course learn to be respectful audience members as well as competent speakers. The course teaches students the importance of sensitivity and awareness when one considers one's audience. Messages are often dependent upon the individuals to whom they are addressed.

Group decision-making

Other teaching responsibilities in this course include addressing group decision-making and interpersonal communication. I devote half of each class period to lecture material and the other half to group work or to an entire class activity. Regardless of the content of the exercise, the students engage in active interpersonal communication, through which, either consciously or unconsciously, they use their ability to explain, argue, and reason.

Listening and writing

Quite obviously, an introductory course in public speaking involves more than performing in front of a group. The course teaches students the role that listening plays in the communication process. By developing critical listening adeptness, students are forming skills that benefit and describe a responsible citizen. The course also emphasizes the importance of good written communication. Appendix B includes a writing assignment I use in a 100-level public speaking course. Effective writing is a precursor to effective speaking. I am therefore responsible for evaluating the students' word choices and language devices as well. These are irreplaceable ingredients in public speaking.

Philosophy of teaching

As a student, I learned through interaction, application, and association. I also use these approaches in my teaching. I believe students learn by interacting with each other as well as with the instructor. I facilitate dialogue as much as possible during each class period. Each class takes on a culture of its own, and I adapt classroom discussions for the particular culture of each section. As student comfort increases, students are more likely to contribute to discussions and to offer personal opinions and experiences related to the course. By hearing such experiences, students are able to apply material to real life. Personal narrative and story telling are wonderful agents for cooperative learning. The understanding of how book terms actually explain and reflect real life is truly enlightening.

My father was a theater professor for 23 years. He frequently taught courses for nontheater majors that fulfilled university requirements. I so often heard people say, "I had your Dad for one class three years ago and he still says hi to me by name." Now as a college teacher myself, I understand and appreciate such a skill and such a sincere interest in students. In higher education, there are often ethical concerns surrounding student/teacher relationships. However, it is possible to show empathy and concern for my students without crossing any line of professionalism. Indeed, it is essential.

Overall, I create a classroom in which I encourage all students to share and communicate ideas, experiences, and opinions. I want students to enjoy the class. I urge them to contribute, and I lead them by example.

Evaluation of teaching

A thorough evaluation of one's teaching includes three types of assessment: student, colleague, and self. I place a high value on student comments because I find them to be useful in my own reflection of my instructional performance.

Student evaluations of my teaching are contained in Appendix C. These evaluations were collected on a campus-wide standardized survey. Students rate me strongest on "enthusiasm for the course," "interest in the students," and an "openness to student participation." I believe it is interesting and important to note these evaluations are from students enrolled in a general education required course. The average response to "self interest in the subject" was a .5 on a 5.0 scale. That's a tough crowd, as they say in show business. Appendix D includes representative examples of anonymous student evaluation narratives regarding my course and instruction.

I also value opinions and observations of colleagues within the discipline. Surely, I can grow from what I see others do and from what others see me do. Appendix E includes statements from several colleagues who have visited my class and observed my interaction with students. The feedback and suggestions I receive from them are instrumental in evaluating my instructional skill and strategies. Similar to the student evaluations, my colleagues' remarks list enthusiasm and concern for students as strong points in my teaching. I am constantly learning and improving by the advice, praise, and even criticism of my peers. Their comments cause me to reflect on my strengths and weaknesses, another valuable form of evaluation.

Self-reflection is a way for me to assess my choices in grading, evaluating, and interacting with my students. I enjoy experimenting with the way I present material. I give considerable thought to my performance each and every day I am in the classroom. After completing a lecture, I go back through my notes and make revisions. If something seemed to work well within the discussion, I make a note.

If I need to adjust the time frame of the lecture, I do so. If the class discussion provides additional examples or insight that I had not previously included, I add them. I also alternate the activities I use in class. There is no time to complete as many of them as I would like. This way I am able to try several different exercises.

Additional Preparation in Instructional Pedagogy

In addition to pursuing a Ph.D. in Speech Communication, I have additional training through course work in college teaching methods, college student profiles, and the college culture. I am devoted to becoming an effective teacher in higher education. I continually work to improve my ability and make the learning experience pleasant and perhaps even fun for my students. Every day I engage in quality discussions with colleagues about occurrences in my classes. The feedback and reciprocal comments are educational. I receive innovative ideas and genuine suggestions through this informal, but useful dialogue. In addition to this, however, I have colleagues observe my performance regularly and offer specific recommendations for improvement.

