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## The teaching portfolio project: An evaluative case study of a portfolio-based approach to the development of university teaching

Martijntje M. Kulski  
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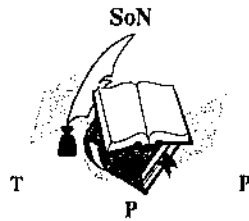
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**THE**  
**TEACHING PORTFOLIO PROJECT**



**Marijntje M. Kulski**

## USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

**The Teaching Portfolio Project:  
An evaluative case study of a portfolio-based  
approach to the development of university  
teaching.**

by

**Martijntje Marijke Kulski**  
B. Sc. (Hons.) M. Psych.

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the  
Requirements for the Award of  
Doctor of Philosophy

At the Faculty of Education, Edith Cowan University, Churchlands.

November, 2000

## **Abstract**

This study on the use of teaching portfolios arose from a number of converging trends and policy initiatives within the higher education sector that led to demands for the improvement of, and a more reflective and scholarly approach to, university teaching. In Australia, and overseas, institutions have responded to these demands by implementing teaching development and evaluation programs for academic staff that are based on the use of portfolios.

A teaching portfolio is essentially a documentary record of selected aspects of a teacher's work across a range of instructional settings. According to some proponents, portfolios can capture the complexity of university teaching in a manner that is both discipline-based and context-specific and thus offer advantages over traditional approaches to teaching appraisal and improvement. However, as portfolios are a relatively recent phenomenon in higher education, their increasing use for both summative and formative evaluation of higher education staff raises a number of questions and concerns.

Against this background, the present study explored the role of teaching portfolios in the professional development of academic staff and the appraisal and improvement of teaching quality. It did so through an evaluative case study of a Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP) that involved the planning, implementation and evaluation of a Staff Development Program (SDP) for academic staff in the School of Nursing at Curtin University of Technology. Stufflebeam's CIPP

evaluation model, comprising discrete context, input, process and product evaluations, provided the framework for informing the design of the SDP and for a comprehensive investigation of the issues surrounding the use of teaching portfolios in a university setting.

The study has shed substantial light on the usefulness of portfolio-based approaches to teaching development. The findings show that with careful planning and appropriate resources a portfolio-based staff development program can be successfully implemented in a university department and point the way to introducing similar initiatives across the university. They also provide insight into how portfolio preparation may be integrated with existing institutional practices for teaching improvement and appraisal, and how portfolios can be adapted to document teaching across a range of instructional settings.

Taken together, the findings of the present study demonstrate that the process of portfolio preparation provides a useful approach to the appraisal and improvement of university teaching and can be a powerful and engaging strategy for academic staff development. The findings further demonstrate that the preparation of a portfolio can facilitate reflective teaching practice and improvement, and that group-based approaches can promote a collegial discourse for teaching development. Whilst the findings of the TPP show that portfolio use in higher education appears to fulfil its early promise, they also highlight areas that will require further investigation.



## Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- (i) incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
- (ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text;
- (iii) contain any defamatory material.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date 5th March 2001

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First, I acknowledge with gratitude my supervisor Dr Rod Chadbourne who exemplifies all the attributes of an excellent teacher. His knowledge and enthusiasm for the discipline, his timely and constructive feedback, as well as his commitment to scholarly values, life long learning, and ethical and responsible professional practice, are exemplary and inspirational. Thank you Rod.

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## **List of Acronyms**

AAHE	American Association for Higher Education
AV-CC	Australian Vice-chancellors Committee
ASD	Academic Staff Development
CASD	Coordinator of Academic Staff Development
CAUT	Canadian Association of University Teachers
CEA	Centre for Educational Advancement, Curtin
CIPP	Stufflebeam's Context, Input, Process, Product, Evaluation Model
DEET	Department of Employment, Education and Training
DEETYA	Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs
FAUSA	Federation of Australian University Staff Association
HERDSA	Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia
HOS	Head of School
SDP	Staff Development Program
SON	School of Nursing, Curtin
SEDA	Staff and Educational Development Association
TLG	Teaching Learning Group, Curtin
TPP	Teaching Portfolio Project.



## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

*The development of academic and general staff competencies and levels of achievement is essential if the University is to raise its overall levels of performance. The 1994 Quality Review Report indicates general support for current staff development practices and sees them as a developing strength of the University. However, the Report also points to a variety of areas where staff development will be critical to the success or otherwise of the University's efforts to achieve continuous improvement.*

*With the Report's comments and suggestions as background, it is timely for the University to revise and extend its staff development strategy, focusing particularly on areas where the documented need for change is greatest. To this end, Divisions and Branches and other interested parties are invited to nominate one or more projects which they will undertake and promulgate as part of an overall University staff development strategy. (Application Form, Quality Funding 1995-1996, Curtin University of Technology)*

### INTRODUCTION

The rationale and aims of grants for University based staff development projects quoted above (Curtin University of Technology, 1995), provides an insight into the *Zeitgeist* prevailing in the Australian higher education sector when I embarked on the study described in this thesis. A project grant from these University quality funds provided me with some of the resources necessary for undertaking a project on teaching portfolios that forms the basis of this research. Moreover, the inception, design, implementation and evaluation of a staff development program

based on teaching portfolios, detailed in the following chapters, demonstrates that such a program may be "critical to the success or otherwise of the University's efforts to achieve continuous improvement" in the teaching performance of its academic staff (Curtin University of Technology, 1995).

This study was undertaken during a period of dramatic change in the Australian higher education sector, a period that demanded innovative responses from those seeking to meet the challenges reflected in the *Zeitgeist* that predominated in the mid 1990s (Armove, Altbach & Kelly, 1992). Diversification, massification and corporatisation of the higher education sector, which commenced under Federal Government reforms introduced in the 1980's, had begun to take effect by the mid 1990s, leading to a national agenda of reforms of the teaching and learning environment within universities (Altbach, 1991). This agenda included calls for the professionalisation of university teaching and an emphasis on reflective practice and teaching scholarship hitherto unseen in the sector (Warner & Palfreyman, 1996). The impact of these changes on Curtin University of Technology, which provided the backdrop for this study, is reflected in both the language and sentiments expressed in the rationale and aims for the University quality grants.

The rationale for the University's quality funded project grants and the present study, then, serve to illustrate some emergent trends in the higher education sector as promulgated in the academic literature and in various reports and policy statements. One such report, *Quality and Diversity in the 1990's*, by a former

Minister for Higher Education and Employment Services, Peter Baldwin, placed quality assurance on top of the Australian higher education agenda (Baldwin, 1991). In his report, Baldwin asserted the need for universities to reward good teaching, and for the government to provide incentives for institutions to enhance the quality of their teaching. Another trend was a move towards decentralised, collaborative approaches to the provision of staff development services. For example, Brew (1995) and Ramsden, Margetson, Martin and Clarke (1995), advocated a devolved approach to professional development of teaching, which takes account of the distinctive culture and values that prevail in university settings, and taps into the collegial nature of academic staff work.

Thus, the study described in this thesis was undertaken on a wave of unprecedented transformation in higher education, which continues to impact on the sector. In order to stay on top of this wave, the implementation of successful practices for documenting and enhancing teaching quality is of vital importance. Higher education administrators are therefore giving increased attention to approaches based on teaching portfolios, as they seek ways to appraise and improve teaching in their university's in a manner which is acceptable to academic staff and consistent with a universities' ethos.

The Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP), that provides the basis for this thesis, arose from the confluence of trends referred to above. The overarching aim of the research was to explore the use of teaching portfolios in the professional development of university teachers. The Project (TPP) was undertaken in the

School of Nursing at Curtin University of Technology. It was partly funded from the University's Staff Development Quality Funds which, as mentioned previously, focussed "particularly on areas where the documented need for change is greatest" (Curtin University of Technology, 1995).

This introductory chapter contextualises the study, defines some key terms, and provides an insight into the major trends in higher education policy development that have impacted on university teaching and the professional development of academic staff. The chapter also addresses the purpose of the research, as well as outlining the main research questions, the significance and purpose of the study, and the structure of the thesis.

## STUDY SETTING

In 1995, the Australian higher education system comprised 36 universities that were publicly funded by the federal government within a Unified National System (UNS). Curtin University of Technology is one of four public universities in the state of Western Australia. Named after John Curtin, an Australian prime-minister from 1941 to 1945, this former college of advanced education attained university status in 1987. At the time of the present study the University comprised a main campus located on 112 hectares in Bentley, ten kilometres from Perth, the State capital, and two branch campuses at Muresk and Kalgoorlie. Curtin offers more than 365 courses to approximately 24,000 students at undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral levels. It has a divisional structure

composed of four teaching divisions, three academic support divisions and two branches. The present study was set in the School of Nursing, within the Division of Health Sciences at Curtin. Further details of the study setting are provided in chapter three.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The Teaching Portfolio Project described in this thesis sought in broad terms to explore portfolio use and examine the effectiveness of teaching portfolios as a strategy for teaching development. The Project evolved from a perceived need expressed in the academic literature (E. Anderson, 1993; Boyer, 1990; Edgerton, Hutchings, & Quinlan, 1991; Wolf, 1991b), in Federal Government policy and planning documents (Aulich Committee, 1990; Baldwin, 1991), in various published reports (Baker, 1995; Ramsden, et al., 1995) and my<sup>1</sup> observations of the workplace in the School of Nursing (SON) at Curtin University of Technology (CUT). Recommendations for the use of portfolios for teaching development purposes have come from a number of different quarters within the higher education sector and portfolios were heralded as having great promise as a professional development strategy (Anderson, 1993; Boileau, 1993; Boyer, 1990; Centra, 1994; Edgerton et al., 1991; Federation of Australian University Staff Association, 1987; Gibbs, 1992; Knapper, 1995; Neumann, 1994; Ramsden et al.,

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<sup>1</sup> At the time this study was undertaken the researcher was employed as a lecturer, and Head of Department of Behavioural Health Sciences, in the School of Nursing at Curtin University of Technology.

1995; Richlin, 1995; Seldin & Annis, 1991; Shore et al., 1980; Urbach, 1992; Wolf, 1991b).

However, as with any innovation, numerous questions regarding the use of portfolios require consideration. Clarification of the portfolio concept itself is necessary because, as indicated below, the term 'teaching portfolio' can mean different things to different people. Other questions range from basic issues such as what should be included in a portfolio, to broader concerns such as the impact of portfolio construction on teaching practices and how portfolio use may relate to institutional teaching development policies and practices.

In this respect, an exploratory investigation using a descriptive case study approach to evaluate portfolio use in a naturalistic setting was deemed appropriate for the present investigation. This type of study enabled me to explore portfolio use 'in practice' thus contextualising the findings in a manner not accommodated in other approaches. Moreover, it was considered that a qualitative evaluation study would provide insights into portfolio-based professional development of teaching and information on which to base decisions regarding portfolio use. The evaluative case study described in this thesis, therefore, sheds light on some of the pitfalls, possibilities, and promise associated with the use of teaching portfolios for the professional development of academic staff.

The dual purpose of this study, then, was (a) to further our understanding of teaching portfolios and their use for various purposes, and (b) to determine the

effectiveness of a portfolio-based approach for the enhancement of university teaching and the pedagogical expertise of academic staff.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

Three concepts of central importance in this thesis are 'teaching portfolios', 'educational evaluation' and 'professional or staff development'. A preliminary definition of these terms follows, whilst further clarification of the terminology is provided in the literature review in chapter two.

### **Teaching Portfolios**

The literature on portfolios indicates a lack of clarity in the use of the term (portfolio) and considerable diversity in portfolio style and documentation (Anderson, 1993; Edgerton, Hutchings & Quinlan, 1991; Knapper, 1995; Seldin & Annis, 1991; Tomkinson, 1997). Some writers conceive of portfolios as a collection of teaching artefacts (see for example, Peter Seldin and Associates, 1990; Shore et al., 1980). Others portray a portfolio as a narrative account of teaching practice, or a combination of both artefact reflection and commentary, that is, an annotated collection of teaching materials (Edgerton et al., 1991; Wolf, 1991a). Most definitions stress the importance of including materials from a variety of different sources, often categorised as 'materials from oneself', 'materials from others' and the 'products of teaching' (Knapper, 1995).

When embarking on this investigation I adopted the view of Edgerton, Hutchings and Quinlan (1991) who stated:

So what is a teaching portfolio? In the broadest sense, the teaching portfolio is a container into which many different ideas can be poured. Rather than settle on any fixed view of what the "it" is, we hope that campuses will explore many images of what portfolios might be. (Edgerton et al., 1991, p. 4)

In the context of the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP) the 'container' analogy enabled me to adopt a non-prescriptive approach to portfolio development, and to explore with the participants in the Project differing images of portfolio use in a university setting.

A distinction also needs to be made between portfolios in 'process' and portfolios as 'product'. The process of portfolio construction is often mooted as the most significant contributor to teaching enhancement (see for example, Edgerton et al., 1991) in that the writing of the portfolio document provides a stimulus for thinking about one's teaching. Portfolio development leads staff to reflect on their teaching and adopt Schön's (1983) 'reflective practitioner' approach to their work. At the same time, the final product of portfolio construction (the portfolio documentation) is generally the focus of interest for academic staff and university administrators. These issues will be discussed in greater detail in the literature review. What can be noted here is the ambiguity in the use of the term 'teaching portfolio' and the lack of a generally agreed upon definition of the concept (Tomkinson, 1997).



## Professional Development

Formal professional development of staff in universities has a relatively short history (Cannon, 1983; Webb, 1996), and is characterised by numerous definitions and a variety of approaches. Traditionally, staff development in universities was concerned with educational development, although this brief has broadened in recent years to include other academic roles of administration and research (Moses, 1988). Webb (1996, p. 1) notes that "staff development is normally considered to include the institutional policies, programmes and procedures which facilitate and support staff so that they may fully serve their own and their institutions needs". According to Moses (1988, p. 2), "Self improvement, development of skills, attitudes, knowledge and insight are all part of professional development". Moses (1988) goes on to note that

professional development in a university setting may be defined as all those activities and programs designed to assist staff in meeting the demands of their various roles as teachers, researchers and administrators. (p. 31)

For some years now, the terms 'staff development' and 'professional development' have been used interchangeably. More recently though, the trend has been towards the use of professional development as the preferred term (Moses, 1988; Webb, 1996). In this thesis the terms are used interchangeably although the staff development program undertaken in the context of the present study is referred to as the Staff Development Program or SDP. Further background on academic staff development practices and teaching development strategies are detailed in chapter two of this thesis.

## Educational Evaluation

Once upon a time there was a word. And the word was *evaluation*. And the word was good. Teachers used the word in a particular way. Later on, other people used the word in a different way. After a while, nobody knew for sure what the word meant. But they all knew it was a good word. Evaluation was a thing to be cherished. (Popham, 1988, p. 1)

There are a plethora of approaches to evaluation in education and these are further elaborated in chapter two of this dissertation. As noted above by Popham, the term evaluation is used in different ways. At least two distinct views are apparent from the burgeoning educational literature of the 1980s (House, 1986b). These views can be summarised as being concerned with (a) evaluation to make a judgement of the quality or worth of an educational phenomenon or object, and (b) evaluation as a tool to aid decision-making for the improvement of educational programs or objects (LeCompte, Millroy, & Preissle, 1992). In the context of the present investigation the latter view had greater relevance, and my working definition was based on the Stanford Evaluation Consortium who define evaluation as:

A systematic examination of events occurring in and consequent of a contemporary program -- an examination conducted to assist in improving this program and other programs having the same general purpose. (quoted in Nevo, 1986, p. 16)

It should be noted however, that the evaluation model adopted in this study enabled the examination of circumstances and events **prior** to the commencement of the proposed Staff Development Program (SDP), thus broadening the focus beyond the definition outlined above.

Another distinction in evaluation terminology that has relevance to the present study and which has been more universally adopted by educational researchers is that of Scriven's (1967) distinction between formative and summative evaluation. Briefly, formative evaluation is used "for the improvement and development of an ongoing activity (or program, person, product, etc.)" (Nevo, 1986, p. 17), and summative evaluation is used for "accountability, certification, or selection" (Nevo, 1986, p. 17). When this distinction is applied to portfolios, then, they may be used for formative evaluation purposes (for example, teaching improvement) or summative evaluation purposes (for example, selecting applicants for appointment or teaching awards).

## POLICY TRENDS IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

In the nineteenth century, Newman declared that the university was:

...a place of teaching universal knowledge...[Its object is] the diffusion and extension of knowledge rather than its advancement. If its object were scientific and philosophical discovery, I do not see why a University should have students. (Newman, 1959; as cited in Ramsden et al., 1995, p. 1)

However, throughout most of the twentieth century institutional resources were steadily channelled away from teaching into research activities thus redefining the object of a university and the roles of academic staff. In the meantime, as the debate on the purpose of universities simmered in the background, the pre-eminence of research began to be questioned, and over the past decade the

pendulum has begun to swing towards universities again becoming 'a place of teaching' (Altbach, 1991). These trends in the higher education sector, outlined below, have relevance for the present study in that the 'portfolio movement' was to become an integral part of the reform process in redressing the balance between teaching and research.

"Higher education institutions throughout the western world are under challenge" (Teather, 1979, p. 13). In this pronouncement, Teather (1979) forecast the beginning of two decades of extraordinary worldwide change in universities. He went on to note that:

There is pressure on teachers to improve their courses of studies; to develop effective ways of facilitating students' learning; and to evaluate their own performance as well as that of their students. (Teather, 1979, p. 13)

According to Teather (1979) amongst the conditions challenging the sector at that time were the increased size and diversity of the student body, the changes to community values and expectations, and the emphasis in some universities on activities other than teaching.

These global trends in the higher education sector continued to predominate in the 1980s and led to varying responses from governments and institutional policymakers. The trends also led to the application of a 'new' terminology in the literature on higher education, with the introduction of terms such as rationalisation, equity, diversity, quality, competition, accountability and globalisation. From even a cursory survey of this literature it is apparent that the

'ivory towers' of the traditional universities were being assailed, and that our 'idea' of universities would henceforth never be the same (Gaita, 1997). For example, Nightingale and O'Neil (1994) have outlined the demands for quality assurance in universities in the United Kingdom that followed a 1987 government White Paper. This White Paper forecast the establishment of systems for monitoring university outcomes and the means used for judging the quality of academic standards, teaching and student achievement (Nightingale & O'Neil, 1994). By the early 1990s, issues related to quality had a great deal of currency across the sector.

In London the Centre for Higher Education Studies and Committee of Directors of Polytechnic sponsor a seminar titled 'Implementing Total Quality Management in Higher Education'. In Canberra, the Higher Education Council publishes the final version of its advice to the Minister in a paper titled, 'The Quality of Higher Education'. In the United States publishers race to bring out the next definitive statement on managing quality in higher education. **Quality is the word** (Nightingale & O'Neil, 1994, p. 7, emphasis added).

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore the impact of these trends in detail at an international level. Nevertheless, the following review of the Australian higher education scene must be considered in light of its international context. As Nightingale and O'Neil (1994) point out above, many of the reforms introduced in Australian universities have parallels in other countries, in particular the United States and Great Britain.

In the 1980s, the Australian higher education sector underwent a period of rapid expansion and dramatic change, especially after the release of the Australian Government's 1988 White Paper, and the introduction of a unified national

system (UNS) of higher education (Dawkins, 1988). The intent of *Higher Education: A Policy Statement* (Dawkins, 1988) was to initiate reforms of the sector. This Paper outlined the blueprint for a unified national system of fewer and larger institutions that were to be funded by the Commonwealth based on performance indicators of an institution's performance. Thus, for these 'new' universities, funding was to be provided on the basis of their mission statements and educational profiles. The profile of performance indicators was to include the institution's objectives, teaching and research activities, student loads, and statements of intent on measures to achieve national priorities such as quality and equity (Knight, 1994).

