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The Digital Teaching Portfolio Handbook: A How-To Guide for Educators

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Teaching portfolios are often used by individuals who are new to the job market, those who are candidates for tenure or promotion, and others who wish to document their professional accomplishments. Typically, a teaching portfolio contains a reflective statement on teaching, samples of teaching style such as syllabi and exams, and evidence of teaching effectiveness such as student evaluations. The magic of the teaching portfolio is that it allows for the accurate substantiation of the complex process of teaching. In *The Digital Teaching Portfolio Handbook: A How-To Guide for Educators*, Kilbane and Milman present the digital format as an alternative method of creating and maintaining this useful archive.

In the first four chapters, the authors make a case for digital teaching portfolios (DTPs). They describe advantages of DTPs such as portability, demonstration of technological skill and creativity. In addition, Kilbane and Milman consider the benefits of DTPs for instructors and administrators at different levels of experience. They provide a well-balanced discussion, even examining disadvantages of the digital format such as knowledge and skill requirements, expensive equipment, and professional support. In this section, a list of online resources containing samples of DTPs is provided.

In Part Two, Kilbane and Milman outline the process of creating the DTP and provide the following stages of development:
- Planning
  - Identifying the purpose for and intended audience of the portfolio
  - Establishing a framework for the presentation of information, which can be around standards, around a theme, or around a question
- Considering Contents
  - Collecting, selecting, and reflecting on contents
  - Choosing "professional artifacts" that may be effective ingredients in a DTP
- Designing
  - Organizing contents
  - Selecting a design tool (e.g., Netscape Composer or PowerPoint) and creating files
- Evaluating
  - Appraising the formative development of the DTP
  - Assessing the cumulative effectiveness of the DTP after the development stage
- Publishing
  - Choosing a publishing method such as World Wide Web using File Transfer Protocol (FTP), CD or DVD, or Zip or Floppy Disk

Part Three describes guidelines to be considered *before* designing a DTP. The authors introduce the Digital Teaching Portfolio Commandments, which include, "If it is nice, save it thrice" and "Protect the privacy of your students and colleagues." In this section, several design tools are reviewed, including HyperStudio, Acrobat, and e-Portfolio. Also included is a discussion of factors that influence the selection of a design tool, such as availability of tool and difficulty of use, and an elaboration on hardware and other production tools, such as multimedia computers, scanners, digital cameras, and mass storage devices (e.g., SCSI drives, CD-RW, and DVD-R). This chapter resembles a short computer lesson and may be redundant for those who are already computer savvy. The book's final chapter presents principles of graphic design such as contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity.

Overall, this handbook is well-structured, well-written, and highly organized. Readers can locate topics of interest with ease, thanks, in part, to the chapter summaries that have been provided. Some readers may dislike the way in which the book resembles a textbook: each chapter contains a "Check Your Understanding" section with review questions, which adds to the coherence of the book but does not seem appropriate for a reference book. Instead of being studied cover-to cover, the book should be perused for its many relevant tips, resources, and activities. Not only is it a terrific reference book, it is a workbook of sorts as well. There are several Activity sections that provide the reader with the opportunity to practice using the information s/he has just learned. This "hands-on" approach is effective and applicable to individuals at all levels of teaching experience, regardless of discipline.