I am a member of the Central States Communication Association. The annual convention creates an enormous amount of excitement and anticipation for the remainder of the semester as well as for future semesters. I return from such events with renewed enthusiasm and a revitalized commitment to teaching.

Future Goals
My future aspirations include becoming an educator with a doctoral degree. After completing my Master's degree, I taught for two years at Eastern Illinois University. That initial experience with communication education was so positive, I decided this is truly the career in which I belong. Upon receiving my doctorate, I hope to work at an institution where my teaching is valued and my research interests are respected. I want to continue to study student/teacher relationships and classroom culture. I look forward to learning more about myself and my profession. I look forward to opening apathetic freshmen eyes to the phenomenon of human communication. I look forward to working with enthusiastic, undergraduate speech majors. Mostly however, I look forward to polishing my pedagogical skills and insights semester after semester. Number 548 of *Life's Little Instruction Book* reads: "Seize every opportunity for additional training in your job." I do that every day I walk into the classroom.

Appendices
Appendix A: Course Syllabus
Appendix B: Vivid Description Assignment
Appendix C: Student Standardized Survey Evaluations
Appendix D: Student Evaluation Narratives
Appendix E: Letters/Statements From Colleagues

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TEACHING PORTFOLIO

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Spring 1996

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Teaching Responsibilities
I am responsible for teaching five different upper-level undergraduate biology classes. Genetics (BI:201) enrolls roughly 50-60 biology sophomores every fall. This year it was taught as part of the introductory biology sequence for the first time. My other two lecture courses, Microbiology (BI:312) and Immunology (BI:400), are both biology electives with annual enrollments of 10-25 students. Microbiology Laboratory (313) and Immunology Laboratory (401) are elective laboratory courses that require past or current enrollment in the lecture courses and regularly enroll between 10 to 16 students.

I am also developing a new lecture course in virology (BI:500) that will be taught to 16 upper-class biology students next fall.

Teaching Philosophy

Lectures should introduce concepts in a fashion that conveys excitement, while providing the training necessary to prepare students for their chosen fields. Students should not be intimidated by the presentation, as overwhelmed students will not learn. There is a great deal of material to be learned in the introductory levels of any course, but if the material is taught in such a manner that students are able to relate to it, they will not only more readily retain the information; they will also be more likely to interact in class, and to independently seek out related topics. Both lectures and assigned readings should include current articles that stress the daily relevance of the course material being presented, and historical readings that show just how far we've come.

Since students learn in many different ways, I am currently developing courses that use a variety of approaches, not only to teach biology, but to evaluate student learning as well. These approaches stress critical thinking and problem solving, rather than just memorizing facts, involve both group and individual assignments, and allow students to progress through a series of project drafts. I make frequent use of student-led peer evaluations, as I feel that students learn as much from teaching each other as I learn from teaching them.

Enthusiasm in a biology program should not only be found in lectures and demonstrations, but also in laboratories that are challenging while still teaching basic experimental skills. Laboratories should prepare students to solve problems of many different sorts. They provide an excellent opportunity to incorporate instruction on topics that often don't fit into any particular niche in classroom instruction. These topics include, but are not limited to, items such as interpretation and presentation of experimental results in both oral and written forms, experimental design, the use of computers in data analysis, and laboratory safety.

Computer literacy is a requirement that cannot be excessively stressed in modern science. It is vital for students to be exposed to computers in scientific applications from the very beginning of their course work. The World Wide Web contains databases and resources that provide valuable ancillary course information.

The goal of a good science program should be to develop in students the intellectual and technical skills necessary to begin answering scientific questions for themselves. Undergraduate research is an invaluable tool to be used in this process. It allows students to apply all the knowledge and laboratory skills they learned in a structured classroom or laboratory setting to a particular scientific question. In an independent project, there is the added excitement of knowing that the research is novel, not just an exercise to learn a new technique. Through successfully solving an original research problem, a student tends to develop self-confidence and a desire to learn even more. In addition to being a great teaching tool, research keeps an educator current in the field. If an instructor is not current, it is difficult to maintain the high degree of enthusiasm necessary to be an effective teacher.

Finally, an isolated professor seldom teaches well. Competent teaching and research can only be accomplished through the contributions of a diverse, but cohesive group of peers, and through the use of student comments to constantly evaluate course outcomes. Student comments should be encouraged throughout the semester in informal conversations, as well as through formal evaluation forms at the end of a semester.