By 1994, the Dawkins 'revolution' had resulted in a substantially expanded provision of higher education places and reduced the number of higher education institutions in Australia to about thirty-five, all of which were now universities and generally much larger institutions (Lingard, Bartlett, Knight, Porter, & Rizvi, 1994). These trends continued during the 1990s, as higher education budget statements signified a consolidation of the Dawkins' (1988) initiatives by restating and adjusting this agenda.

Although these budgets resulted in only minor adjustments to the thrust of the initial Dawkins' policy intentions they continued the trend "towards transforming universities into semi-autonomous but corporate and market-oriented enterprises" (Knight, 1994, p. 41). Moreover, successive budgets in the nineties signalled "the federal government's capacity for policy steering in the higher education sector

with the reduction in public *vis-à-vis* private funds" (Lingard et al., 1994, p. 2). Lingard et al. (1994) go on to note that the tight budgetary environment of the 1990's had the potential to 'disfigure' the traditional functions of universities.

In the meantime, a transformation of the student body in higher education institutions was taking place. This had also been signalled in the White Paper which stated the need "to change the balance of the student body to reflect more closely the structure and composition of the society as a whole" (Dawkins, 1988, p. 21). In 1990, the Government's equity policy and program intentions were spelled out in more detail in *A Fair Chance for All* (Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1990) which linked institutional funding with equity performance targets (Bowen, 1994). The additional higher education places resulting from these expansionary policies were partly funded by increased government spending and partly by the introduction of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS). HECS is a deferred partial user-pay system in which student contributions are collected through the tax system when the student's earnings reach or exceed the level of average weekly earnings (Wran, 1988). Further barriers to student participation and access were removed through a process of partial deregulation of the sector. This enabled institutions to charge full fees to international students and for students in postgraduate professional programs. It was estimated that in many Australian universities international students accounted for over ten per cent of total enrolments in 1993, making the sector both highly internationalised and increasingly dependent on full fee paying students for revenue (Mazzarol & Hosie, 1997).

In summary then, the student body in Australian universities by the mid 1990s was larger, more diverse and more demanding, expecting value for money. This was recognised by the Higher Education Council (HEC) which suggested in *Higher Education: The Challenges Ahead* that the major challenge was to provide "relevant higher education of undisputed quality to a growing and increasingly diverse student body" (Higher Education Council, 1990, p. 5).

The structural changes to the Australian sector decreed in the Dawkins (1988) White Paper have since impacted on both the established and resultant newly formed universities. The reforms have changed the organisational cultures and the teaching-learning environments of these institutions in profound ways. The changes have also raised concerns amongst the various stakeholders in the sector about the value and meaning of a university education (Gaita, 1997).

Some of these concerns have arisen in the Australian higher education sector as a consequence of Government reforms implemented in the late 1980's outlined above, which have resulted in closer scrutiny and accountability of all university activities (Baldwin, 1991). The Dawkins White Paper also foreshadowed a system whereby funding to universities would be allocated on the basis of performance. This has served to re-open the teaching versus research debate, as well as establish the evaluation of teaching firmly on institutional agendas. In October 1991, the Federal Minister for Higher Education, the Hon. Peter Baldwin released a policy statement entitled *Higher Education: Quality and Diversity in the 1990's*. The stated purpose of this paper was "to take stock of the general impact of the White



Paper policies, to respond to new issues that have emerged, and to chart directions for the future" (Baldwin, 1991, p. v). In this statement the Government announced a number of initiatives supported by funding commitments. In the context of the present study, one of the three broad themes addressed in the statement is particularly relevant, that is,

the need for credible quality assurance arrangements for Australia's higher education system, **and for arrangements to systematically reward excellence in teaching as well as research** (Baldwin, 1991, p. 2; emphasis added).

In addition to announcing the establishment of an independent National Centre for Teaching Excellence this policy document also introduced grants to encourage and reward good teaching practices, and for institutional initiatives aimed at enhancing teaching quality (Baldwin, 1991). This served to focus the sector on issues related to the quality of university teaching and student learning, performance indicators related to teaching performance, and the evaluation of teaching in higher education. In this policy statement, Baldwin also foreshadowed his intention to set up a national quality assurance body. This resulted in the establishment of the Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CQAHE). By 1993, Australian universities were invited to participate in a quality review process which involved the preparation of an institutional portfolio containing documentation and evidence of outcomes which would be scrutinised by a team established by the CQAHE (Porter, 1994).

Nightingale & O'Neil (1994) in a comparative analysis of the 'quality movement' in the United Kingdom and Australia have highlighted some of the key issues

associated with these policy thrusts. These include problems associated both with defining and measuring quality, and the importance of adequate resourcing to maintain quality within the system. They concluded that:

if governments (are) ...to achieve their goal of improving higher education, institutions (will)... be pressured into quality enhancement programmes which have wide and substantial impact on staff at all levels within the university. (Nightingale & O'Neil, 1994, p. 26)

During the 1990s, then, when the present study was undertaken, a transformation of higher education in Australia had taken place and there was increasing scrutiny and a renewed interest in improving the quality of university teaching (Ramsden et al., 1995).

## BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

During the period when these events (mentioned above) were unfolding, I was a lecturer in the School of Nursing teaching behavioural science to students in the Division of Health Science at Curtin. In 1995, I was appointed Head of the Department of Behavioural Health Science, which at that time comprised ten academic staff with backgrounds in psychology, sociology and anthropology. The appointment to departmental Head provided an impetus and opportunity for reflection, and the adoption of new administrative roles and tasks, including the responsibility for teaching development within the Department. From the perspective of an area Head, I became increasingly aware of the forces of change impacting on the sector as these filtered through to the 'chalk-face'. The genesis of the study then, lay in my own desire to understand the changes impacting on

both the Department, the School of Nursing (SON) and the University, and to adapt to new roles and duties as a Head of Department.

These circumstances led to the qualitative case study of a Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP) described in this thesis. The TPP encompassed the inception, design, implementation and evaluation of a Staff Development Program (SDP) based on teaching portfolios, within the methodological framework of the CIPP model of evaluation (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1985). A central premise of the CIPP evaluation model, which is more fully explicated below and in subsequent chapters, is the notion that the most important purpose of evaluation is to guide decision-making in program development. The CIPP model comprises four distinct evaluations, namely context, input, process and product (hence the acronym CIPP), each of which was undertaken in the course of this study. The data from these evaluations were gathered through participant observation, structured interviews, audiotapes of group discussions, surveys, questionnaires, and the collation of relevant documentation.

The Staff Development Program (SDP) entailed two groups of seven academic staff from the School of Nursing working collaboratively on portfolio development. As a researcher, who also acted as manager of the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP), I facilitated the group sessions which were conducted fortnightly over fourteen weeks.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The overarching aim of the research was to explore the role that teaching portfolios might play in the development of teaching in a university setting. The Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP) which provided the basis of the study described in this thesis, was undertaken in the School of Nursing (SON) at Curtin University of Technology. The central research questions of this thesis can be stated as follows:

How useful are teaching portfolios for teaching development purposes in a university context?

What are the outcomes and benefits for academic staff and universities of a professional development program based on the preparation of a teaching portfolio?

As outlined previously, the CIPP model of program evaluation provided the framework for investigating these questions. CIPP comprises four distinct but related evaluations, namely, context, input, process, and product. Each evaluation then, addressed certain aspects of the central research questions as follows:

### 1. Context

- a) What needs for improved practices in universities for teaching appraisal and development purposes are existent and could approaches based on portfolios potentially meet these needs?
- b) What is the extent of interest and demand amongst academic staff in the School of Nursing and other university stakeholders for a professional development program based on teaching portfolios?

- c) What opportunities are there for the implementation of a portfolio based professional development program within the School of Nursing?

## **2. Input**

- a) What program design may best serve the needs for teaching development within the School of Nursing?
- b) What resources are available for implementing a professional development program at Curtin and in the School of Nursing?

## **3. Process**

- a) Was the professional development program implemented according to plan?
- b) To what extent were the objectives of the program met, and how satisfied were participants with program activities?

## **4. Product**

- a) What were the outcomes and effects of the TPP and the staff development program?
- b) What recommendations can be made with regard to further portfolio based professional development programs and activities?

The criteria for what constitutes 'useful' were framed in terms of the context, input, process and product evaluation questions. This means that the adoption of teaching portfolios may be judged to be useful if:

- (a) within context, the use of portfolios addresses an important and pervasive need, and proves to be an improvement over existing practices for teaching development;
- (b) the procedural design for implementing the program is rated potentially more feasible and effective than alternative designs for addressing the needs identified in (a);
- (c) in practice, the procedural design for implementing the program proves to be practical and achievable; and
- (d) the outcomes of the program meet the needs of the stakeholders they are intended to serve.

The evaluation questions and the criteria were further refined and developed over the course of the study. In this regard, a report which identified and validated criteria for staff development programs using the CIPP model was a useful reference (Hekimian, 1984). Thus, the central research questions provided the broader framework from within which more specific questions were drawn for each of the context, input, process and product evaluations to inform both decision-making for program development and to address the TPP's central questions. Furthermore, findings from each evaluation led to further questions for subsequent evaluations, in accordance with the iterative nature of the CIPP model. These questions are delineated in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The literature suggests that the use of portfolios is an improvement over existing strategies for both formative and summative teaching evaluation purposes. For example, numerous writers claim that portfolios may be a useful approach for teaching development (Anderson, 1993; Boileau, 1993; Edgerton, et al., 1991; Federation of Australian University Staff Association, 1987; Neumann, 1994; Seldin & Associates, 1990). They also suggest that portfolio based approaches have the potential to overcome some of the problems inherent in traditional approaches to the appraisal of university teaching.

// As detailed in chapter two, many universities rely predominantly on narrowly based teaching appraisal measures, such as the sole use of student evaluations of teaching or student pass rates. Portfolios are thought to offer an advance over existing methods of measuring teaching performance by providing a more holistic and comprehensive overview of teaching quality (Anderson, 1993; Edgerton et al., 1991; Lally & Myhill, 1994; Neumann, 1994). In addition, it is noted that teaching portfolios offer a 'bottom-up' approach to developing institutional quality portfolios, in that they may be used on an individual basis, leading to a course, departmental or school portfolio and eventually to institutional portfolios (Anderson, 1993; Braskamp & Ory, 1994; Edgerton et al., 1991). When viewed in the context of the trends prevailing in the higher education sector outlined above, it is perhaps not surprising that university administrators seeking new ways of

reviewing teaching performance were drawn to the use of portfolio-based approaches.

There is now a large literature on how to compile a portfolio (Seldin & Associates, 1991; Seldin, 1997; Shore, et al., 1980; Urbach, 1992; Richlin, 1995; Gibbs, 1992; Federation of Australian University Staff Association, 1987). However, there have been few systematic investigations of portfolio use or evaluations of portfolio-based staff development programs. The few accounts of portfolio programs in the literature to date have tended to be anecdotal and based in the United States (Anderson, 1993; Edgerton et al., 1991; Richlin, 1995). Moreover, these accounts are from the perspective of university administrators rather than from the 'coal-face' or the perspective of academic staff. Although there are some parallels between the sectors in the United States and Australia, the teaching development policies and practices within Australian universities are sufficiently different to warrant the investigation undertaken in the present study. Furthermore, there is clearly a need for research to determine the efficacy of portfolio programs in teaching development and this has hitherto received little attention from educational researchers.

In light of the paucity of empirical evidence to support claims made by advocates of portfolios, their enthusiasm must therefore be viewed with some caution. This is particularly true in the present climate of increasing demands for accountability, increasing pressures associated with academic work, and the subsequent low morale amongst academic staff across the sector (Neumann, 1994; Ramsden et al.,



1995; University Academic Board, 1996). Academic staff can become cynical and understandably apprehensive when there are calls for appraisal of or improvements in their work. In the absence of systematic investigations of the portfolio concept, staff could not be expected to develop portfolios for instructional improvement, much less accept the use of portfolios in decision-making that may affect their careers.

Thus, the evaluative case study of the Teaching Portfolio Project described in this thesis was developed in response to emerging and significant needs with respect to the improvement and recognition of university teaching. The findings have relevance for teaching development practices at a number of levels. At the institutional level, universities need to have systems in place for the continuous review and monitoring of teaching performance, as well as staff development practices which can be demonstrated to improve the quality of teaching. At the level of university schools and departments, these needs have to be translated into systems and practices that are both discipline-based and context-specific (Neumann, 1994). Finally, for academic staff, practices for teaching appraisal and staff development should be seen as relevant and responsive to their personal and professional needs.

The Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP) addressed a number of these concerns. For example, it examined the design, implementation and evaluation of a portfolio-based Staff Development Program (SDP) that offered the prospect of providing an innovative approach to the development of university teaching in a collegial and

collaborative setting (Anderson, 1993; Mullins & Cannon, 1992; Ramsden et al., 1995; Seldin, 1980). The findings of this study have the potential to enhance decision making at the departmental or school level with respect to the efficacy or otherwise of the staff development program. Moreover, they can help determine the future direction of professional development activities that focus on teaching quality. They can also aid decision making at the institutional level with respect to the introduction of similar programs in other schools and departments within the University. Finally, the findings have relevance for academic staff, institutional managers and administrators, and policy developers, across the higher education sector.

## STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This chapter has provided an overview of the policy developments and key events occurring in the Australian higher education sector which led to the development of the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP). Chapter one has also outlined the rationale, significance and purpose of the research.

In chapter two of this thesis relevant literature on academic work, university teaching, the professional development of academic staff, and educational evaluation is reviewed, and the conceptual framework of the study is outlined. Chapter three provides details of the setting for the case study and describes the methodology used for data collection and analysis. The next four chapters describe the main findings from each of the four evaluations undertaken in this

study. Each of these chapters also provides a preliminary discussion of implications arising from the findings which are then related to previous evaluations. Thus, chapter four outlines the context findings which include an assessment of the need for teaching portfolios and portfolio-based staff development programs. Chapter five contains findings on barriers, resources and opportunities for program development and identifies alternative strategies to determine the most appropriate procedural design for the program. In chapter six the conduct of the program is analysed and procedural activities and events are described and assessed. The outcomes of the Teaching Portfolio Project are described in chapter seven, and these are related to the aims of the study and previous evaluations. Finally, in chapter eight there is a critique of the study methods and an integrative discussion of the main findings from the context, input, process and product evaluations, as well as a discussion of the implications of the findings and suggestions for further research.

## Chapter Two

### LITERATURE REVIEW

*First, portfolios can capture the intellectual substance and "situatedness" of teaching in ways that other methods of evaluation cannot. Second, because of this capacity, portfolios encourage faculty to take important, new roles in the documentation, observation, and review of teaching. Third, because they prompt faculty to take these new roles, portfolios are a particularly powerful tool for improvement. Fourth, as more faculty come to use them, portfolios can help forge a new campus culture of professionalism about teaching. (Edgerton, Hutchings, & Quinlan, 1991, p. 4)*

### INTRODUCTION

The present study arose from a number of converging trends and policy initiatives within the higher education sector that were detailed in chapter one of this thesis. These reforms called into question the nature of academic work and challenged the traditional approaches to university teaching. Calls for improvements in the quality of teaching, academic staff accountability, the encouragement of reflective practice, and the notion of a scholarship of teaching were amongst these developments. Moreover, these trends translated to a perceived need for innovations in the development of university teaching, leading to the introduction of approaches based on portfolio use and the research described in this thesis. The focus of this evaluative case study was a Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP) undertaken in the School of Nursing (SON) between June 1995 and June 1997. The TPP encompassed the development, design, implementation and evaluation

of a portfolio-based Staff Development Program (SDP) in the second semester of 1996.

The study was designed to enable issues related to portfolio use to be explored '*in situ*' and in practice. The Project was partly funded by the University's Quality Funds made available for School-based projects as part of Curtin University's devolved staff development strategy. The Project's aim was to explore the role of teaching portfolios in the professional development of academic staff, and the appraisal and improvement of teaching quality. The Project findings have relevance for stakeholders in the School of Nursing, Curtin University and others in the higher education sector.

### **Chapter Overview**

As outlined above, the study described in this thesis is concerned with the development of teaching through the use of teaching portfolios and arose from a confluence of issues under debate in the sector. In the present chapter, the literature relevant to this debate and the central research question will be reviewed. Thus, literature germane to academic work, university teaching and the professional development of academic staff, as well as literature pertinent to the methodology employed in the research is reviewed. Furthermore, the 'portfolio movement' is placed in its historical context, and the promise and pitfalls of approaches to professional development based on portfolio construction is surveyed.

The aim is to provide the reader with a broad overview of the relevant literature and to contextualise the research. Certain aspects of this literature are further elaborated in subsequent chapters of this thesis. Thus, in chapter three the methodology of the study is described. Moreover, in accordance with the CIPP approach to evaluation, a more specific analysis of literature and documentation relevant to the informational needs of the Teaching Portfolio Project is described in chapters four and five. In this regard, the review of literature is an integral part of the procedural design of the study, as detailed in chapter three.

## ACADEMIC WORK

Traditionally, research and teaching have been the primary functions of universities. However, for academic staff in universities, the emphasis in terms of recruitment, tenure and promotion has historically been on their research activities and achievements (Altbach, 1991; Boileau, 1993; Boyer, 1990; Braskamp & Ory, 1994). Consequently, university policies and practices have tended to foster and reward research, arguably at the expense of good teaching practice. University academics have also tended to perceive themselves primarily as researchers and experts in their discipline, a point not lost on their students. For example, a submission by the Postgraduate Students' Association at the University of Adelaide to the Aulich Committee (1990) stated that:

While there are some excellent teachers within the university system, the general perception by students is that most of their tutors/lecturers are inadequate teachers. (1990, p. 48)

This point was reinforced by other submissions to the Committee. Thus, Dr. Jack Gray of the University of New South Wales (1990) submitted that:

one of the most serious weaknesses of Australian universities is their failure to identify, describe, support, encourage and reward excellence in teaching. (Aulich Committee, 1990, p. 48)

The Aulich Committee's report, *Priorities for Reform in Higher Education*, identified a number of systemic problems inherent in the sector, including concerns with the recruitment and retention of academic staff and the status and quality of university teaching. The Aulich Committee (1990) made a number of recommendations including:

...that the promotion of good teaching within higher education institutions be designated a national priority area. (p. 65)

The literature on higher education at this time was replete with similar observations and conclusions as those arising from the Aulich Committee report (see for example, Anwyl, Balla, & McInnes, 1991; Baldwin, 1991; Boyer, 1990; Higher Education Council, 1990). It was evident that the dual functions of research and teaching that characterise the missions of modern universities and comprise the work of the academic profession were perceived to be in a precarious state of balance early in the 1990s.

Throughout their history the function of universities has been to teach (Boyer, 1990; Ramsden, et al., 1995), and it is "only in the last hundred years that research has become the driving force of the university" (Ramsden et al., 1995, p. 1). However, more recently, the global reforms of the higher education sector detailed in chapter one, have called into question the appropriateness of the ascendancy of

research over teaching, and have led to a renewed interest in university teaching and the nature of faculty roles and rewards.

A seminal work in this debate was the late Ernest Boyer's (1990) *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. Boyer (1990) argued for a reconceptualisation of academic work and proposed that it comprised four distinct scholarships:

- the scholarship of discovery (undertaking original research and the advancement of knowledge);
- the scholarship of integration (the connection and synthesis of ideas across disciplinary boundaries);
- the scholarship of application (the interaction of theory and practice in service to 'real world' problems); and,
- the scholarship of teaching (the transformation of knowledge between the teacher's understanding and the student's learning) (Boyer, 1990).

Boyer envisaged these four scholarships as encapsulating the essence of academic work. He argued a strong case for a more holistic view of academic work and the need for the status of teaching to be raised in universities. He noted that if teaching were to be considered equal to research it should be "vigorously assessed, using criteria that we recognise within the academy, not just a single institution" (Boyer, 1990, p. 37). Boyer acknowledged some of the problems associated with evaluating teaching and proposed the use of evidence from different sources such as self, peers and students. Of interest in the context of the present study, is that Boyer (1990) also stressed the importance of documenting



academic work, especially teaching, through the use of innovative strategies based on portfolios.

When it comes to pulling all the evidence together, we are impressed by the *portfolio* idea – a procedure that encourages faculty to document their work in a variety of ways. A faculty member could choose the form of scholarship around which a portfolio might be developed. (Boyer, 1990, p. 41)

It could be suggested that Boyer's views on academic work are 'traditionalist' and perhaps somewhat idealistic, and may therefore not necessarily have relevance to the experiences of the modern day academic in times of volatile change. However, Boyer's analysis of academic work served to synthesise a number of issues arising from the global reforms of the sector detailed in chapter one, and provided direction and focus to the ongoing debate.

Overall, Boyer's report gave new meaning to academic work and was to have a profound impact on the sector. His views of scholarship have since been reflected and incorporated in the mission statements and strategic plans of numerous universities both in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. As Ramsden (1998) notes, "I believe that Boyer's message is even more true today across the Atlantic and the Pacific" (p. 184). Boyer, then, laid the groundwork for changing the conceptions of academic work and the acceptance of portfolios as a procedure for documenting this work. He also paved the way for the development of a framework to improve the status and profile of teaching in universities.

## UNIVERSITY TEACHING

Despite a vast literature on research in teaching we are still a long way from understanding the teaching process (Dunkin, 1986; Shulman, 1986). Research into teaching is a complex endeavour because teaching is complex,

involving many variables, variations and subtleties not always readily recognised or acknowledged outside the educational research community. ... In the teaching process, variables include subject area; class size and level; student background, motivation and ability; teacher personality, motivation and intellectual styles as well as a variety of departmental and institutional influences. (Neumann, 1994, p. 8)

Historically, university teaching has been viewed as quite distinct from teaching in other education sectors and academic staff have generally not viewed themselves primarily as teachers (Moses, 1988). The dual objectives of teaching and research explicit in a university's mission provide a teaching context unlike other learning environments, and require academic staff to balance the sometimes competing demands of these two functions. Moreover, higher education institutions offer unique teaching environments, and therefore appraisal and improvement of university teaching pose particular challenges for researchers, administrators and academic staff developers.

Universities differ in several characteristic ways from learning institutions in other sectors (Lally & Myhill, 1994). These differences emerge from the nature of the context in which teaching takes place, the teaching staff and the student population. As global reforms of the sector take effect, the 'traditional' approach to university teaching based on large class lectures accompanied by small group

tutorials and/or laboratories, is giving way to innovative, electronic delivery modes and the expansion of flexible and distance learning (Fraser & Deane, 1997; Mazzarol & Hosie, 1997). Until recently,

Higher education within Australia has tended to follow the British "tutorial model" with students presenting their ideas and having in-depth face to face discussions. Whatever the effectiveness of this method, it is labour-intensive and has been placed under severe strain in some faculties. (Mazzarol & Hosie, 1997, p. 23)

As pointed out by Mazzarol and Hosie (1997) the traditional approaches to university teaching are under strain as class sizes have increased, resulting in a need for teaching practices that can be 'packaged' and delivered to mass audiences on demand. Increasingly, university administrators are turning to the use of information technology and other methods of flexible delivery as a means of doing 'more with less'.

The new information technologies offer this option and have received support from governments seeking to expand access without increasing expenditure. (Mazzarol & Hosie, 1997, p. 23)

Thus, with the spectre of 'virtual' universities on the horizon, academics are being asked to re-assess and adapt their teaching practices, against a backdrop of dwindling resources, larger classes and increasing numbers of part-time or casual teaching staff (Neumann, 1994). To deal with these concerns Coaldrake (1995) suggests that some of our traditional thinking about the way teaching is organised in universities will have to change. For example, he notes that larger classes may not necessarily provide formula-driven increases in infrastructure to support teaching, such as staff or instructional facilities. He goes on to suggest that in

order to find solutions to these emerging problems institutions may need to consider,

...funding development projects which focus on how the quality of the learning environment can be maintained and enhanced given the entirely altered teaching modes, different staff needs and transformed space requirement (that are) continually emerging. (Coaldrake, 1995, p. 39)

Demands for change, then, are coming from various sources and are forcing academic staff to redefine their roles and to reinvent themselves. Recent surveys seeking the views of academic staff on workloads and work patterns have shown that academics are working longer hours and are spending less time on research relative to other academic pursuits (McInnes, 1992; McInnes, 1996). They also report increased time spent on other activities such as quality assurance tasks, staff development and appraisal, and alternative modes of delivery (McInnes, 1992; McInnes, 1996). Moreover, these changes are accompanied by decreased staff morale, an increase in reported stress levels, and the declining status of academic work (Ramsden, 1998).

Academic staff in universities differ from teachers in other sectors in that the majority have had no formal teacher training, and, in addition to their teaching duties, they are expected to undertake administrative, research and consultancy work. Furthermore, university lecturers consider "themselves a breed apart from school teachers" (Kember, 1998, p. 4), and see themselves in terms of their professional affiliations or academic disciplines. Kember (1998) points out that academic staff tend to see their role in teaching as being concerned with

conveying disciplinary or professional knowledge to their students, unlike school teachers who envisage teaching as student-centred and learning oriented. As Weimer (1990) notes, university teachers hold a number of flawed assumptions about teaching including the notion that 'if you know it you can teach it'. She argues that:

the equating of content mastery with instructional effectiveness inhibits instructional improvement because it makes teaching an activity without form or substance in its own right. (Weimer, 1990, p. 5)

Weimer (1990) further asserts that the allegiance of academic staff to the content of their discipline area is another barrier to effective teaching. That is, with the explosion of knowledge, discipline content grows exponentially placing pressure on academic staff to teach more and more content. Moreover, although staff readily espouse the importance of teaching generic skills such as critical thinking to students, few spend time in class developing these skills (Weimer, 1990). It becomes apparent from reviews of the large literature on university teaching (see for example, Biggs, 1999; Ramsden, 1992) that academic staff are often not meeting the needs of the students they teach.

The students who enter higher education also differ in important respects from students in other education sectors. Traditionally, they comprised those in the upper range of cognitive ability in the population, and were assumed to be competent, adult learners (Lally & Myhill, 1994). However, as noted in chapter one, the expansionary policies of the Dawkins' era has resulted in a larger, more diverse, and more demanding student body. Now, the proportion of school leavers

in higher education has risen in some areas to over 40 percent from around 15 percent 10 years ago (Biggs, 1999). Moreover,

the brightest and most committed students will still be there, as they have been in the past, but they will sit alongside students of rather different academic bent. The *range* of ability within classes is now considerable. (Biggs, 1999, p. 1)

Apart from the range of ability of students entering universities, the student body is also more diverse in other ways. Thus, increasing numbers of mature age students are entering the system, as are students from diverse cultural backgrounds and from different socio-economic groups (Lingard, Bartlett, Knight, Porter, & Rizvi, 1994). Moreover, as the costs to students of obtaining a university education continue to rise they demand quality in teaching echoing the calls from policy makers, institutional administrators and other stakeholders in the sector.

### **Quality in University Teaching**

Questions of what constitutes quality in teaching, how quality should be measured, and who should evaluate teaching quality, are pivotal issues across all education sectors (Ashcroft, 1995). If, as proposed in the reform initiatives described above, academic staff need to improve their performance and universities should reward and foster enhanced quality in teaching, then it is essential that we define quality teaching and recognise teaching excellence. A

review of the literature on the appraisal of teaching would indicate that this is easier said than done (Ashcroft, 1995; Popham, 1993). Indeed, it has been argued that teaching is a complex activity requiring intellectual, imaginative and behavioural processes (Shulman, 1987), that judgements of teaching quality are at best subjective (Loder, Clayton, Murray, Cox, & Schofield, 1989), and that good teaching can take a variety of forms (Anderson, 1993; Edgerton et al., 1991).

In attempting to describe quality teachers and teaching in higher education researchers have taken two main approaches (Neumann, 1994). One approach involves studying teachers who have been identified as excellent teachers and describing the attributes or characteristics of this group. The other approach focuses on the use of student evaluations of teaching. Both approaches are reflected in a report from the Higher Education Council (HEC) on the quality of teaching in the higher education system in Australia (Higher Education Council, 1992). The HEC report outlined the generic attributes of good teachers described in the literature and reported widespread support for the evaluation of tertiary teaching by means of student evaluations. However, the report qualifies support for the latter approach by noting that student evaluations have their limitations and do not necessarily capture all of the attributes demonstrated by good university teachers (Higher Education Council, 1992). Neumann (1994) states that both approaches have their drawbacks and limitations. She argues that

deeper evaluation of teaching takes into account more fully the content and context of teaching, thus allowing for the complexities of the teaching process, and is by necessity judged by peers. (Neumann, 1994, p. 11)

This view has gained support from others. For example, Lally and Myhill (1994) point out that in using student ratings alone other important aspects of teaching are ignored, and there are indications that factors such as class size or discipline area could bias the ratings. These authors recommend that recognition and validation should be given to the full range of activities and contexts that constitute teaching in universities, and more attention should be given to developing instruments other than student rating forms to determine the quality of teaching (Lally & Myhill, 1994). Boileau (1993), moreover, asserts institutions relying solely on student appraisal to determine the teaching effectiveness of staff are merely paying lip service to the importance the institution places on teaching. Ashcroft (1995) also takes up this point, stating:

A performance indicator that has been used for a long time is the extent of student satisfaction (with teaching). The questionable assumption underlying this performance indicator is that high student satisfaction equates with high quality and standards. (p. 50)

Nevertheless, there is now a large literature on student evaluation of teaching and some consensus that student ratings are reliable, relevant and adequately valid measures of certain aspects of teaching effectiveness and therefore an important source of information on teaching quality (Lally & Myhill, 1994). Information about other significant aspects of good teaching such as mastery of subject matter, appropriateness of assessment tasks, and contributions to curriculum development, must be derived from other sources (Boileau, 1993; Cashin, 1990; Lally & Myhill, 1994; Ramsden et al., 1995). However, as Lally & Myhill (1994), point out, although several alternatives to student ratings exist, including peer and alumni ratings and direct observation of teaching methods,



these alternatives are not as well developed as yet as assessment instruments in comparison with student ratings and the available research data do not show such alternatives to be any more valid or reliable than student ratings. (p. 32)

Related to the argument of who should evaluate the quality of teaching (that is, students, administrators or colleagues) is the issue of what constitutes effective teaching. Various studies have identified a range of attributes that are related to good teaching and Centra and Bonesteel (1990) have noted there is some agreement as to what these attributes are. Ramsden et al.'s (1995) review of this literature resulted in the following list of attributes that researchers generally agree are essential to good teaching.

They suggest good teachers:

- are themselves good learners, that is, their teaching is dynamic, reflective and constantly evolving;
- display enthusiasm and a desire to share their subject with students;
- are able to modify their teaching according to particular students, the content and the learning environment;
- encourage deep learning approaches and the development of critical thinking, and problem-solving in their students;
- are able to transform and extend knowledge of their subject into terms understandable to their students;
- set clear goals for learning and use appropriate assessment and high quality feedback to their students; and,

- have high expectations of their students, show respect for students, and display an interest in their student's professional and personal growth. (Ramsden et al., 1995)

The seven attributes identified by Ramsden et al. (1995), stress the importance of relating the characteristics of good teachers to good learning outcomes for students. The Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (1992), the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (1993), and Boyer (1990) have also emphasised the development of students' lifelong learning skills, such as problem solving and critical thinking, as an important outcome of university teaching. However, whilst there appears to be some agreement on the characteristics or attributes of good teachers, there is a lack of explicit criteria for judging the effectiveness of teaching (Ashcroft, 1995; Neumann, 1994; Ramsden et al., 1995).

For example, Ashcroft (1995) in noting the need for criteria to be developed suggests these should include:

agreed indicators of good practice in areas such as preparation, communication and organization of teaching events and follow-up and assessment. (p. 96)

Moreover, Ramsden et al. (1995) make the point that in developing criteria it is important to keep in mind that concepts of good teaching are not fixed, whilst Neumann (1994) emphasises that criteria need to be discipline-based and context specific. All these authors stress the importance of involving academic staff in the development of criteria and the need to make the criteria explicit, particularly

when used in the context of evaluating teaching effectiveness. Furthermore, as noted above, it is now generally agreed that the evaluation of university teaching should be based on information from a number of sources, including peer, student and self evaluation (Ramsden, 1998). As detailed later in this chapter, it is in this context that a portfolio-based approach offers most promise.

In summary then, the nature of academic work and the environment for teaching and learning in universities has undergone a transformation in the last two decades. Furthermore, whilst a number of issues associated with appraising the quality of teaching in universities remain unresolved, the need for improved practices in this regard have been highlighted. These characteristics of the higher education environment must be taken into consideration then, both in planning staff development programs for university academics, and in the development of strategies for the appraisal and improvement of university teaching.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC STAFF

The professional development of academic staff is a growing area of activity in higher education, as university administrators begin to respond to emerging needs arising from the global reforms of the sector (Brew, 1995). As outlined in chapter one of this thesis, professional development may be defined as all those activities and programs designed to assist staff (academic and general) with the demands of their roles as teachers, researchers and administrators (Moses, 1988). It should be noted however, that the following overview of professional development of

university employees is confined to activities and programs for academic staff who seek to improve their teaching. This is in keeping with the aims of the present study, although, for most institutions, professional development for teaching improvement has also been the primary focus of staff development in universities (Webb, 1996).

According to Ramsden et al. (1995, p. 11), until the late 1980s staff development was virtually an optional extra in Australian universities, with initiatives developed at the institutional level and funded through recurrent grants. Although Australian institutions were required to establish structured professional development programs as a result of the 1991 Academic Staff Award Agreement, access to these programs "is still not widely perceived to be an integral right for all academic staff" (Ramsden et al., 1995, p. 11). Thus, until recently, professional development initiatives have generally been offered on an *ad hoc*, informal and voluntary basis, and appear to have had little impact on enhancing the teaching skills of university academics (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992a). This has been compounded by the fact that there is no unified view of academic staff development, and no professional identity for those providing these programs (Brew, 1995). Brew (1995) notes that staff developers are called upon to adopt many roles. These roles include those of teacher, researcher, academic, administrator, evaluator and change agent, amongst others. Moreover, practitioners come from various academic (for example, education or psychology) and non-academic (for example, human resource or administration) backgrounds, each group having quite different aspirations and approaches (Brew, 1995).

Also, Moses (1988) has noted some tensions inherent in the (sometimes) conflicting roles of providing a service to both academic staff and administrators, particularly in relation to providing programs to serve both formative and summative evaluation purposes. For example, she highlights the difficulties arising for staff developers if they are requested to perform tasks such as assessing staff performance, in a manner which may not be consistent with their beliefs and values, whilst needing to maintain the trust of both management and academic staff (Moses, 1988).

Thus, the roles and responsibilities of professional developers in higher education have generally been poorly defined and have lacked direction and focus. These problems have been exacerbated by the lack of institutional planning or support for professional development units (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992a). More recently, however, professional developers in higher education have started to become more organised and are taking tentative steps on the road to professionalisation (Brew, 1995). For example, in the United Kingdom, the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) has introduced a scheme for professional recognition. These developments have been accompanied by the introduction of more focussed and strategic program delivery (Webb, 1996). In many universities this has resulted in the devolution of responsibility for teaching development to academic departments, these activities then being coordinated by central units. The resultant programs have included peer mentoring schemes as well as collegial networks of staff which focus on the improvement of teaching in discipline-specific settings (Ramsden et al., 1995). These decentralised approaches, then,

provide opportunities for academic staff to become proactive in their own professional development and that of their colleagues.

The clients of professional developers in universities also have unique and specific needs with regard to the development of their teaching practice. According to some critics, however, academic staff have not availed themselves of professional development opportunities because they do not necessarily perceive themselves primarily as teachers (Brew, 1995). Moreover, universities tend to be departmental organisations in which each department may have a quite different culture and academic staff often place allegiances and loyalty to their discipline and professional bodies above loyalty to the university (Dopson & McNay, 1996). Also, as suggested above, many lecturers see their role in teaching as simply to convey discipline-specific or professional knowledge to students (Weimer, 1990).

In order to encourage staff to participate in teaching development activities, Kember (1998) cautions against attempting to make 'teachers' of discipline experts, suggesting instead that professional developers focus on both the how and what of teaching. He further suggests that,

Educational developers and those concerned with quality assurance need to consider whether their schemes address the underlying beliefs about teaching held by academics. ... They need to get academics to think of themselves as teachers as well as specialists in their discipline area. The message is that an academic needs to be a discipline expert and a teacher. (Kember, 1998, p. 23)

In addition to the problems outlined above, there are other potential barriers to participation in professional development programs in universities. These include the lack of recognition and reward for these activities, the scarcity of resources in terms of personnel and infrastructure, a lack of institutional support such as time-release from teaching, as well as scepticism amongst staff of the value of such programs (Murphy, 1995; Webb, 1996).

These issues have contributed to the considerable diversity of teaching improvement programs within the sector (Katz & Henry, 1993). The programs offered may range from a one-off skills development workshop or consultation on an aspect of teaching, to comprehensive induction programs for new staff or full-scale degree programs in tertiary teaching (Brew, 1995). However, although some Australian universities now offer academic programs such as Graduate Diplomas in University Teaching (Andresen, 1995), little incentive is provided for university lecturers to undertake these programs. Thus, these awards are presently not related to appointment or promotion processes and there is little research to determine the effectiveness of these approaches (Ramsden et al., 1995).

In this respect universities have similar problems to those experienced in other sectors of the educational system. For example, Ingvarson and Chadbourne (1994) point out that in schools there is little incentive to improve one's teaching, because promotion for teachers is unrelated to teaching ability, and advancement to higher levels is achieved by undertaking administrative roles such as deputy principal or principal. At the present time neither educational system has a career

structure linked to professional development or educational programs that recognise advanced levels of teaching. However, in both sectors there are indications that this is about to change.

One indicator of this shift is that both sectors have begun to explore the certification of advanced teaching skill courses or accreditation of teaching programs during the last few years. These programs emphasise reflective practice and explore strategies for the provision of appropriate recognition and reward for good teaching (Kydd, Crawford, & Riches, 1997). In schools the focus for advanced certification has largely been on professional development programs based on the use of teaching portfolios (Ingvarson & Chadbourne, 1994; Wolf, 1991b). In universities this shift has served to refocus professional development activities towards more strategic, devolved, and project-based initiatives, such as those explored in the present study (Neumann, 1994; Ramsden et al., 1995). Wolf (1994) has emphasised the benefits of this approach, as follows:

portfolios can have a positive ripple effect that extends from the individual constructing the portfolio to immediate colleagues and the professional community at large. (p. 119)

Thus, recent trends in the delivery of professional development programs have resulted in a shift towards devolved, collegial approaches that focus on improving teaching quality in tertiary institutions. Furthermore the use of teaching portfolios has received increasing attention in higher education in recent years as a strategy in the professional development of academic staff for teaching appraisal and improvement purposes.