General Classroom Strategies

In order to convey information to students without overwhelming them, I have found it very useful to provide the students with typed outlines of my lectures (see Appendix A) which include copies of any detailed figures that the students will need. These handouts are also made into

transparencies or slides that are used to organize my lectures. With these outlines on hand, students can spend more time listening to important concepts, and less time writing down every little detail that comes out of my mouth. This approach also allows me to cover concepts in more detail, as I do not have to wait while my budding Rembrandts try to draw reasonable facsimiles of cell architecture.

It is important to stress the relevance of biology in students' everyday lives. In microbiology (BI:312), we take 15 minutes at the end of class every other week to discuss "microbes in the news." In this format, students earn credit for discussing any papers they have read, or news stories they have seen that involve microbiology. Last year, topics of discussion included everything from new strains of bacteria found in hot springs, to food poisoning incidents on cruise ships. In immunology (BI:400), lecture topics include "why do I get colds?" and AIDS biology.

New biological discoveries are making the news every day, and in order to remain current and exciting, my courses need to reflect these discoveries. In all of my courses, I keep current by reading journal articles, and relevant information is incorporated into my lectures, and/or added to the class reading lists.

Course Syllabi

My course syllabi (see Appendix B) reflect many of the different techniques that I use for teaching and student evaluation, and several of those approaches are highlighted on a course-by-course basis in the section below.

Genetics(BI:201)

The first half hour to hour of each two-hour class is spent explaining concepts and formulas. Then the students break up into groups of three to five to work on graded in-class assignments. This approach gives me time to interact with students immediately following the lecture, as the students try to apply the material from class to sample problems. The problems are handed in at the end of class and are graded before the next class period. This allows me to determine if there were any glaring problems with comprehension of the material, which can then be addressed at the beginning of the next lecture.

I presented a "way cool biology database of the week" (see Appendix C for some representative databases) to my genetics students every week this fall, and was stunned by the positive response. By the end of the semester, students were coming to *me* with new databases, and one of my students even found a data base site where he could make virtual fruit fly matings (he called them "cyber matings") to supplement his real fruit fly experiments, which had gone awry.

Microbiology (BI:312)

Activities are incorporated that break down the barriers between lecture and lab whenever possible, as most science concepts rely on both. I often begin a lecture, then say "Oh, to heck with this; let's go to the lab!" In lab, students actually look at living microorganisms while we discuss their biology. For example, it is much more effective to have students observe a bacterium while it is swimming, than to expect them to remember the statement "spirochetes swim with a corkscrew-like motion." Likewise, students who have actually done a Gram stain are more likely to remember that Gram positive bacteria are purple.

Immunology (BI:400)

Group activities—rather than quizzes—are used to assay student performance between tests. One of my more successful events was "Immuno-Jeopardy," where students answered questions in

groups and were graded based on the amount of money their group had won by the end of the class period. The final group activity for students was to present any area of immunology to any group of nonpeer, nonscientists. Some of the more creative products included a bed- time story about "Tommy T-cell" and a puppet show that showed how macrophages attack and eat invading bacteria (if you have never seen one sock puppet eat another, you have not truly lived!).

Laboratory courses

I am slowly adding to my repertoire laboratories that require students to devise their own experiments to answer scientific questions. This approach not only teaches students techniques, but also how to think critically about science. In Genetics Lab (BI:201), students use the Ames Test to determine if commonly used substances (like toothpaste, beer, and tobacco) are carcinogenic. In Microbiology Lab (BI:313), students learn a variety of techniques early in the semester; then use those techniques to identify unknown strains of bacteria.

Finally, peer evaluations of student work are an integral part of many lab assignments. In Immunology Lab (BI:401), the first class period is dedicated to describing how a good science paper should be written (see Appendix D for the biology department's criteria for grading papers) and how to make helpful comments when reviewing papers. Following that session, students evaluate each other's first drafts, and I evaluate only the second drafts, as well as the reviewer's first-draft comments. Students have a much clearer understanding of how to write a good paper once they have gone through the process of grading a bad one.

Student Research

The importance of student research in an undergraduate science education cannot be underestimated. Independent research allows students to begin to ask scientific questions for themselves, rather than just performing "canned" experiments with known answers during defined laboratory experiments. Over the past year and a half, I have collaborated with seven undergraduate researchers who are all attempting to determine genetic mechanisms that underlie the regulation of the mammalian immune response. Jennifer Wells and Elise Knappenberger used their research experience with me to fulfill university honors thesis requirements, and Meredith Libby received departmental honors for her work. See Appendix E for copies of student papers.