## TEACHING PORTFOLIOS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The use of teaching portfolios in higher education originated in Canada in the early 1970s, at the initiative of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) (Knapper, 1995). The central idea of portfolios is a relatively simple one, and best exemplified in the way a creative artist assembles samples of work for presentation and review (Knapper, 1995). In relation to university teaching, the impetus for portfolios came from a CAUT Committee established to develop a policy on student evaluation of teaching (Knapper, McFarlane, & Scanlon, 1972). The Committee's report supported the use of student appraisal of teaching for formative evaluation purposes but cautioned on their use for summative evaluation purposes such as tenure or promotion on the grounds that they constituted only one type of evidence from one limited perspective (Knapper et al., 1972). The report went on to recommend that evaluation of teaching should have strong faculty involvement to be effective and urged academic staff to be more proactive in gathering evidence about their teaching performance (Knapper et al., 1972, p. 46).

The notion of gathering evidence about teaching and documenting academic staff teaching performance was given further stimulus by Shore (1975) who extended the Committee's proposals as follows:

We are going to try to draft a handbook by dealing with matters over which the individual instructor has some control, by which he (sic) can build a case for teaching effectiveness; a portfolio of evidence that he (sic) is a competent teacher. (Shore, 1975, p. 8)

This handbook was not published until 1980, by which time the term portfolio had been replaced by dossier in Canada. The *CAUT Guide to the Teaching Dossier: Its Preparation and Use* (Shore et al., 1980), contained an explanation of the dossier concept, described how a dossier may be compiled and listed 45 items that might be included as evidence of teaching effectiveness. The *Guide* was thus the first (and most often quoted) account of how portfolios may be used in tertiary teaching (Knapper, 1995). Christopher Knapper, one of the original exponents of the portfolio concept, has detailed the wide distribution of the original guide in Canada and the United States as part of the Committee's dissemination process (Knapper, 1995). He remarks:

It is interesting that when the idea began to take hold in the United States, the term *portfolio* was revived, perhaps because *dossier* had rather sinister implications for a country that was still embroiled in the Cold War. (Knapper, 1995, p. 47)

Moreover, in 1981, Knapper published a paper on the concept in the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia's (HERDSA) publication, the *Bulletin* (Knapper, 1981), and gave a number of workshops on teaching dossiers at Australian universities the following year (Knapper, 1995).

The portfolio concept was enthusiastically promulgated in the United States, although the adoption of portfolios took some time to gather momentum. In the 1980s, a number of influential authors on faculty evaluation (for example, Centra, 1982; Seldin, 1980) and organisations such as the American Association for Higher Education (Anderson, 1993; Edgerton et al., 1991) began to advocate the use of portfolios for teaching appraisal. However, although faculty evaluation

was the initial impetus for the introduction of portfolio programs, coinciding with demands for accountability in tertiary teaching in the US, the notion that portfolios could also be used for teaching improvement purposes soon followed. For example, according to Boileau (1993), "The major contribution most advocates of portfolios mention is the perceived improvement of teaching" (p.8). Similarly, Wolf (1991b) suggested, "A teaching portfolio serves two main purposes: improvement and evaluation", and that, "The ultimate goal for constructing teaching portfolios is to improve the quality of teaching" (p. 4).

In Australia during this period, teaching portfolios were also gradually gaining acceptance. For example, the Federation of Australian University Staff Association (FAUSA) (1992) publication *How to compile a teaching portfolio* stated that whilst FAUSA supported the recent moves towards an increased emphasis on the recognition of teaching ability in university promotion and appointment processes:

... it (was) not convinced that staff development resources (were) always adequately provided within university teaching and learning units designed to assist staff who wish to enhance their teaching skills. (Roc, 1987, p. 1)

Advocating the use of teaching portfolios, the document went on to say that FAUSA wished to provide members with a means to show their teaching skills to advantage through documenting their teaching in a portfolio, using information from a number of different sources (Roc, 1987).

It should be noted that this initial FAUSA publication gave acknowledgment to the CAUT Committee's Guide and it was to the FAUSA publication that academic staff in Australian universities were directed if they wished to compile a teaching portfolio. Moreover, the FAUSA guide was subsequently reprinted and updated a number of times (Federation of Australian University Staff Association, 1992) and it was this later edition that was provided to participants in the staff development program described in the present study, as detailed in chapter three.

In Australia portfolio use was advocated to provide increased recognition and reward for teaching and the improvement of teaching performance. However, FAUSA was also concerned about the need for improved practices for the documentation and review of teaching effectiveness mirroring the concerns of its North American counterpart. Moreover,

Equally, FAUSA is concerned that committees of review such as those dealing with tenure or promotion, do not always deal with evidence of teaching ability in as clear a manner as they do with evidence of research achievements. (Roe, 1987, p. 1)

Thus, from the outset portfolios were thought to provide a means to address a number of concerns about tertiary teaching. These issues included the low status afforded to teaching, the poor quality of instruction and the lack of appropriate methods to determine the quality of teaching in universities. By the early 1990s, the use of teaching portfolios was still not common practice in the sector but it was evident the die had been cast. For example in 1991, Wolf, in a *Synthesis of Research and Annotated Bibliography* on teaching portfolios, wrote:

Portfolios have recently become a very popular topic in education. Student portfolios have received most of the attention, but there is a growing interest in teaching portfolios — portfolios constructed by teachers to improve and demonstrate their knowledge and skills in teaching. Many practitioners, researchers, and organizations are exploring the use of teaching portfolios at both the K-12 level and in higher education for a variety of purposes. (Wolf, 1991b, p. 1)

According to Wolf (1991a) the questions to be addressed about the use of portfolios were similar across all education sectors, namely:

- What is a teaching portfolio?
- What purpose may portfolios serve?
- How should a portfolio be structured?
- What should a portfolio contain?
- How should portfolios be evaluated?

By the mid 1990s, when the investigation described in this thesis commenced, research to explore these questions was under way in both the K-12 and higher education sectors. This research is summarised below, with emphasis on the higher education research in keeping with the aims of the present study.

### **Research on Teaching Portfolios**

Despite the claims made regarding the benefits of teaching portfolios and the growing acceptance of their use for both summative and formative purposes, there have been few empirical investigations of the portfolio concept, with most studies being of a descriptive or exploratory nature (Wright, 1995). There appear to be a

number of reasons for this. These reasons include the relative novelty and complexity of the portfolio concept as well as the diversity of approaches both to portfolio use, format, and style, making comparisons with existing practices and between institutions difficult.

During this period the major work on portfolios was undertaken in the United States. Thus, the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) published the outcomes of a large-scale project in two monographs on the use of portfolios. In one, *The Teaching Portfolio: Capturing the Scholarship in Teaching*, the authors proposed a model for portfolio use, steps for implementing portfolios, and provided some sample portfolio entries (Edgerton et al., 1991). On the basis of this exploratory investigation they concluded:

First, portfolios can capture the intellectual substance and “situatedness” of teaching in ways that other methods of evaluation cannot. Second, because of this capacity, portfolios encourage faculty to take important, new roles in the documentation, observation, and review of teaching. Third, because they prompt faculty to take these new roles, portfolios are a particularly powerful tool for improvement. Fourth, as more faculty come to use them, portfolios can help forge a new campus culture of professionalism about teaching. (Edgerton et al., 1991, p. 4)

In a companion volume, *Campus Use of the Teaching Portfolio: Twenty-Five Profiles*, the authors provided accounts of actual campus experiences with the use of portfolios (Anderson, 1993). This monograph provided some useful comparative information on portfolio use in these institutions, which is detailed in chapter four of this thesis. Moreover, this publication also provided the names and addresses of key personnel in these institutions who could be contacted for further

information. These program directors were surveyed on aspects of portfolio use in their institutions as part of the input evaluation, and the findings from this survey are described in chapter five. Apart from these monographs, the work of Peter Seldin (Seldin, 1980; Seldin & Annis, 1991) also provided a helpful point of reference. However, these publications tend to provide a more anecdotal 'cook-book' approach to portfolio development, perhaps reflecting Seldin's role as a consultant in higher education on the use of portfolios (Seldin, 1980; Seldin & Annis, 1991). Other accounts of portfolio use were published in 1995 in a special edition of the *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching* (Richlin & Cox, 1995). This edition provided the background to the introduction of portfolios in universities (Knapper, 1995), outlined above, as well as accounts of approaches to portfolio use in various institutions (Cox, 1995; Davis & Swift, 1995; Kaplan & Millis, 1995; Millis, 1995; Richlin, 1995; Smith, 1995).

Despite all these advances, the uptake and enthusiasm for the use of portfolios was by no means universal. For example, Wright and O'Neil (1995) surveyed professional development staff in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australasia, to determine their views on the potential impact of a wide range of teaching improvement practices. They found only moderate support or confidence in the use of portfolios for this purpose amongst this particular group. These authors note that the lack of confidence expressed by professional developers in the UK and Australia was perhaps not surprising given the short history of portfolio use in these countries. However, they did not anticipate the lack of strong support from respondents in the US and Canada. They concluded:

Perhaps the true potential of the portfolio concept remains a relatively unknown commodity despite the flurry of activity relating to the portfolio in many higher education settings in recent years. (Wright & O'Neil, 1995, p. 20)

Other issues surrounding portfolios were also under consideration in the higher education sector. For example, in the foreword to a guide on teaching portfolios, McKeachie noted a number of questions that required investigation such as:

1. Does the use of portfolios result in greater weight being given to teaching?
2. Are decisions based on the portfolio more reliable and valid than those made using other methods of assessment?
3. What elements of the portfolio contribute most to the portfolio's value?
4. What are the costs, as well as the gains, of portfolio assessment as compared with traditional assessment (or lack of assessment)? (Seldin & Annis, 1991, p. ix)

With respect to decision-making, Centra (1994) reported an investigation on the use of portfolios for summative evaluation purposes in which faculty members at a college were required to construct teaching portfolios to renew their contracts. In this study each faculty member nominated a peer for the assessment of the portfolio (Peer A), whilst a peer selected by the area dean (Peer B) and the dean of the School, also assessed the portfolio. Centra (1994) also had available student evaluations of teaching for all staff included in the study and he was therefore able



to compare these to peer and dean judgements of teaching portfolios. Centra (1994) reported that judgements made by peers selected by faculty members (Peer A) did not agree with Peer B or dean judgements of teaching effectiveness. The Peer A evaluations also did not correlate with the student evaluations. However, Centra (1994) reported that the student evaluations did correlate reasonably well with the teaching evaluations made by the deans and Peer B. He concludes

the evaluations of the portfolios in this study would have undoubtedly benefited from additional discussions among the evaluators about the criteria and standards to apply. (Centra, 1994, p. 569)

Whilst the results of Centra's study were somewhat equivocal they do highlight an important concern related to the use of portfolios for summative evaluation purposes. That is, what criteria or standards should be used to evaluate teaching portfolios? This question, as well as others related to the use of portfolios, was explored in a four-year study with secondary school teachers which aimed to develop new approaches to teacher evaluation (Wolf, 1991a). The Teacher Assessment Project (TAP) at Stanford University demonstrated that portfolios hold great promise for the evaluation of teaching but also highlighted some potential problems (Wolf, 1991a). For example,

Portfolios are messy to construct, cumbersome to store, difficult to score, and vulnerable to misrepresentation. But, in ways that no other assessment method can, portfolios provide a connection to the contexts and personal histories of real teaching and make it possible to document the unfolding of both teaching and learning over time. (Wolf, 1991a, p. 129)

With regard to the evaluation of portfolios Wolf (1991a) notes that the TAP found an approach based on an analytic scoring system to be less suitable than an

holistic approach based on professional judgements by trained examiners using specific criteria. Moreover, the TAP also highlighted that the potential for portfolio use was largely dependent on the political, organisational and professional contexts in which they were used. Wolf (1991a) concludes:

What remains is to consider the ways that institutional and professional forces will support or subvert the promise of portfolios. (p. 136)

In higher education, institutional forces were sweeping along the portfolio 'movement' as university administrators to a large extent wrested the agenda from professional organisations such as CAUT, AAHE and FAUSA. One result of this trend is that research on the portfolio concept has arguably not kept pace with the implementation of portfolio programs for formative and summative evaluation of university staff. That is, as detailed above, despite the initial enthusiasm shown by the professional organisations and then university administrators for the adoption of portfolios for various purposes, few systematic investigations have been undertaken to determine the efficacy of portfolio-based approaches.

To summarise then, the use of teaching portfolios for the improvement and evaluation of teaching quality shows considerable promise. However, much work remains to be done and numerous questions remain unanswered before academic staff in Australian universities can be expected to accept the use of portfolios for summative evaluation and decision-making which affects their careers. In this respect, a case study approach that evaluates portfolio use in the context of a

professional development program may elucidate some of the pitfalls and promises associated with the use of teaching portfolios for academic staff.

## EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION

Prior to 1930, the term evaluation tended to be used synonymously with the notion of testing or grading of student performance by classroom teachers (Popham, 1993). Then, in the 1930s, Ralph W. Tyler undertook a study to compare the college performance of students prepared in "progressive" high schools with those prepared in conventional high schools and in the process initiated a broader conceptualisation of educational evaluation. In Tyler's view evaluation should be concerned with the appraisal of educational programs rather than being solely concerned with the evaluation of student performance (Popham, 1993). This conception of educational evaluation stimulated subsequent educators to regard the purpose of evaluation in broader terms, and paved the way for other approaches to educational evaluation which have since produced a burgeoning literature (Madaus, Scriven & Stufflebeam, 1991; Pitman & Maxwell, 1992; Posavac & Carey, 1997; Schumacher & McMillan, 1993; Worthen & Sanders, 1987). Whilst it is beyond the scope of this chapter to detail the many approaches that have evolved since Tyler's work, a broad-brush overview of some of the main approaches and conceptual breakthroughs is presented in order to provide a context for the evaluation approach adopted in the present study.

As outlined in the previous chapter, definitions of evaluation abound and there are numerous approaches to the practice of evaluation. Some of these approaches have been more formally developed into detailed protocols to guide the process of undertaking evaluation, and often an approach has an accompanying array of techniques (Popham, 1993; Rossi & Freeman, 1989; Scriven, 1967; Worthen & Sanders, 1987). Nevo (1986) and others (for example, Popham, 1993; Schumacher & McMillan, 1993; Worthen & Sanders, 1987) have detailed how the many views and approaches to evaluation practice have evolved over the years. Nevo (1986) points out, however, that many approaches are unduly referred to as 'models',

...in spite of the fact that none of them includes a sufficient degree of complexity and completeness that might be suggested by the term 'model'. (p. 15)

Following Tyler's early work in educational evaluation, the 1940s and early 1950s was mainly a period of refinement, consolidation and application of this approach (Worthen & Sanders, 1987). Then, in the 1950s and the early 1960s there was a period of considerable technical development building on Tyler's work (Popham, 1993). For example, taxonomies of educational objectives were developed which became indispensable reference tools for those involved in educational evaluation (Worthen & Sanders, 1987). One of these developments, referred to as "Bloom's Taxonomy",

.... defined in explicit detail a hierarchy of thinking skills applicable to various content areas. This document continues to be a standard tool both in testing and curriculum development, design, and evaluation. (Worthen & Sanders, 1987, p. 16)

Later in the 1960s, Lee J. Cronbach's work marked another shift in perspective on educational evaluation (Popham, 1988; Worthen & Sanders, 1987). In response to a large scale curriculum development initiative funded by the US Government, Cronbach argued that educational evaluation should focus on assisting curriculum developers with decision-making and help them determine the extent to which a program promoted desired consequences (Popham, 1988). The notion of using evaluation for program improvement was subsequently further developed in 1967 by Michael Scriven. He identified two essentially different roles for educational evaluation which he described as formative and summative. According to Popham (1988),

Rarely has a conceptual clarification been so quickly and so widely adopted by a specialization. ....Scriven cut through a confusing situation regarding evaluation's roles and set forth a useful way of conceptualizing it. (p. 13)

As noted in chapter one, formative evaluation is conducted during the operation of a program in order to provide information useful for improving a program; summative evaluation is undertaken at the program's conclusion to determine its worth or merit. Most subsequent approaches to educational evaluation have since incorporated these two roles of evaluation, albeit with varying emphases. Moreover, many of the evaluation techniques and approaches that have been developed over the last few decades may be used for both formative and summative evaluation; the timing of their use and the purpose for which they are employed often determining the role (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993). It should also be noted that not all evaluation approaches necessarily articulate how

formative and summative evaluations feature in the approach. This occurs despite the fact that, as Popham (1988) notes rather cynically, "new inventors often build their own wheels by using other people's spokes" (p. 22). Moreover, he argues that in many approaches there has been a great deal of re-invention of the wheel.

For a time it appeared that an educational evaluation model was being generated by anyone who (1) could spell "educational evaluation" and (2) had access to an appropriate number of boxes and arrows. The building of educational evaluation models was, clearly, a fashionable activity of the late 1960s and early 1970s. (Popham, 1988, p. 22)

A review of the various conceptual approaches to evaluation shows overlap as well as considerable diversity in the design and implementation of evaluations depending on the specific purpose they are to serve and the methodologies employed by the evaluators (Rossi & Freeman, 1989). Also, because evaluation is multi-faceted and can be conducted in different phases of a program's development, the same model may be classified in diverse ways (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993). For these reasons, it is generally agreed that evaluation approaches evade clear-cut classification (Pitman & Maxwell, 1992; Posavac & Carey, 1997; Schumacher & McMillan, 1993; Worthen & Sanders, 1987).

The following overview of the major approaches, then, based on a comparative analysis of six alternative evaluation orientations, is neither exhaustive nor are the approaches mutually exclusive (Pitman & Maxwell, 1992; Posavac & Carey, 1997; Schumacher & McMillan, 1993; Worthen & Sanders, 1987). These evaluation approaches are outlined here to provide a context for the approach

employed in the present study as well as a rationale for the study design. Thus, the classification scheme outlines the characteristics, strengths and limitations of each approach, highlights some of the techniques employed and describes the context in which these approaches are generally used (Benson & Michael, 1990; Pitman & Maxwell, 1992; Posavac & Carey, 1997; Schumacher & McMillan, 1993; Worthen & Sanders, 1987).

### **1. Objectives-Oriented**

This approach is characterised by the use of objective means such as pre-post measurement of performance to gather data, as well as the specification of measurable objectives. Some of the main proponents of this approach include Tyler, Bloom and Popham and the main purpose of objectives-oriented evaluation is to determine the extent to which a program's objectives are achieved. The benefits of this approach include the ease of use and high acceptability. Schumacher and McMillan (1993) note that other advantages of the objectives-oriented approach include its highly definable methodology and detailed procedural protocol, features which make it attractive to novice evaluators. Limitations of this approach include an over-emphasis on student testing and the reductionistic and linear nature of procedures used (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993; Worthen & Sanders, 1987).

## **2. Consumer-Oriented**

Proponents of the consumer-oriented approach include Scriven, mentioned previously, who is responsible for the formative-summative distinction in evaluation research. The purpose of this approach is to provide information about educational products to assist in decision-making regarding the adoption or purchase of various educational products and programs (Madaus et al., 1991; Worthen & Sanders, 1987). The benefits of this approach are that the check-lists and associated criteria that have evolved from these evaluations are useful tools for educators (or potential consumers) interested in determining the value of a range of educational products (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993; Worthen & Sanders, 1987). Limitations of the consumer-oriented approach include the fact that the emphasis on consumer information needs may lead to a lack of cross-examination or debate on the product being evaluated (Worthen & Sanders, 1987).

## **3. Expertise-Oriented**

Eisner and various accreditation groups (for example, professional associations or government bodies) are the main proponents of the expertise-oriented approach to evaluation, according to Worthen and Sanders (1987). As the name suggests, the approach relies heavily on the professional expertise of the evaluator. Professional judgements of the quality of educational programs, institutions, products or activities are the main purpose of this approach, based on the evaluator's individual knowledge and experience. Both the benefits and limitations of this approach revolve around the fact that human judgement and 'experts' play a



major role in expertise-oriented evaluations. This may lead to problems associated with replicability (for example, reliability between 'expert' judgements), a vulnerability to personal bias, and potential conflicts of interest. On the other hand, expertise-oriented approaches provide the potential for broad coverage and ease of implementation and planning (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993; Worthen & Sanders, 1987).

#### **4. Adversary-Oriented**

Adversary-oriented approaches, led by proponents such as Wolf, Owens and Levine, seek to provide a balanced examination of program strengths and weaknesses (Worthen & Sanders, 1987). This approach is characterised by public hearings and decisions that are based on arguments heard during a hearing, and is often associated with controversial programs or policy issues. The benefits of the adversary-oriented approach include a close examination and 'public' scrutiny of evaluation objects, and the potential for high impact on the audience for the evaluation. Limitations of this approach include the potential for high costs and the fallibility of the judges or arbiters of evaluation outcomes (Pitman & Maxwell, 1992; Worthen & Sanders, 1987).

#### **5. Naturalistic and Participant Oriented**

Some of the more recently developed approaches to educational evaluation include those by Stake, Patton and Guba (Madaus et al., 1991; Pitman & Maxwell, 1992; Worthen & Sanders, 1987). These approaches are distinguished

by the use of inductive reasoning and first-hand experience on site as suggested by the terms, namely, naturalistic and participant (Posavac & Carey, 1997; Worthen & Sanders, 1987). Naturalistic and participant-oriented approaches often draw on ethnographic research methodologies and emphasise a consideration of a wide variety of information in drawing conclusions (Worthen & Sanders, 1987). In these respects it overlaps with the evaluation approach used in the present study. A limitation of this approach is that it tends to be non-directive and has the potential for high labour intensity with concomitant high costs (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993; Worthen & Sanders, 1987). However, naturalistic approaches are acknowledged as particularly suited to an examination of educational innovations or where an understanding of complex educational activities is desired (Posavac & Carey, 1997).

## **6. Management-Oriented**

The main purpose of this approach sometimes referred to as decision or improvement-oriented (Posavac & Carey, 1997) is to provide information to aid in decision-making. Proponents include Alkin, Provus, and Stufflebeam (Popham, 1993), who, as noted in chapter one, is acknowledged as the developer of the CIPP approach that was adopted for the present study. A distinguishing characteristic of management-orientated approaches is the fact that evaluation occurs at all stages of program development and the benefits include its comprehensiveness and systematic nature (Harris, 1996; Madaus et al., 1991).

Limitations of the management-oriented approach are that they can be expensive to administer and, because of the emphasis on assisting with managerial decision-making, may focus too narrowly on the concerns of management at the expense of other stakeholders (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993; Worthen & Sanders, 1987).

For example, Schumacher & McMillan (1993) point out,

the decision-oriented approach assumes that the decision-maker is sensitive to possible problems in bringing about educational change and is willing to obtain information regarding these realities. (p. 531)

However, as discussed below, in the context of the present study the CIPP approach was not used primarily to inform institutional (or managerial) decision-making. Instead, it focused on gathering information to inform program development and to address the central research questions. Further details of the CIPP approach are detailed in other parts of this chapter and thesis.

The plethora of evaluation approaches outlined above has, not surprisingly, resulted in a bewildering array of evaluation studies, methods, tools and techniques. Needless to say, this can lead to some confusion on the part of a novice researcher in the field of educational evaluation. Furthermore, whilst the emphasis, definitions and approaches to educational evaluation have been refined over the years, the focus of educational evaluation has also changed. Thus, Popham (1993) points out that in the 1970s educators were preoccupied with program evaluation and the focus in the 1980s was on competency testing of students. However, he notes that "the latter part of the twentieth century may well

be remembered as the period when our attention was focused on teacher quality".  
(Popham, 1988, p. 31)

In this regard, the CIPP approach to program evaluation has also been used as a framework for evaluating the performance of superintendents in a systematic approach to assessment over the course of a school year (Stufflebeam, Candoli, & Nicholls, 1995). Stufflebeam et al. (1995) note,

The evaluation model used in this portfolio proposes an ongoing, systematic approach to assessment that spaces out evaluation tasks over the course of a school year, fiscal year, or some similar evaluation cycle. ...In this portfolio, we apply this model (CIPP) specifically to the evaluation of superintendent performance. (p. 5)

In summary, it would appear that the various approaches to educational evaluation outlined above, are both flexible and adaptable to suit a variety of different purposes. Moreover, depending on the way they are used, evaluation approaches can satisfy a number of the criteria for systematic enquiry that are normally associated with educational research. However, with such a broad range of approaches the type of evaluation utilised is largely a question of choice governed by the focus and purpose of the evaluation. In the present study, Stufflebeam's CIPP evaluation approach was chosen as the framework for conducting the present investigation as detailed below.

### CIPP Evaluation Framework

The CIPP approach to program evaluation was first proposed in 1970 by Stufflebeam and his colleagues in the Phi Delta Kappa National Study Committee on Evaluations report entitled, *Educational Evaluation and Decision Making* (Mason & Bramble 1989). According to Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (1985),

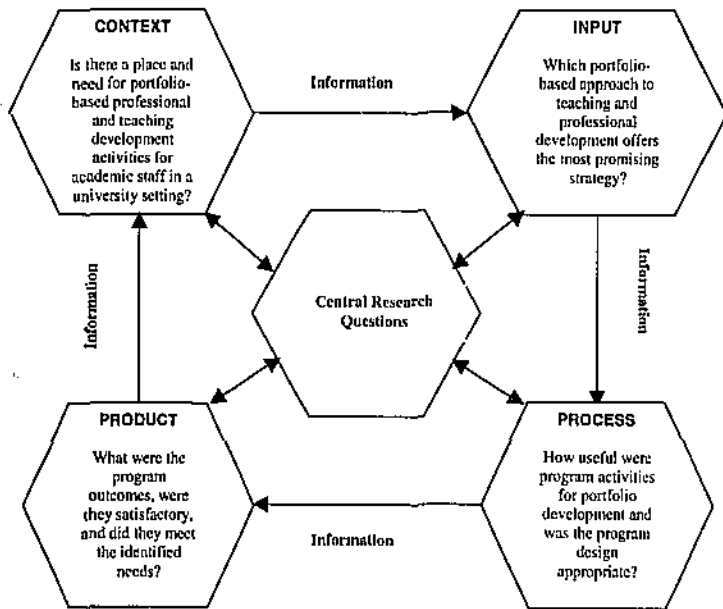
Evaluation is the process of delineating, obtaining, and providing descriptive and judgmental information about the worth and merit of some object's goals, design, implementation, and impacts, in order to guide decision-making, serve needs for accountability, and promote understanding of the involved phenomenon. (p. 159)

In undertaking the present study, the CIPP approach was chosen because:

- it is a comprehensive approach which enables the evaluator to obtain a holistic picture of the evaluation object;
- it can be used for both formative and summative evaluation purposes by supplying information to guide decision-making as well as for accountability purposes; and,
- it enables the evaluator to gather information before, during and after the commencement of a program, thus assisting in program design and implementation, and research and development (Stufflebeam, 1983).

Figure 2.1 (below) provides a pictorial account of how these general features of CIPP apply to the evaluation of the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP) and informed the design, implementation and evaluation of the staff development

program (SDP). In other words, the TPP provided the context in which the central research questions of this study was addressed through the collection and analysis of data within the CIPP approach to evaluation. Moreover, each evaluation yielded information to support the design, implementation and evaluation of the staff development program (SDP).



**Figure 2.1** Flowchart depicting the role of CIPP in providing information to address the central research questions and the development of the SDP

Thus, as shown in Figure 2.1, the CIPP supplied the methodological approach to the present study and underpinned the development of the SDP based on a

conceptual framework drawn from emerging trends in the literature on research and development of university teaching, detailed below.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND CHAPTER SUMMARY

In the present study, the design, implementation and evaluation of a portfolio-based Staff Development Program (SDP) was investigated in the context of the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP). The conceptual framework for this research was drawn from theoretical developments and emerging trends in the study of university teaching and academic development. Three emerging and inter-related philosophical and conceptual trends were identified as underlying the portfolio concept in higher education. These trends included a shift towards reflective practice in higher education, increasing professionalism in university teaching and calls for a scholarship of teaching. The converging conceptions that served to guide program development in the context of this study are elucidated below.

### **Reflective Practice, Scholarship and Professionalism**

As discussed previously in this chapter, the notion of reflective practice has gained increasing importance in the development of teaching in higher education (Anderson, 1993; Brookfield, 1995). The reflective practitioner approach to teaching practice originated from the work of Schön in the early 1980s (Schön, 1987; Schön, 1992). It is now generally accepted that reflection on, and in, practice underlies many of the approaches to the development of teaching in

universities (Brew, 1995). Moreover, the term, reflective practice, has considerable currency in higher education and implies "more than 'thinking about', it also includes collecting data about practice and analysing it in the light of the social, moral and political context" (Ashcroft, 1995, p.1). Reflective practice is also a key aspect of Kolb's experiential learning model which outlines four stages of learning: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). As Seng and Seng (1996) note,

The rationale for this (reflective practice and experiential learning approach) in staff development is that whilst we learn from experience, it is critical for us to reflect on the experience and discuss it to optimise our learning. (p. 2)

Thus, the approach taken in the staff development program described in this thesis aligns well with the reflective practitioner model outlined by Ashcroft and Foreman-Peck (1994). This model "sees professional development as progressing through a process of critical enquiry and problem-solving" (Ashcroft, 1995, p. 4). It implies independence on the part of the learner (in this case the participants in the TPP); an approach to professional development that accords with the values and aspirations of academic staff; and the view that teaching is part of an academic's scholarly work. Also, the fact that the portfolio concept lends itself to a reflective practice approach has been noted. For example, Pat Hutchings, the Director of the AAHE Teaching Initiative, in the foreword to *Campus Use of the Teaching Portfolio* (Anderson, 1993) writes:



...we need models of the teaching portfolio that would document the more substantive, intellectual (i.e. scholarly) aspects of teaching. ...I've come to believe that particularly promising models might be driven by Donald Schön's notion of reflective practice. (p. 5)

Hutching's observation complements another assumption underlying the approach adopted in this study, which draws from the view that teaching and teaching development are in themselves scholarly activities. As noted earlier, Ernest Boyer first advocated the notion of a scholarship of teaching in 1990 in an influential report to the Carnegie Foundation, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (Boyer, 1990). In this report, Boyer argued eloquently for academics to bring to the improvement of teaching some of the creativity and rigour they apply to the scholarship involved in their research. The notion of a scholarship of teaching has been incorporated into the rationale for portfolio development by many proponents of teaching portfolios (Anderson, 1993; Edgerton et al., 1991; Ramsden et al., 1995) although as discussed previously there are differing views on what constitutes a scholarly approach to teaching. Nevertheless, it has been suggested that if teaching is viewed as a scholarly activity it will lend itself to review by peers in much the same way as is presently done with research. This may ultimately lead to new strategies for the appraisal of teaching which conform to the ethos of academic staff and traditional university values (Boyer, 1990; Edgerton et al., 1991). Moreover, in conceptualising university teaching as scholarly work we will also gain a better understanding of some of the complexities involved in university teaching (Edgerton et al., 1991; Martin & Ramsden, 1993; Prosser & Trigwell, 1997).

Together with the adoption of reflective practice and the scholarship of teaching in universities, there has been a growing tendency towards the notion of professionalism of teaching in higher education. Ramsden et al. (1995) point out that although university teaching is sometimes referred to as one of the oldest professions it lacks some of the features that generally characterise professions, including:

a prescribed period of relevant pre-service education and supervised practical experience, ongoing in-service education, a code of ethics, and strong and well-supported professional associations. (p. 17)

Thus, accompanying calls for more accountability in teaching, the introduction of qualifications in tertiary teaching, and demands for improvement of teaching quality, has been a growing debate about the profession of university teaching. (Ashcroft, 1995; Ashcroft & Foreman-Pech, 1994; Brew, 1995; Ramsden et al., 1995). In Australia, Ramsden et al. (1995) have recommended national recognition of courses that lead to qualifications in university teaching. They point to the model developed in the United Kingdom by the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) as one which

would facilitate the process of achieving an academic workforce qualified in teaching and would provide a guarantee that minimum professional standards are reached. (p. 98)

Brew (1995) has also argued that professionalism in university teaching will lead to more public exposure and discussion of teaching performance and to giving higher scholarly status to the design and delivery of good teaching within a discipline. Although formal accreditation of university teachers seems unlikely in

the short term, the trend toward teaching professionalism continues to gather momentum (Ramsden et al., 1995).

In summary then, both reflective practice and the development of a scholarship of teaching are notions that underpin the trend towards professionalism in university teaching and these concepts are an integral part of the philosophy underlying the portfolio concept. Moreover, as outlined above, reflective practice and teaching professionalism have also influenced the direction and content of staff development programs in higher education which seek to improve teaching (Moses, 1988; Zuber-Skerritt, 1992a) as has research on teaching in higher education (Ashcroft, 1995; Neumann, 1994; Ramsden et al., 1995; Zuber-Skerritt, 1992b). In this regard, the rationale and approach to the design and implementation of the professional development program on teaching portfolios undertaken in the present study also draws on these concepts.

This chapter has reviewed literature on university teaching, professional development and teaching portfolios with relevance to the research described in this thesis. In the following chapter, the procedure and framework for the evaluations employed in this study are described.

## Chapter Three

# METHODOLOGY

*...the value of the alternative approaches (to educational evaluation) is their capacity to help us think, to present and provoke new ideas and techniques, and to serve as mental checklists of things we ought to consider, remember, or worry about. Their heuristic value is very high; their prescriptive value seems much less. (Worthen and Sanders, 1987, p.151)*

## INTRODUCTION

As outlined in chapter one, the use of teaching portfolios has been proposed, both in Australia and overseas, as an improvement over existing strategies for the recognition, appraisal and improvement of university teaching. However, as teaching portfolios are a recent innovation, particularly in Australian universities, their utility in these contexts is not known, and there are a number of issues surrounding the use of portfolios which warrant further investigation. The central research questions investigated in this study can be stated as follows:

How useful are teaching portfolios for teaching development purposes in a university context?

What are the outcomes and benefits for academic staff and universities of a professional development program based on the preparation of a teaching portfolio?

These questions were investigated by means of an evaluative case study of the Teaching Portfolio Project, which involved the design, implementation, and

evaluation of a portfolio-based staff development program (SDP) for academic staff in the School of Nursing (SON) at Curtin University of Technology. As discussed in chapter two, the methodological framework of the study was derived from the CIPP approach to program evaluation.

The present chapter outlines the procedures used to address the questions arising in the context, input, process and product evaluations that comprise the CIPP approach. Details of how the data collected in the four evaluations informed decision-making in the development and implementation of the program are also provided. Furthermore, the setting of the case study and the procedures used to analyse the data gathered over the course of the present investigation are described. The chapter concludes with a discussion of some ethical considerations and limitations of the study design and methodologies used.

## STUDY DESIGN

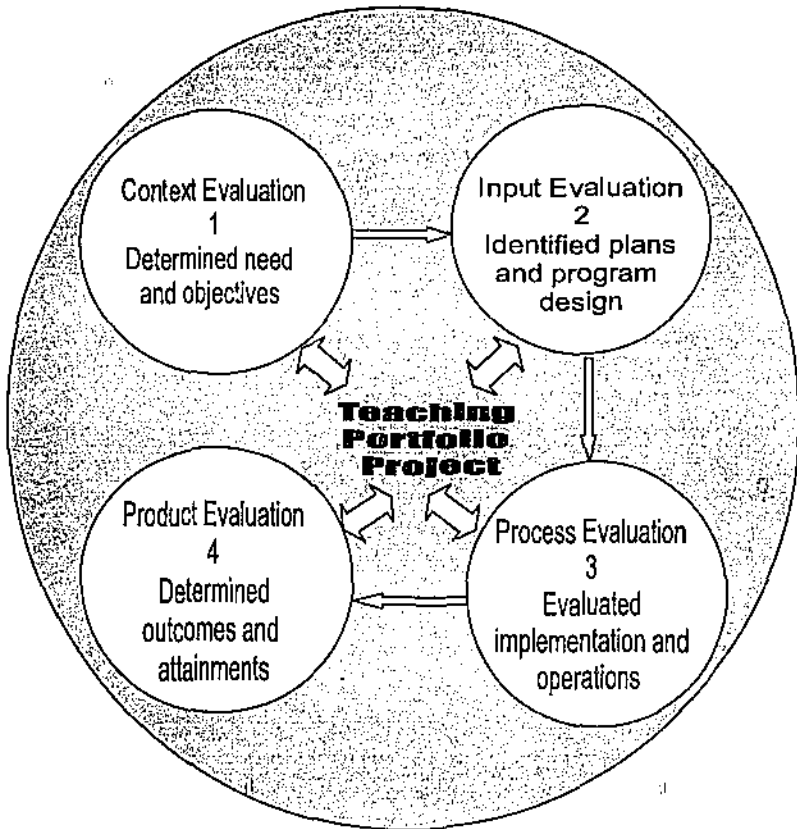
Case study design, because of its flexibility and adaptability to a range of contexts, processes, people and foci, provides some of the most useful methods available in educational research. (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993, p. 375)

According to Sturman (1997) "case study" is a generic term for the investigation of an individual, group or phenomenon. Case study techniques may vary, and may include qualitative and quantitative approaches (Borg & Gall, 1989; Merriam, 1998). A distinguishing feature of the approach is that in order to explain, predict or generalize from a single example (the case), it is necessary to conduct an "in-

depth investigation of the interdependencies of parts and of the patterns that emerge (Sturman, 1997, p. 61). In this regard, Diesing (1972) places case studies within the holist tradition of scientific inquiry, in which the characteristics of a part are seen to be largely determined by the whole to which it belongs. According to the holist tradition, to understand the whole requires an understanding of the interrelationships between the parts (Merriam, 1998).

Lancy (1993) notes that case studies have a number of different applications. In the present study a single 'instrumental' case study design was employed, using both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Stake (1994), in identifying three types of case study design, notes that in what he terms an 'instrumental case study', a particular case is examined in depth to provide insight into a particular issue. In instrumental case studies "the case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else" (Stake, 1994, p. 237). He goes on to say that the choice of a case is made in order to further our understanding of the issue under investigation (Stake, 1994).

In relation to the present study, the issue to be investigated was the use of teaching portfolios in a university setting, whilst the case of the Teaching Portfolio Project provided the context in which this issue could be explored. Thus, within the Teaching Portfolio Project, the researcher designed, implemented and evaluated a portfolio-based staff development program (SDP), using the CIPP evaluation approach. Figure 3.1 shows the relationship between the various components of the research design.