Often the outcomes of student research are not as tangible as papers or presentations. My first research student, Jennifer Wells ('95), is not only the first member of her family ever to go to college, but she is now pursuing her Ph.D. in biology at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. Her independent research experience was a critical factor in her decision to pursue graduate work. From this year's crop of five research students, two (Jason Guilford and Jennifer Wilhelm) are applying to graduate school, and two (Meredith Libby and Elise Knappenberger) have been accepted to vet school.

Additional Teaching Activities

In order to serve the Selinsgrove community, I have participated in several high school science education programs. Every fall, Susquehanna University sponsors a Science In Action Day, during which several hundred high school teachers and students come to campus to learn science techniques that high schools do not normally teach. As part of the program, I have developed a "Solving Crime Using Biology" unit (see Appendix F) in which students determine which suspects have performed the heinous murder of the year. Last year, biology faculty members were accused of murdering Barney, and this year we had to determine if Wile E. Coyote had indeed managed to kill Roadrunner. The students are given sheets that tell the alibis and motives

for each suspect. Then they test blood found at the crime scene for blood type and DNA type to determine "whodunit."

I have also served as judge for several high school science fairs and have supervised a high school research project. See Appendix G for letters pertaining to these activities.

Teaching Assessment

Student assessment: IDEA forms

The following table summarizes the 1994-95 student evaluations of my courses (my only year of teaching) based on the IDEA Short Form that Susquehanna University uses. I have chosen to summarize my scores for "factual knowledge," "principles and theories," "thinking and problem solving," and "overall, an excellent teacher." Gaining factual knowledge is critical to all science courses, while learning principles and theories is important because it indicates that I have been successful in conveying "the big picture." The analysis of my ability to stimulate thinking and problem solving indicates how successfully I am teaching critical thinking. The final scores give me an overview of how successful I am as an educator.

	Factual	*Principles*	*Thinking*	*Excellent Teacher*
BI:201	4.2*	4.1	3.9	4.5
BI:312	4.8	4.6	4.0	4.8
BI:313	4.8	4.6	4.4	4.8
BI:400	4.8	4.8	3.7	4.7
BI:401	Course too small to get evaluated			
BL500	New Course			

*The scores for each course show the average raw score (1 = low, 5 = high).

Student assessment: anecdotal comments

I always encourage students to comment on my teaching techniques on the back of their IDEA forms in order to get a more diagnostic picture of my teaching effectiveness. The comments are always very useful and have indicated that many of my teaching strategies are quite effective. See Appendix H for complete copies of student comments.

My course outlines have met with unanimous approval, and have helped to organize my lectures as well as encouraging my students to listen. Representative student comments include: "I liked the class very much. The handouts for lecture were great—made class easier to follow—enabled me to listen more rather than always missing certain sections in my mad rush to take notes. Overall—two thumbs up!" "The handouts/outlines for each lecture are extremely helpful!! It gives me the chance to look at what Dr. Tobin-Janzen is planning for the lecture—it helps keep me on track because I know what is important & what is not important."

Students also seemed to enjoy the varied class activities that I have employed. About in-lecture lab activities, one student wrote, "I think integrated lab/lectures were very helpful in reinforcement. Some concepts were easier for me to understand because of being in lab..." The microbiology poster sessions were a "super idea, since they get the students out into the 'real world' of microbiology," and Immuno-Jeopardy was "fun and a great way to remember info for the exams."

Microbes in the News was successful in getting students to make connections to their lives. Students wrote "I like Microbes in the News not just as extra credit but because it lets you see

how micro is related to everyday stuff" and, "The best part of this class was Microbes in the News. It was good to take a break from straightforward lecture to discuss current issues."

Teaching Improvement

My attempts at improving my teaching have centered around three basic areas: response to student comments, participation in a small teaching cell, and participation in a teaching portfolio workshop.

Response to student comments

Student comments (both elicited and spontaneous) have given me tremendous insight into what works in my courses and what doesn't. After my first semester of teaching, most of my students commented that they would like more frequent tests in class, so I began to give four semester exams rather than three. I found that the increased number of smaller tests allowed students to learn the material at a much more reasonable pace.

I am also changing my immunology textbook since the nicest comment about last year's text was "the book had good figures." Most of my students read the text for the first week, then gave up in disgust. This year's text is written much more clearly and does a much better job of describing the big picture, rather than wallowing in facts. Also, it still has good figures.