**Figure 3-1 Study Design: The CIPP evaluation framework in relation to the Teaching Portfolio Project**

Figure 3.1 above illustrates how the case study of the Teaching Portfolio Project (depicted in the shaded, outer circle) encompassed four distinct evaluations, based on Stufflebeam's CIPP approach to program evaluation. As also shown in this figure, the context (1), input (2), process (3), and product (4) evaluations were undertaken sequentially. However, it is important to note that some of the procedures for these evaluations overlapped. This is elucidated later in this

chapter in Figure 3.5, which shows an overview of the study and the time-frame for each evaluation.

The principles of data collection in case studies, according to Burns (1994), include the use of multiple sources of evidence, the maintenance of a chain of evidence, and the recording of data in notes, video or tapes. He also points out that a case study investigator needs to be observant, a good listener, adaptive and flexible, and to have a good grasp of the issue under investigation. Moreover,

Lack of bias is essential to prevent an investigator interpreting evidence to support a preconceived position. Openness to contradictory evidence is a must. (Burns, 1994, p. 375)

Sturman (1997) states that case studies embrace 'both the qualitative and quantitative paradigms'. He argues that in evaluative case studies, which involve the evaluation of programs, 'condensed fieldwork' is required, using a variety of research techniques (Sturman, 1997, p. 63). Condensed fieldwork in this context, contrasts with the more lengthy ethnographic case study approaches, and refers to the use of fieldwork that is targeted to address specific evaluation questions (Merriam, 1998). In the present study the CIPP evaluation framework provided a flexible and focused approach to the investigation of the case study of the Teaching Portfolio Project.

### **The CIPP Approach to Evaluation**

All four evaluations of Stufflebeam's (1985) context, input, process, and product (CIPP) scheme were undertaken in the present study. CIPP, which in Worthen & Sanders' (1987) classification of evaluation approaches is management-oriented,



was used as a framework for guiding the evaluative process. According to Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (1985),

evaluation is the process of delineating, obtaining, and providing descriptive and judgmental information about the worth and merit of some object's goals, design, implementation, and impacts, in order to guide decision making, serve needs for accountability, and promote understanding of the involved phenomena. (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1985, p. 159)

As noted above, the CIPP approach has been categorised as management or decision oriented (Stufflebeam & Webster, 1988). This is reflected in Stufflebeam and Shinkfield's definition of evaluation with its emphasis on providing information to guide decision-making and to promote understanding of the object under investigation. CIPP is based on the notion that the most important purpose of evaluation is 'not to prove but to improve' (Stufflebeam, 1983), and in this respect not all of the activities undertaken in the CIPP approach are purely evaluative in nature (Isaac & Michael, 1982; Madaus, et al., 1991).

The broad array of evaluation approaches proposed by educational researchers over the decades was reviewed in chapter two. With such a profusion of evaluation types, the question of which approach to adopt can appear confusing to a novice evaluator (Charles, 1995). In the absence of empirical evidence about "which model works best under which circumstances...choices among alternatives will remain a matter of the evaluator's preference" (Worthen & Sanders, 1987 p. 149). Moreover, as noted above, Worthen & Sanders (1987) suggest,

the value of the alternative approaches lies in their capacity to help us think, to present and provoke new ideas and techniques, and to serve as mental checklists of things we ought to consider, remember, or worry about... their heuristic value is very high; their prescriptive value seems much less. (p. 151)

The CIPP approach was chosen because it provides a comprehensive rationale for undertaking evaluation studies. It also provides a framework for formative and summative evaluation and can serve a range of informational needs, namely,

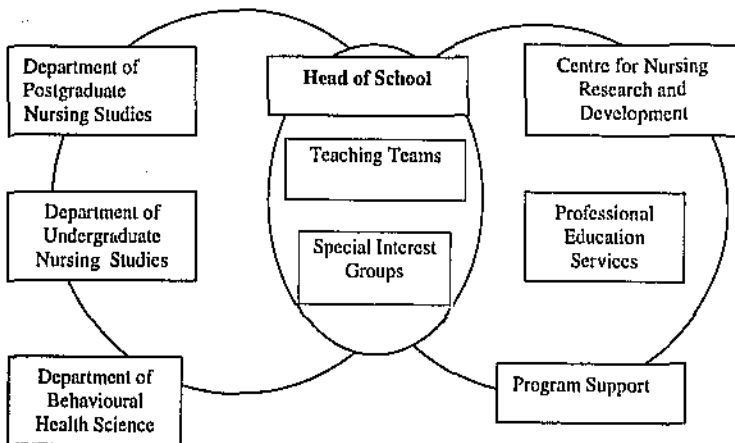
- **Context** - identifies problems and/or needs to facilitate decision-making in planning a project,
- **Input** - determines resources and strategies required to achieve a project's objectives,
- **Process** - evaluates the implementation and procedures of a project, and,
- **Product** - measures outcomes and attainment of project goals and objectives.

In the study described in this thesis, all four of these evaluations were employed in a sequential order, although some evaluations were overlapping. However, Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (1985) maintain that according to the CIPP scheme, each evaluation can be undertaken independently, be consecutive or overlap, or have different emphasis. Furthermore, whilst the CIPP approach has often been associated with large scale, quantitatively based program evaluations it has been demonstrated that it can also provide useful information for undertaking smaller scale qualitatively based project evaluations, such as the TPP (Boyan, 1988; Harris, 1996; Madaus, et al., 1991).

## CASE STUDY SETTING

The present study was undertaken in the School of Nursing situated within the Division of Health Sciences, at Curtin University of Technology. The School of Nursing (SON) was established in 1975, making it one of the first schools of

nursing to be established in an Australian university. In 1995, at the beginning of the study period, the School of Nursing had 71.98 full-time equivalent (FTE) academic staff and 15.81 FTE general staff. Of the academic staff, 45.20 FTE positions were tenured, 12.50 FTE academic staff were on limited term contracts, and a further 14.28 FTE were employed on a sessional basis. The School had three departments, these being an Undergraduate Studies Department employing 43.75 FTE academic staff; a Postgraduate Studies Department with 8.20 FTE academic staff, and a Department of Behavioural Health Science with 11.40 FTE academic staff. The organisational structure of the School is shown in Figure 3.2. In addition to the three departments shown in the left circle the other main components of the organisational structure, namely the Centre for Nursing Research and Development, Professional Education Services, and Program Support, are shown in the right circle. The centrally depicted Teaching Teams and Special Interest Groups comprised staff drawn from all areas of the School's operations.

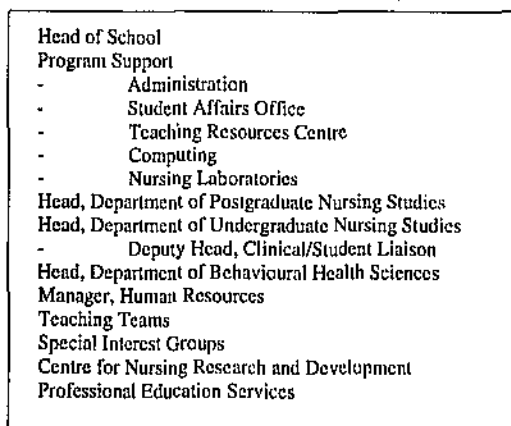


**Figure 3-2 School of Nursing Organisational Structure**

(Adapted from School of Nursing 1995 Internal Annual Report)

Membership of these teams and groups fluctuated, and was determined by teaching requirements and allocations, and the interests of staff. According to the 1995 Internal Annual Report, the Teaching Teams and Special Interest Groups were "central to the total organisation of the School" and they were "expected to be a major source of ideas and expertise for the School's various activities" (School of Nursing, 1995, p. 87).

The 1995 Internal Annual Report goes on to note that responsibility for teaching quality lies with those implementing the curricula, and had been devolved to the Teaching Teams under the overview of the School's Curriculum Committees. As a member of the School's Undergraduate Studies Curriculum Committee during the period the present study was undertaken I was thus in a position to monitor the Committee agendas for issues with a bearing on the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP). The management structure of the SON as outlined in the School's 1995 Internal Annual Report, is shown in Figure 3.3 below.



**Figure 3-3 Management structure of the School of Nursing**

(Adapted from School of Nursing 1995 Internal Annual Report)

The SON's Management Committee, chaired by the Head of School, comprised the three Department Heads, the Deputy Head Clinical/Student Liaison, a representative from Program Support and the Centre for Research and Development, and an elected academic staff representative. The Management Committee met on a fortnightly basis, to advise the Head of School on policy and resource matters. As Head of the Department of Behavioural Health Sciences during the time of the present study I was thus a representative on the School's Management Committee.

Another SON committee with relevance to the present study was the Staff Development Committee. This Committee comprised twelve members representing undergraduate and postgraduate academic staff, the Research Centre, professional education services, continuing education, human resources, and the general staff (School of Nursing, 1995). The purpose of the Staff Development Committee was to provide information and overview procedures for the orientation of new staff, and to identify and provide for the SON's staff development needs. With regard to the present study, it is of interest to note that the Report highlights a workshop on "Reflective Practice" amongst its 1995 activities, which was attended by thirty-four staff (School of Nursing, 1995).

A salient feature of the study setting is the researcher's role in the SON, with membership of the Management Committee and the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee as Department Head, and access to the Staff Development Committee. The limitations of 'internal' evaluation studies will be outlined later in this

chapter. However, the advantages inherent in the researcher's knowledge and understanding of the School's staff and operations were considerable with regard to undertaking the present investigation. For example, one of the research methods employed was that of 'participant observation', detailed below, in which a thorough understanding of the setting is considered vital (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

## RESEARCH METHODS

For most evaluators the question is not whether to use qualitative methods or quantitative methods; the question is how to use the methods so that they complement each other in the best ways possible. (Posavac & Carey, 1997, p. 227)

Maykut and Morehouse (1994) have noted that the developing, alternative paradigms of qualitative research, are based on fundamentally different postulates than the positivists' approach to research. The positivistic tradition in research, sometimes called scientific paradigms or objective and quantitative methodologies, are often in sharp contrast to what may be referred to as qualitative inquiry or naturalistic paradigms and subjective methodologies (Worthen & Sanders, 1987). Some distinctive features of qualitative inquiries are that they are generally conducted in natural settings and utilise the researcher as the chief 'instrument' for data-gathering through the use of participant observation and interviews (Lancy, 1993; LeCompte et al., 1992; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Payne (1994) suggests that the primary reasons for selecting qualitative approaches in evaluation are that they enable the researcher to discover the meanings that an innovation or program has for stakeholders at the program or

project site through observation, documentation, and assessment of the effects of the program on participants.

The processes of discovery, observation, documentation and assessment were integral aspects of the methods employed in this study, within the conceptual framework of the CIPP model of program evaluation. Thus, the data collected in the course of the study was mainly descriptive and qualitative in nature, although there was some quantification of certain aspects of the results as delineated later in this and other chapters.

Whilst the debate on the relative merits of qualitative versus quantitative approaches to research has continued for many years some authors “view both forms of inquiry as appropriate, depending on the purpose and questions for which the study is conducted” (Worthen & Sanders, 1987, p. 53). Moreover, as suggested by Posavac and Carey (1997), it has become accepted practice to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative data in evaluation research.

### **Criteria for CIPP Evaluations**

In addition to selecting appropriate methods to conduct the four evaluations that comprise the CIPP approach, each evaluation necessitated the development of criteria against which the findings associated with the evaluation questions could be judged. Criteria can provide both a framework within which the evidence is collected, as well as a direction toward the types of information sought. The

criteria for the present study were adapted from previous research on the evaluation of professional development programs based on the CIPP approach (Hekimian, 1984). Hekimian identified a range of criteria for context, input, process and product evaluations of professional development programs, which she then validated with different groups of stakeholders. Although Hekimian's study was undertaken in the American college system, and was not therefore directly relevant to an Australian setting, the findings provided a useful platform for the development of criteria against which the effectiveness of the planning, design, implementation and outcomes of the SDP could be determined.

Further details of specific methods employed in the present study are provided below where the procedures used in the context, input, process and product evaluations are described. The findings arising from these evaluations are described in chapters four to eight of this thesis.

## CONTEXT EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (1985) state that a context evaluation can be used for a number of purposes. It may serve to define the institutional context and identify and assess the needs of the target population. A context evaluation may also help to discover potential problems that underlie the expressed needs, determine opportunities to meet the identified needs, and enable the evaluator to judge the merit of the proposed program objectives (Madaus et al., 1991; Stufflebeam, 1983). Stufflebeam and Webster (1988) note that one pointer for undertaking a



context evaluation is if an institution is considering changes to practice or the implementation of an innovative program.

In the present study, the context evaluation primarily addressed the identification of needs, opportunities, and potential barriers or problems in the development of a portfolio-based professional development program for academic staff in the SON. As such, it enabled the researcher to gather data to inform decision-making in the planning and setting of objectives for the proposed Staff Development Program (SDP).

### **Context Evaluation Questions**

Accordingly, specific questions to be addressed in the context evaluation phase of the study were as follows:

- What need is there for teaching portfolios to replace or enhance existing practices for the appraisal, improvement or recognition of university teaching?
- What need is there for professional development activities with respect to teaching portfolios and what form might these activities take?
- What barriers and opportunities presently exist with respect to the implementation of portfolios for professional development or improvement/appraisal of teaching?
- Is there sufficient interest and demand for participation in the proposed staff development activity amongst staff in the SON?
- What objectives should be established for a professional development program based on the use of teaching portfolios?

The criteria for the context evaluation included the extent to which the findings demonstrated that the use of portfolios and portfolio-based professional

development promised to be an improvement over existing strategies; there was sufficient opportunity and interest to warrant the implementation of the program; and, the proposed objectives would address the expressed need.

The procedures used to address the above questions, detailed below, included:

1. a review and qualitative and quantitative content analysis of relevant literature and documentation on portfolio use and teaching development practices;
2. a review, examination and content analysis of relevant University and School of Nursing reports, minutes of meetings, and other policy and planning documents;
3. structured interviews with key personnel in the SON; and
4. a survey of academic staff in the SON.

### **Context Evaluation Procedures**

#### ***Review and qualitative and quantitative content analysis of relevant literature and documentation on portfolio use and teaching development practices.***

As noted in chapters one and two, a review of relevant literature was an integral aspect of the present study, both in order to provide an understanding of the setting and to establish the need for a portfolio-based professional development program. In the present study, aspects of literature relevant to the broader higher education scene were described in chapters one and two. Some of this literature and documentation was subjected to further content analysis in order to provide a better understanding of portfolio use in other institutions, as detailed below. Also, literature and documents more specifically relevant to the present study, that is, directly relevant to the establishment of need for the use of teaching portfolios as

a strategy for teaching development in the SON at Curtin University, were examined.

Mostyn (1985) suggests that content analysis is essentially another term for the analysis of unstructured, open-ended research material, which requires interpretation to give meaning to the content. Moreover, content analysis can yield both qualitative and quantitative data depending on the application of the approach and the material to be analysed (Fraenkel, 1996; LeCompte, Millroy & Preissie, 1992). Accordingly, accounts of portfolio use in 25 institutions recorded in Anderson (1993) were analysed to provide both quantitative and qualitative information on the purpose for which portfolios were used, and to identify potential barriers to portfolio use identified in these institutions.

For example, in order to understand how portfolios were used in the institutions detailed in Anderson (1993), the accounts were examined and coded according to different categories of portfolio use (recognition, appraisal and improvement) and a frequency count was undertaken (Fraenkel, 1996). Moreover, to provide a better understanding of potential barriers to portfolio use, these accounts yielded examples of a range of problems that were associated with portfolio use and the implementation of portfolio programs, which were summarised and collated.

*Examination and content analysis of relevant University and School of Nursing reports, minutes of meetings, and other policy and planning documents.*

An examination and content analysis of pertinent University documentation was conducted during the context evaluation to address the need, feasibility,

opportunities, and potential barriers to the implementation of a portfolio-based staff development program in relation to the study setting. Worthen and Sanders (1987) note that informal content analysis, as applied in this aspect of the context evaluation, can provide qualitative summaries of documents and elicit insights into themes in the documentation with relevance to the research questions.

This analysis explored how portfolios could be integrated with existing procedures and policies for the appraisal and development of teaching. The analysis included scrutiny of University documentation on promotion and annual staff review as outlined in the University's Human Resource Manual, and other relevant University reports, discussion documents and publications. SON documentation inspected by the researcher included Annual Reports, strategic planning documents, and other SON committee documents and minutes of relevance to the present investigation.

#### *Survey and recruitment of academic staff in the SON*

Prior to the program's implementation, a number of fliers (Appendix 3.1) providing information on the proposed staff development program (SDP) and the TPP were posted at various points around the SON. The purpose of the fliers was to promote the forthcoming program and to raise awareness of staff about the use of portfolios. The researcher also gave a short presentation to a SON staff meeting and to the members of the Staff Development Committee to provide information about the proposed program and to encourage staff to consider participation.

A survey of all eligible academic staff in the SON was conducted in order to provide information for program planning and to recruit participants for the proposed program. The survey comprised an information section (Part A), an application form with multiple choice questions for staff who wanted to participate in the staff development program (Part B), and a short, open-ended questionnaire (Part C) (Appendix 3.2).

Thus, Part A provided background information on portfolios, the objectives of the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP) and the author's role in the study. The application form, Part B, contained a section for all respondents to complete, requesting information on name, contact details, position, number of years teaching experience and teaching responsibilities. Informants intending to enrol in the program were also asked to indicate their availability, their preferences for participation (ie. individual, small group, etc.), frequency and length of session, and their reasons for participating in the program. In Part C, respondents were asked to comment on the value placed on teaching in the SON, the methods they presently used to evaluate or document their teaching, and opportunities and barriers for improving their teaching skills.

The survey was sent to all eligible staff in the SON via the internal mail system. Eligible staff were those who were teaching full-time in the SON, had been teaching for at least two years, and who were not on leave or in managerial positions. Survey forms were sent to 43 members of academic staff and responses were subsequently received from 25 (58%) of those surveyed. Of these 17 (39%)

contained expressions of interest to participate in the program. However, two of the contract staff who applied subsequently did not have their contracts renewed and one staff member could not be released from other duties, leaving a total of fourteen staff to take part in the program. Details of the program participants are outlined later in the chapter.

### *Structured interviews with key personnel*

Interviews provide a means of obtaining data that allow for the clarification and probing of issues surrounding an evaluation object (Burns, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Isaac & Michael, 1982). Schumacher & McMillan (1993) point out that a qualitative interview may range from an informal conversational interview through to a standardised open-ended interview. For the context evaluation, the former was deemed more appropriate. Using what Schumacher & McMillan (1993) refer to as key-informant interviews, semi-formal interviews were conducted with the Head of School and the Chair of the Staff Development Committee. Key-informants, are individuals who have special knowledge or status, or who by virtue of their positions have access to information that may otherwise be unavailable to the evaluator (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993). These interviews were conducted during the context evaluation to clarify the potential needs, barriers and opportunities in the planning of the proposed Staff Development Program (SDP).

The interviews were conducted in the offices of the interviewee, at their convenience, and were approximately thirty minutes in duration. At the outset of the interview, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and the proposed

methodology. Discussion centred on the interviewee's thoughts and perceptions of the need for the proposed program, and potential barriers and opportunities for program implementation. Extensive notes were recorded both during and after the interviews by the researcher (Laney, 1993; Mason & Bramble, 1989). These notes were subsequently analysed to inform decisions regarding the objectives and design of the SDP.

## INPUT EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

An input evaluation can be used to identify and assess alternative strategies and procedural designs for implementing a program (Stufflebeam, 1983). They typically involve undertaking an inventory of human and material resources, and determining the relevance and feasibility of a program's procedural design. This enables the evaluator to determine the most appropriate scheme for implementing a program in light of competing strategies and available resources, and based on information obtained from the context evaluation.

### **Input Evaluation Questions**

Accordingly, four main research questions for the input evaluation were formulated.

- What strategies, resources, and program designs have been used by directors of similar portfolio-based professional development programs in other institutions?

- How are portfolios structured and evaluated in other institutions and what items are included?
- What resources are required, and are sufficient resources available, to implement a staff development program in the SON?
- What program design will best address the needs identified in the context evaluation?

Criteria relevant to the input questions included whether the program's structure, design, and activities were feasible and had the potential to meet the program objectives, and whether the physical, material and human resources required to conduct the SDP were appropriate and adequate.

The procedures used for data collection and analysis to address these questions involved:

1. a survey of directors of similar programs in other institutions;
2. a review and content analysis of relevant documents and literature on aspects of portfolio construction and evaluation procedures in other institutions;
3. compiling an inventory of material, physical and human resources for program implementation;
4. the design of the proposed professional development program; and
5. interviews with key personnel.

### **Input Evaluation Procedures**

#### ***Survey of directors of similar programs.***

Stufflebeam (1993) suggests that directors or managers of programs similar to a planned program are an important source of information with regard to program



design, structure and content. As noted in previous chapters, at the time of the present investigation there were no documented accounts of portfolio programs in Australian or British universities. Accordingly, the researcher undertook an open-ended mail survey of program directors of portfolio programs in twelve North American institutions listed in Edgerton et al. (1991). A letter (Appendix 3.3) outlining the purpose of the survey, requested the respondents to comment on the following aspects of portfolio use in their institutions:

- (i) the purpose/s for which portfolios were used, and if their use was voluntary or mandatory;
- (ii) details regarding the forms of assistance and resources provided to staff to assist in portfolio construction;
- (iii) details of the criteria or standards used for the appraisal of portfolios; and
- (iv) their views of the success/benefits and advantages/disadvantages of their portfolio program.

The letter also requested the respondents to provide other information or materials relevant to portfolio use in their institution. Responses were obtained from program directors in nine institutions (75% of those surveyed), and materials and documents such as policy statements, articles, and materials used in portfolio workshops accompanied seven of these responses. The responses were summarised and collated, and an analysis of this information was used in the design of the proposed SDP.

#### ***Review and content analysis of relevant literature and documentation.***

Accounts of portfolio use in other institutions that were examined as part of the context evaluation (Anderson, 1993) were also reviewed in the input evaluation to

inform aspects of the SDP's procedural design. Thus, the researcher analysed these accounts in order to determine the potential structure and contents of portfolios, and to examine how portfolios could be appraised.

With regard to determining the appraisal of portfolios in other institutions a qualitative analysis of Anderson (1993) was undertaken to ascertain exemplars of approaches to portfolio assessment (Fraenkel, 1996). Moreover, University and SON documents were examined to determine how existing teaching development policies and practices may help or hinder the use of portfolios and how existing practice may be integrated with portfolio use. Findings from these analyses are shown in chapter five, which details the input evaluation results.

***Obtaining resources for program implementation.***

A range of resources necessary for the implementation of the proposed SDP was identified in the context evaluation. As part of the input evaluation an application was made for a University grant to undertake a project on professional development activities based on the use of teaching portfolios. Applications for funding were open to all academic staff in the University on a competitive basis. The University's Teaching Learning Group and Quality Office jointly administered the grants, which were financed from the University's Quality Funding (1995-1996) program.

The project objectives, as stated in the application form, were to explore the role of teaching portfolios in:

- the professional development of academic staff; and
- the evaluation and improvement of teaching quality.

The application sought staff replacement funding for 16 staff, for two hours per week, over twelve weeks (384 hours staff replacement), to facilitate staff participation in the Project. Subsequently, a minute from the Head, Academic staff Development in the TLG, was received. This stated in part:

As Chair of the selection panel for the 1995-1996 Staff Development Grants, I am pleased to advise you that your application has been successful. We received 25 applications and were able to fund 12 projects.

However, although the application was successful, the Project budget was reduced to staff replacement funding for eight staff, for two hours per week, over twelve weeks (192 hours staff replacement). Thus, one constraint in planning the proposed project was the limited amount of time release funding available for staff participation. As described in chapter five, in light of other findings arising during the context and input evaluations and in consultation with key stakeholders the SDP was designed to accommodate 14 participants for participation in the program within the available budget.

Other resources available to the researcher for conducting the staff development program included physical resources such as access to SON seminar rooms, as

well as access to administrative support for promoting and conducting the program and the preparation of program materials. Moreover, the Head of School gave permission for me to take time-release from teaching duties for the second semester in 1996, when the program was due to be implemented. In this regard, the researcher was an integral resource in the development and implementation of the program, bringing to the role of program manager and group facilitator a background in psychology, and over twelve years experience as a university lecturer. Furthermore, the researcher was also experienced in the facilitation of group work as a teacher, a clinical psychologist and a facilitator in management training programs.

#### *Design of the Staff Development Program (SDP)*

As outlined in chapter two, the program design with regard to structure, strategies and content, was based on tenets arising from conceptions of reflective practice, scholarship, and professionalism in university teaching. Conceptually then, the program was founded on a number of assumptions. One was that the experience, backgrounds and interests of the participants were an important program resource (Anderson, 1993; Edgerton et al., 1991). A second was that the program would focus on the process as well as products of portfolio preparation, thus providing scope for the participants to explore and reflect on the scholarship underlying their teaching practice (Boyer, 1990; Gibbs, 1992; Kydd, Crawford, & Riches, 1997). A third assumption was that the program should cater for autonomous, adult learners and that a collaborative, collegial approach to teaching development would be encouraged within the program (Katz & Henry, 1993; Lucas, 1994;

Reece & Walker, 1997; Webb, 1996). Fourthly, as noted previously, it was assumed that the CIPP approach would enable the findings from each evaluation to inform decision-making in subsequent stages of program development. In practice, findings from the context and input evaluations, pertinent to the program design, shaped the format of the staff development program, as follows.

Two groups of seven staff (A and B), met fortnightly over fourteen weeks in two hourly sessions facilitated by the researcher. Details of the SDP participants are shown in Table 3-1 below.

**Table 3-1 Details of SDP Participants**

Level of Appointment	Tenured	Non-Tenured	No. of Years Teaching Experience (Range)
Associate Lecturer (A)	0	1	3
Lecturer (B)	9	3	4-16

A seven session program (Appendix 3.4) was developed comprising of an introductory session, four sessions based on categories of items and materials for inclusion in a portfolio, a session focusing on the criteria and standards for the evaluation of portfolios, and a concluding session.

All participants received a file two weeks prior to the commencement of the program. The file contained the following materials:

- an introductory information page(Appendix 3.5).
- an informed consent form (Appendix 3.6).

- a program (Appendix 3.4).
- details of session dates and times (Appendix 3.7).
- *How to compile a teaching portfolio* (Federation of Australian University Staff Association, 1992).
- *Using the teaching portfolio to improve instruction* (Seldin, Annis, & Zubizarreta, 1995).

The pre-reading materials were provided in order to encourage participants to start thinking about their own teaching portfolios prior to the commencement of the program, and to enable them to consider their objectives for participation. The introductory information emphasised the fact that the program was a negotiable one, and subject to changes depending on participant interests. Further details of program activities and materials and the individual and group tasks undertaken during the program are recorded in chapter six of this thesis, which provides the process findings of the TPP.

#### *Interviews with key personnel in the SON.*

Interviews were held with the Head of School, the Heads of the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programs, and the Chair of the Staff Development Committee. The purpose of these semi-formal interviews was to obtain feedback on the proposed program's design, to establish the allocation of funding for time release of staff, and to solicit the support and cooperation of key personnel for program implementation (Pitman & Maxwell, 1992; Schumacher & McMillan, 1993). The interviews thus focussed on the interviewees' perceptions of the feasibility of the study design and the logistics of time release of staff. These interviews were held

in the interviewee's office at a time of their choice, and took between 20 – 30 minutes. The researcher took notes during the interviews, and these were referred to in finalising the procedural details of the staff development program (Borg & Gall, 1989; Burns, 1994).

ii

## PROCESS EVALUATION PROCEDURES

A process evaluation, as the name suggests, examines the procedures involved in the implementation phase of a program. According to Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (1985) a process evaluation enables the researcher to identify defects in the design and implementation of a program and to record and judge procedural events and activities. Thus, the process evaluation phase makes it possible for the researcher to detect potential and actual problems during program implementation, and to determine the merits or otherwise of the procedural plan by monitoring and observing project activities.

### Process Evaluation Questions

The central questions to be addressed as part of the process evaluation were as follows.

- How was the portfolio program implemented, and was it executed according to plan?
- From the perspective of participants and the facilitator, how useful were the program activities and tasks for portfolio construction?

- What do the session outcomes tell us about the process and products of portfolio preparation?
- How satisfied were participants with the staff development sessions and the overall program?
- What recommendations are there for improvements or changes to the staff development program?

Criteria against which the process findings were judged included determining the appropriateness and effectiveness of program activities and design, and the strengths and weaknesses and costs and benefits of program processes and procedures. The specific methods used in the course of the process evaluation to address these questions are shown below.

1. The administration of various questionnaires to program participants to determine their views on the relative importance on the components of a portfolio and their views of good teaching in different contexts.
2. The administration of feedback forms to ascertain the reaction of participants to program sessions.
3. Participant observation and the maintenance of a journal to record program attendance, activities, and observations of group interaction and participation.
4. Audio tape-recording, transcription and analysis of transcripts of program sessions.

Details of the procedures used as part of the process evaluation are provided below.



## Process Evaluation Procedures

### *Administration of questionnaires to determine participants' goals, preferred portfolio contents, and views on good teaching in different contexts.*

A number of questionnaires were devised in the course of the TPP to facilitate portfolio construction and to ascertain the views of participants on various aspects of teaching portfolios as outlined below. One questionnaire sought to determine the individual and group goals participants hoped to achieve in the SDP (Appendix 3.8). The responses to this open-ended questionnaire were collated and provided as feedback to both program groups as outlined in chapter six.

A series of questionnaires sought data on various components of a portfolio (Appendices 3.9-3.13). The questionnaires on portfolio contents were based on Edgerton et al.'s (1991) list of portfolio materials. SDP participants were asked to indicate if they considered particular items essential to include in a portfolio and whether they already had these items. In addition to providing a focus for group discussions, these questions were also designed to provide the participants with a shared understanding of potential resources for materials that may be included in a portfolio, and to consider general issues surrounding portfolio contents. Responses were collated and quantified for each item (i.e. the number of people who thought an item was essential, and number of people who already had particular portfolio items) and results were presented (as group data) at the beginning of the next session.

Another open-ended questionnaire focused on the development of criteria for good teaching in various teaching contexts (Appendix 3.14). The questions were designed to elicit characteristics of good teaching and teachers in various teaching contexts as well as vignettes of good teaching practice. Responses to this questionnaire were collated and used in the context of a group activity in session seven of the SDP.

The questionnaires used in the TPP program were designed to provide a focus for the group discussions in program sessions, and an understanding of issues surrounding the process and product of portfolio construction. They were generally completed by the participants as a group activity towards the end of each session, and the results were collated and provided feedback and a focus for group discussion in the following session.

### *Session feedback forms*

Feedback forms for program sessions (Appendix 3.15) were devised in accordance with Kirkpatrick's (1994) four-level approach to the evaluation of training programs, namely reaction, learning, behaviour, and results (Kirkpatrick, 1994). This approach is also applicable to evaluating staff development activities (Blackmore, Gibbs, & Shrives, 1999). In the context of the process evaluation the feedback forms were designed primarily to ascertain a participant's reaction to program activities, to determine whether changes were required for the following week's session, and to seek open-ended responses to these questions:

- (i) From this session I gained:
- (ii) Questions that remain unanswered include:
- (iii) The session could be improved by:
- (iv) In the next session I would like:

Responses to this feedback questionnaire were collated immediately after the session for each group. The collated information was used to inform the activities of the next session, to gauge the satisfaction of participants with the program, and to provide a better understanding of the process of portfolio construction.

#### *Participant observation and maintenance of a Project journal*

Participant observation is a data-gathering technique often used in ethnographic studies in which the investigator may take part in the day-to-day activities of the individuals being investigated (Popham, 1993). Atkinson & Hammersley (1994) note that a distinction can be drawn between participant and non-participant observation, "the former referring to observation carried out when the researcher is playing an established participant role in the scene studied" (p. 252).

Moreover, they note that the degree of a researcher's participation may be influenced by a number of factors. These include whether others involved in the research know the researcher's role and research aims, the activities in which the researcher engages, and the researcher's orientation as 'insider' or 'outsider' (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994). In the present study, the researcher's roles within the TPP and in the context of the SDP were clearly defined and the purpose of the research was fully explained to all participants.

Observations arising from participant observation are generally recorded in the form of field notes or are kept in a journal for subsequent analysis (Lancy, 1993; Merriam, 1998). In the present study, the researcher recorded the procedural events and activities of the program in a journal. The researcher made notes in the journal both during and after each session about attendance, group interactions, and participant behaviour, and recorded self-observations of the researcher's performance in the role of group facilitator and program manager. The collection of data in a journal may be classified as a narrative data collection system where events are recorded in written form to provide detailed descriptions of observed phenomena, to explain unfolding processes, and to chronicle information about individuals, groups and activities (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The researcher made entries as soon as possible after particular events of interest during the group sessions, reflected on the sessions and recorded these reflections in the journal immediately after the session.

The journal served a number of purposes. It enabled the researcher to be responsive to participant needs, it provided a detailed record of procedural events and it allowed for triangulation of the data obtained from participants in the form of questionnaire responses and the transcripts of group sessions (Borg, Gall, & Gall, 1993; Denzin, 1988). A content analysis of the researcher's journal at the conclusion of the program provided information in relation to the evaluation questions and the conduct of the SDP (Borg, et al., 1993).

*Recording, transcription and analysis of program sessions*

All program sessions were audio-taped using a tape recorder that was centrally placed in the room where the sessions were conducted. These recordings resulted in approximately 28 hours of recorded group discussion (7 sessions x 2 groups (A&B) x 2 hourly sessions). The recordings were transcribed between sessions so that the transcripts were available before each subsequent session. The transcriber, a member of the administrative staff of the SON, knew the program participants and thus recorded who was speaking on the transcripts. If the transcriber was uncertain as to who was speaking or aspects of the content, the researcher listened to these sections of tape and assisted in the transcription. This enabled a full transcript of the group discussions to be available for a preliminary analysis after the session and more detailed analysis at the conclusion of the SDP.

The transcripts of the group sessions were analysed using QSR. NUD•IST 3.0.5 (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing, Searching and Theorising) for Windows (Qualitative Solutions and Research Pty. Ltd, 1996). The NUD•IST program is a software package for the qualitative analysis of unstructured data, in this instance, the transcripts resulting from the audio-taped program sessions of the present study and sections of the researcher's journal, described above.

NUD•IST has been favourably evaluated in comparison to other computer-based qualitative data analysis systems, and is described as user friendly and well thought out (Weitzman & Miles, 1995). Moreover, the powerful search capabilities and flexibility of NUD•IST allow for a more systematic and complete

analysis of text than through the use of manual methods (Weitzman & Miles, 1995).

The structure of the NUD•IST database system is organised and referenced by two separate but parallel databases or systems (Qualitative Solutions and Research, 1996). The document system contains information about every document (both on and off-line) and any memos about it, whilst the index system contains the data categories (called nodes) constructed by the researcher, plus information about the categories and the documents indexed under that category. Thus, using NUD•IST, coding the data is a process of indexing segments of text which are then 'stored' at nodes in a hierarchical tree structure, as each node or category can have any number of nodes attached below as 'children' or adjacent as 'siblings' (Qualitative Solutions and Research, 1996).

In the context of the present study, Microsoft Word document files of each transcribed group session were entered as a text only, on-line document into the NUD•IST project database. The length of text units used in the present study was a paragraph, as this is considered the most suitable unit of analysis in conversations (Weitzman & Miles, 1995).

Analysis of the transcripts used both the document and indexing system capabilities of NUD•IST. Thus, each document file of a session transcript could be investigated to review the discussion of program topics or for instances of

discussion on any particular theme of interest, for example, 'clinical teaching' or 'quality of teaching' (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990).

The indexing system was also used to categorise group session discussions according to the topics and issues discussed, such as, 'portfolio construction' or 'information from others - feedback from colleagues'. Thus categories were derived from a combination of program topics, notes in the researcher's journal and document analysis (Patton, 1990; Wiersma, 1991). That is, the data categories were created by coding the transcripts according to the session, group, program topics, and issues and themes arising in the discussion. Figure 3.2 illustrates this in a section of a NUD•IST 'tree'.

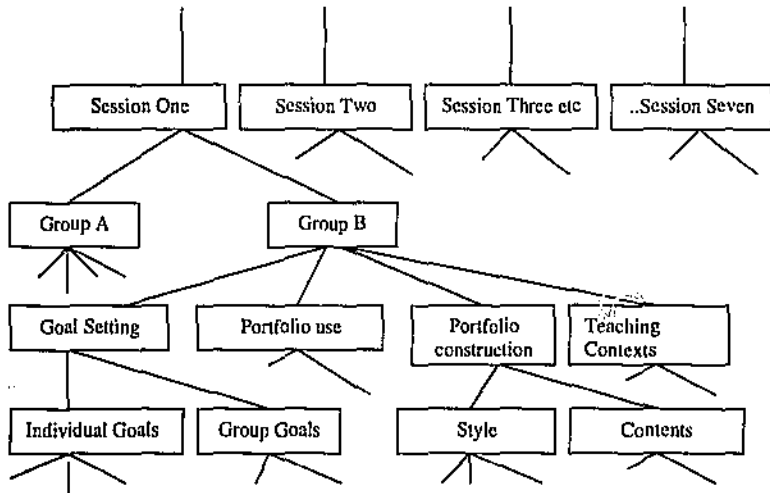


Figure 3-4 Section of NUD•IST tree showing examples of categories at different nodes

NUD•IST thus facilitated analysis and understanding of the discussion occurring during SDP activities and surrounding the issues arising during the SDP sessions. It also facilitated a comparative analysis between the two program groups.

## PRODUCT EVALUATION PROCEDURES

In the CIPP approach, the product evaluation addresses program outcomes. Thus, the aim of a product evaluation is to collect descriptions and judgements of outcomes and relate these to program objectives and to context, input and process information. According to Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (1985) this can be achieved by defining and measuring outcome criteria and collecting judgements of outcomes from stakeholders through qualitative and quantitative analyses.

The information obtained from a product evaluation is used in decision-making in order to determine whether to continue, modify or terminate a program and to provide a record of intended and unintended effects and positive and negative outcomes (Stufflebeam, 1983). Thus a product evaluation enables the researcher to inform institutional and program development decision-making through the provision of information obtained from key stakeholders and previous evaluation phases (Madaus et al., 1991; Patton, 1990)

### **Product Evaluation Questions**

The main questions addressed in the product evaluation are as follows:



- What were the key outcomes of the professional development program?
- What was the perceived utility and quality of the program sessions and TPP outcomes for key stakeholders?
- To what extent did the participants achieve their individual and group goals?
- What recommendations can be made for further program development?

These questions were addressed using various procedures as outlined in the next section and the findings were judged against a number of criteria. The criteria for the product evaluation included a determination of the effectiveness of the program, the extent of goal attainment and how well the program met the needs of program participants and other stakeholders.

Four methods were employed in the product evaluation, namely:

1. The administration of follow-up questionnaires to participants.
2. Structured interviews with program participants.
3. An examination and classification of participants' teaching portfolios.
4. A review of the Project journal and context, input and process evaluation findings.