Teaching cell activities

Since I came to Susquehanna University, I have been part of a small group that meets once a week to discuss teaching strategies. The other group members are Mary Cianni and Jerry Habegger from Business, Don Housely from History, and Karen Mura from English. The teaching cell has provided a place for me to fly some of my more radical teaching ideas past a forgiving, critical audience that frequently has very valuable suggestions to improve my courses. In particular, I have incorporated case studies into my genetics course, have developed an anecdotal student evaluation to complement the IDEA form, and have broken away from the strict lecture mode employed by all of my professors in the past.

In August 1995, our teaching cell organized and hosted a Teaching Fair that featured teaching strategies that work. As part of this workshop, I described my use of Immuno-Jeopardy to bring life to the classroom. Following that presentation, several faculty, including Jeannie Zeck from English, indicated that they used Jeopardy to teach many different aspects of their courses and that it was successful in all cases.

Teaching portfolio workshop

I participated in a teaching portfolio workshop in order to clarify my teaching goals, and to determine whether my teaching methods are adequately fulfilling my goals. As a result of this workshop, I have developed a series of future goals to improve my teaching performance. These goals are outlined in the next section.

Future Teaching Goals

I think that my teaching evaluations make it quite clear that while I teach facts quite well I still need to work on developing students' critical thinking abilities. I have three major areas where I will address this need. Beginning in spring semester 1996, I will incorporate more investigative-style laboratories into my courses. For example, rather than doing an in-class problem set, genetics students could spend time following my natural selection lecture planning how to use fruit flies to study natural selection. Then they could use that approach in lab that week.

I am also in the process of co-authoring a regional interactive genetics database with James Pollack, Toni Oltenacu, Martha Mutschler, Charles Aquadro, and Dean Sutphin from Cornell University, and Barbara Ward from Delaware Valley College. This database will contain interactive projects that will stimulate critical thinking outside of class. Additionally, the database will have simulations, videos, and pictures of mutant organisms that will provide another medium by which students can learn genetics. (See Appendix I for a copy of the funded grant for this project.) This database should be ready for use by fall semester, 1996.

More rewrites will be incorporated into my courses. In immunology lab this spring (1996), third drafts of papers will be allowed in order to address my comments. Additionally, while students know the minimum requirements for an acceptable biology paper (see Appendix D), they often seem to miss the qualities that raise a paper from being simply acceptable to being very good. I plan to search the literature to find published papers that exemplify both examples and have the students read both papers. We will then discuss which paper is which, and why this is the case. Examples of "A" and "D" papers from this spring's labs will also be used as models in future lab courses.

By spring of 1997, students working in my lab will be expected to present the results of their independent research projects at regional conventions, such as the ones sponsored by the Pennsylvania Academy of Science and the Council of Undergraduate Research. Truly outstanding performances will be presented as posters at national immunology conferences.

Finally, I will improve the methods by which my course outcomes are evaluated. An additional, anecdotal form for student evaluations will be used beginning this spring (see Appendix J for a copy of the form under consideration for use). This form will give me more diagnostic information than the IDEA short form currently does. Furthermore, the anecdotal form has a specific section that will allow me to analyze the effectiveness of the student peer review system that is used to grade immunology papers.

Starting next semester, I also plan to get my department head, Jack Holt, to sit in on my classes. Additionally, as part of our teaching cell activities, members of my teaching cell will begin regular class visitations. These peer evaluations should prove very helpful to my course development.

Appendices

Appendix A: Sample Lecture Outline
Appendix B: Course Syllabi
Appendix C: "Way Cool" Biology Databases
Appendix D: Biology Instructor's Grading Criteria
Appendix E: Samples of Student Papers
Appendix F: Science in Action Day Handouts
Appendix G: Letters From Local High Schools
Appendix H: Anecdotal Student Comments
Appendix I: Interactive Genetics Database Grant
Appendix J: Anecdotal Student Evaluation Form

Pre-Workshop Worksheet for Teaching Portfolio Readings for CTE Teaching Dossiers Workshop

Read the two teaching portfolios (or dossiers) provided. For each, answer the following questions in preparation for a discussion in the workshop.

1. What is each writer's philosophy statement? Summarize the key points.

2. What evidence is given to support each philosophy statement? In which section(s) is the evidence located?

3. As a reader, do you find it easy to find the evidence? (hint: consider the structure of each portfolio for ease of reading)

4. Given that a teaching portfolio/dossier should identify why you do what you do as a teacher (your philosophy, your beliefs) and describe how you put those beliefs into practice, which of the two portfolios do you feel is the most effective and why?