### **Product Evaluation Procedures**

#### ***Administration of follow-up questionnaires to SDP participants.***

Soon after the conclusion of the group sessions a letter of thanks (Appendix 3.16) and a certificate of participation (Appendix 3.17) were sent to all participants.

These were followed by open-ended questionnaires (Appendix 3.18) which were sent to participants in the internal mail system two weeks after the program's conclusion (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1985; Blackmore et al., 1999). These questionnaires asked participants to comment on the Staff Development Program (SDP) in terms of:

- the structure of the program (number and length of sessions, time frame, group size, etc.);
- the discussion topics (content areas) covered;
- the resources provided (ie. materials, time release);
- the group facilitator's performance (ie. running of sessions, project management, etc.);
- their personal objectives and the extent to which they were achieved;
- whether the program sessions provided adequate support and resources and further support or resources required;
- barriers or problems participants thought they may encounter in portfolio development;
- whether these were adequately addressed in the program sessions;
- the potential advantages or disadvantages in developing a teaching portfolio;
- the purposes for which they would like to see portfolios used in the SON;
- whether they would recommend the program to the SON Staff Development Committee or to other academic staff; and
- any further comments they may have.

As noted above, this questionnaire sought participants' views on various aspects of the SDP. The responses were anonymous to encourage frank and honest opinions, although the participants' group membership was identified through the use of A and B forms of the same questionnaire. Responses were received from all participants, although reminders had to be sent after two weeks, as at that time, not all had returned the questionnaires.

#### ***Structured interviews with program participants***

Structured interviews were conducted with SDP participants to determine the impact of the program on participants, as advocated by Kirkpatrick's (1994)

model of program evaluation, described previously. These interviews took place between three and five months after the program was completed. The interviews were up to sixty minutes in duration and were arranged for a time that was mutually acceptable to both the interviewer and interviewee. Generally the interviews took place in the participant's office, although, as noted in chapter seven, one interview took place by telephone. The researcher took notes during the interviews and in some instances noted comments *verbatim*. In accordance with accepted practice in evaluation research, the researcher conferred with the interviewee at the conclusion of the interview to ensure that the participant concurred on the accuracy of the notes taken (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Patton, 1990; Schumacher & McMillan, 1993).

The interview schedule included the following open-ended questions.

- What progress have you made on your portfolio since last year?
- What factors influenced your progress?
- How satisfied are you with the present state of your portfolio?
- For what purposes (have) will you use your portfolio?
- How has the preparation of a portfolio impacted on your teaching?
- How has the preparation of a portfolio impacted on your career planning?
- How should your portfolio be judged (evaluated)?

Structured interviews are an important part of data collection procedures in qualitative methods, as noted previously. Popham (1988) suggests that the advantages of interviews over paper-and-pencil self reports are that the interviewer can put the respondent at ease, and can follow-up on responses in a manner not possible in written questionnaires. Moreover, Schumacher & McMillan (1993) note that when responses are recorded in handwritten notes, as

was the case here, it forces the interviewer to be attentive, and 'legitimizes' the writing of research insights during the interview. These interviews were face-to-face in most instances. For reasons outlined in chapter six, four participants had left the School of Nursing at the time of these follow-up interviews. One was undertaking full-time postgraduate study, one was employed in another School within the University, and another two were employed in other organisations.

All participants consented to continue with their participation and some were very keen to get the researcher's feedback on their teaching portfolio. Interview responses were collated and analysed to determine the main outcomes, from the perspective of the program participants and the researcher. Interviewees were also requested to make their portfolios available for examination during the interview. All agreed to this request, and generally appeared pleased to display their work as described below. One participant who had moved away from the metropolitan area was interviewed by telephone and her portfolio was not viewed. This participant readily complied with a request to provide a detailed description of her portfolio to assist the researcher in classifying her portfolio.

#### *Examination and classification of participants' teaching portfolios.*

It will be recalled that in the input evaluation, a preliminary classification of teaching portfolios had been identified from the literature on portfolio use. These categories were based on content analysis of documents on portfolio programs, and a review of literature on the use of teaching portfolios, as described in chapters four and five. This preliminary classification was subsequently refined

during the process evaluation, where participants identified their perceptions of the essential components of a portfolio and discussed various portfolio styles.

The classification was refined further based on work by Tomkinson (1997) in which she proposed a taxonomic structure for categorising teaching portfolios. The factors identified in Tomkinson's (1997) classification scheme, which she treats as dichotomies, are:

<i>Style</i>	Descriptive	Reflective
<i>Structure</i>	Informal	Formal
<i>Scope</i>	Narrow (teaching)	Broad (professional)
<i>Purpose</i>	Developmental (formative)	Evaluative (summative)
<i>Confidentiality</i>	Personal (closed)	Public (open)
<i>Content</i>	Focussed	Comprehensive
<i>Timing</i>	Discrete	Continuous

This classificatory system was further refined as part of the product evaluation activities as described in chapter seven, which also shows the findings from the examination of participants' portfolios.

***Review of the researcher's journal and context, input and process findings.***

As in previous evaluations, the researcher's journal provided another source of data. In the product evaluation, the researcher recorded details of the dates and times of interviews, the interview records, and descriptions of the participants' portfolios. These recorded observations supplemented other data obtained in this

evaluation and served to document key issues and incidents that occurred in undertaking the product evaluation (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

In accordance with the CIPP evaluation framework, program outcomes are reviewed in the light of findings from previous evaluations (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1985). Accordingly, the records and data from previous evaluations were reviewed in relation to product criteria such as the nature and extent of need, the efficacy of the program design, and the effectiveness of program implementation. The findings of this review are discussed in chapter seven, whilst an overview of the study showing the sequence of procedures used in the CIPP evaluations is shown below.

### **Time Frame of the TPP**

The previous sections have outlined the procedures used in the context, input, process, and product evaluations that were undertaken over the course of the evaluative case study of the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP). Figure 3-5 below shows the time frame of the procedures used within the CIPP model. As discussed previously, some of the evaluations that comprise the TPP are overlapping in terms of the procedures used as illustrated in Figure 3-5. In this regard, the methods utilised were undertaken in a timely fashion with respect to meeting both the informational and decision-making requirements of the staff development program (SDP).

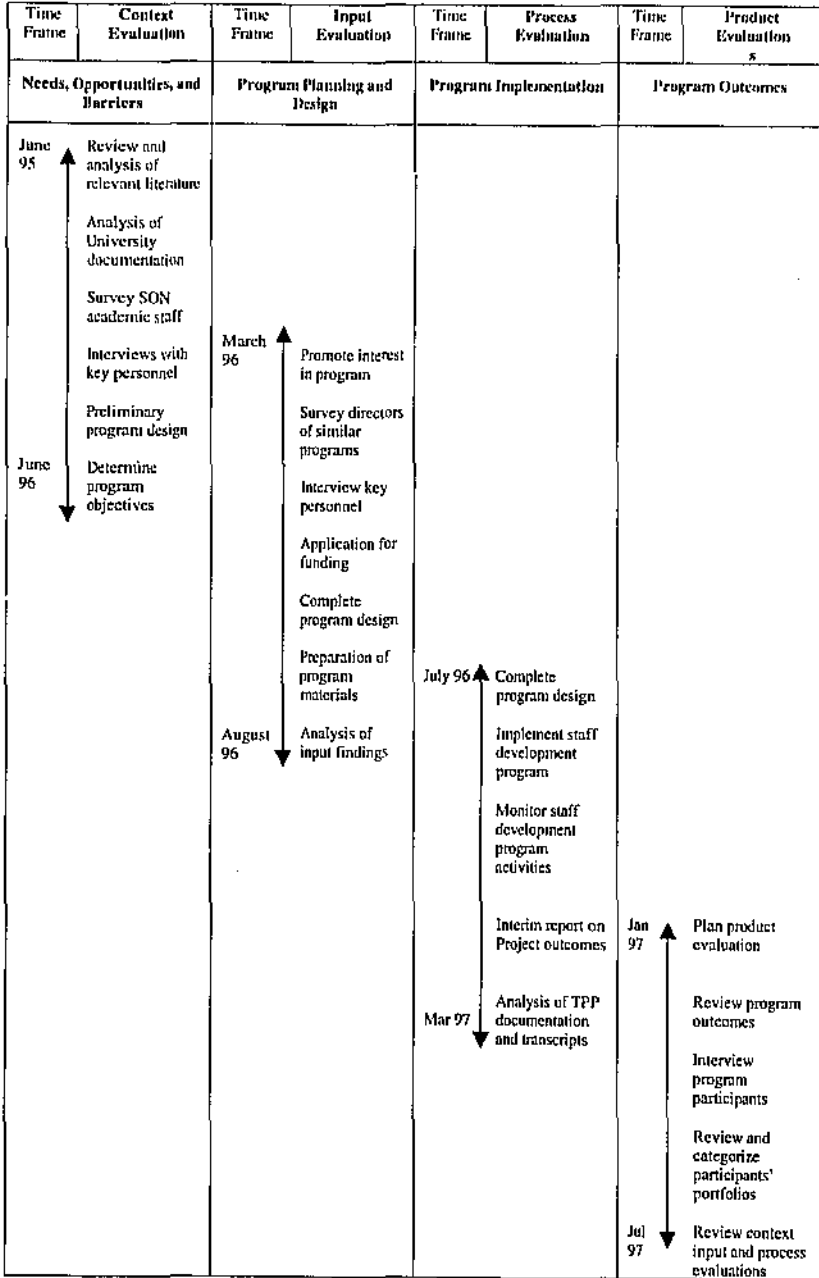


Figure 3-5 Overview of procedures showing time frame of evaluations

## STAKEHOLDERS

The term stakeholders is commonly used to refer to those who should be involved in, or may be affected by, a program evaluation (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1981, p. 25). The following list (adapted from Payne, 1994), identifies the major stakeholders in the present study.

- Policy makers and decision-makers - relevant committee members and academic staff of the SON and University committees.
- Program sponsors – SON, Quality Office, Teaching Learning Group.
- Evaluation sponsors - Quality Office, Teaching Learning Group.
- Target participants - Academic staff in the SON participating in the SDP.
- Program management – Researcher, Management Committee and Academic Staff Development Committee, SON.
- Evaluators – Researchers in higher education.
- Contextual stakeholders - Schools, Departments and Divisions at Curtin University of Technology, and those responsible for teaching development in other higher education institutions.

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Prior to the implementation of the Staff Development Program (SDP) the research proposal was submitted for approval to the Edith Cowan University Committee for the Conduct of Ethical Research. All subjects participating in the



Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP) including academic and other staff who were surveyed or interviewed and program participants had the purpose of the study fully explained to them. All subjects signed a standard informed consent form that was countersigned by the researcher, providing a guarantee of confidentiality and the anonymity of all subjects in subsequent reports.

### LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES OF THE STUDY

There has been an ongoing debate for many years about the distinction between educational evaluation and educational research. According to Popham (1993), there are clear differences between these two activities. The following table (adapted from Popham, 1993, p.13), highlights some of the differences between the two activities, with respect to the focus of the investigation, the generalisability of the findings, and the emphasis of values underlying each activity.

Inquiry Characteristics	Educational Evaluation	Educational Research
Focus:	Decisions	Conclusions
Generalisability:	Low	High
Value emphasis:	Worth/Merit	Truth

**Fig. 3-6 Differences between educational evaluation and educational research**  
(adapted from Popham, 1993, p. 13)

Payne (1994) argues that the replication of results in evaluation studies has a lower likelihood, compared with educational research, and that the control of relevant variables is high in research and low in evaluation. He also notes that:

It perhaps makes most sense to conceive of evaluation, as... 'disciplined inquiry'. Such a conception calls for rigor and systematic examination but also allows for a range of methodologies from traditional, almost laboratory-like experimentation to free-ranging, heuristic, and speculative goal-free evaluation. (Payne, 1994, p. 12)

Some quantitative researchers claim there are limitations inherent in using an evaluative case study approach such as low generalisability and dependability of the results. On the other hand, Maykut and Morehouse (1994) note that several elements in the procedures for collecting and analysing the data in qualitative research findings may increase the trustworthiness of the findings.

Some of these elements include using multiple methods of data collection (referred to as triangulation) and the building of an audit trail through documentation of all procedures (Denzin, 1988; Worthen & Sanders, 1987). Also, the use of techniques such as 'member checks' which refer "to the process of asking research participants to tell you whether you have accurately described their experience" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 147) can assist in increasing the reliability of data collection procedures.

Moreover, Guba and Lincoln (1981) have listed a number of ways to ensure that participant observation procedures are reliable, including the use of detailed notes,

as well as triangulating, confirming and cross-checking. These techniques were adopted in the present study where appropriate.

In addition to the limitations arising from the qualitative case study design the generalisability of the findings of this research are also limited by the small number of study participants and the fact that they represent only one academic discipline. Clearly, a cautious approach must be adopted in extrapolating the present findings to other disciplinary contexts or university settings.

The researcher wore a number of additional hats during the course of this investigation, such as:

- project manager – which involved all aspects of managing the TPP from promotion of the staff development program through to the organisation of venues, materials, etc.;
- group facilitator – which included the facilitation of all the SDP sessions; and
- evaluator – which required obtaining feedback on program sessions as well as feedback on the researcher's performance as facilitator.

Whilst undertaking the investigation I was also a colleague of the SDP participants and was employed as a lecturer and Head of Department in the SON. The interplay of these roles was at times difficult as was maintaining the boundary between my normal position within the SON and that of researcher. Nevertheless,

by virtue of being an 'insider' I was in a unique position to understand and empathise with colleagues taking part in the study in ways not open to an 'outsider' (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Borg et al., 1993).

These challenges as well as the limitations will be discussed in further detail in subsequent sections of this dissertation. It is worth noting here though, that my role was clearly articulated at the outset to all those taking part in the TPP, thus minimising the potential for any conflict of interest. Also, all participants were given assurances of confidentiality and anonymity in the reporting of the findings. Furthermore, by being conscious of the pitfalls inherent in the methodologies employed, the researcher could endeavour to avoid these where possible, or take steps to minimise problems by the use of appropriate strategies where these were available.

Overall, the present study utilised a range of different procedures for collecting data to inform the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of the portfolio-based staff development program (SDP) and the central research question of this evaluative case study (TPP). The findings of the context, input, process and product evaluations are shown in the following four chapters of this thesis.

## Chapter Four

# CONTEXT EVALUATION FINDINGS

*More creative thinking about how to assess good teaching is needed. In order to recognise good teaching, and to help foster a culture in which reflective discourse about teaching is valued, best practice indicates that a principal source for making a judgement about an individual academic's teaching competence for confirmation and promotion should be a teaching portfolio. This portfolio should be developed collaboratively and based on a longer record or journal sustained over an extended period. (Ramsden, Margetson, Martin, & Clark, 1995, p. 95)*

## INTRODUCTION

In the first three chapters of this thesis I have outlined the main trends and issues in higher education which led to the inception of the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP). These chapters also describe the setting of the TPP and the methodology and procedures used to inform the design, implementation and evaluation of the Staff Development Program (SDP). The findings from the context, input, process and product evaluations that comprise the CIPP approach (detailed in chapter three) are described in this and the subsequent three chapters.

A context evaluation serves to define the institutional setting, and to identify and assess the needs of the target population. This evaluation can also discover potential problems that underlie the expressed needs, determine opportunities to

meet the identified needs, and enable the evaluator to judge the merit of the proposed program objectives (Stufflebeam, 1983).

### **Context Evaluation Questions**

In the present study, the context evaluation built on the literature review to address the identification of needs, opportunities, and potential barriers or problems in the development of a portfolio-based Staff Development Program (SDP) for academic staff in the School of Nursing (SON) at Curtin. This was done in relation to the central research question of the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP).

Accordingly, the specific questions to be addressed in this evaluation were:

- What need is there for teaching portfolios to replace or enhance existing practices for the appraisal, improvement or recognition of university teaching?
- What need is there for professional development activities with respect to teaching portfolios and what form may these activities take?
- What barriers and opportunities presently exist with respect to the use of portfolios for teaching development?
- Is there sufficient interest and demand for participation in the proposed Staff Development Program (SDP) amongst staff?
- What objectives should be established for a professional development program based on the use of teaching portfolios?

The context findings were examined against criteria to determine the extent to which the data established needs, opportunities, barriers and interest. That is, the extent to which the findings demonstrated: that the use of portfolios and portfolio-based professional development promised to be an improvement over existing

strategies for teaching development; there was sufficient opportunity and interest to warrant the implementation of the SDP; and the proposed objectives could address the expressed need.

The methods used in obtaining the data to address the context evaluation questions have been fully outlined in chapter three. Moreover, as previously noted, some procedures of the CIPP evaluations undertaken in the course of the present study were overlapping and concurrent, and, in this respect, at times addressed questions relevant to more than one evaluation. The findings with relevance to needs, barriers, and opportunities with respect to portfolio use in a university setting are described below. A discussion of the implications of the findings for planning of the Staff Development Program (SDP) and the central research question of the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP) follow these.

## NEED FOR TEACHING PORTFOLIOS

The main issues and trends in university teaching with relevance to the present study were outlined in chapters one and two. In summary, the issues concerned the quality and status of university teaching and how teaching performance should be appraised and improved. In response, a number of professional organizations and policy makers have advocated the use of portfolios for various teaching development purposes (Anderson, 1993; Boileau, 1993; Boyer, 1990; Edgerton, Hutchings, & Quinlan, 1991; Federation of Australian University Staff Association, 1992; Gibbs, 1992; Knapper, 1995; Ramsden et al., 1995; Seldin &

Annis, 1991; Smith, 1995; Urbach, 1992; Wolf, 1991b). A necessary aspect of the context evaluation then, was to review pertinent literature and other documentation such as policy documents and committee minutes, to determine the extent of need for portfolios across the sector and in the study setting. To establish this two issues were investigated, namely: dissatisfaction with prevailing teaching development strategies; and how portfolios were being employed as a strategy for formative and summative evaluation of teaching in higher education.

### **International Context**

As noted in chapter one, portfolios for teaching evaluation purposes in higher education were first introduced in the 1970s as an initiative of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (Knapper, 1995). In Canada, at that time, teaching was assessed primarily on the basis of results from student questionnaires and the portfolio concept was developed in response to criticisms that this constituted only one type of evidence (Knapper, 1995). The portfolio concept was subsequently adopted in the United States where Peter Seldin (1980) became a strong advocate of their use, mainly as a strategy for teaching improvement. It was argued that teaching practice could be enhanced through portfolio development because it encouraged staff to take a more reflective approach in their teaching (Seldin, 1997).

However, despite this initial enthusiasm for portfolios as a strategy for teaching appraisal and improvement, it was not until the American Association for Higher



Education (AAHE) initiated a program on teaching portfolios in the 1990s that an attempt was made to systematically investigate their use. The AAHE program, which aimed "to provoke new conversations about teaching" (Edgerton et al., 1991, p. i), provided a number of narrated portfolio entries, as exemplars. This document showed that the development of the portfolio concept was at an early stage, and indicated that there was much to learn about the nature and use of a teaching portfolio. Edgerton et al. (1991) summed it up by saying that the teaching portfolio:

is no one thing; it's a tool, a technology, to be used in ways that advance particular purposes. Its structure and format, the array of entries included in it, the processes it entails, and the methods by which it is judged will depend on institutional (and perhaps departmental) context and culture. (p. 49)

A further publication from the AAHE profiled campus practice in the use of teaching portfolios with concise accounts of how twenty-five campuses were using them, and explored the promise and pitfalls of the portfolio concept (Anderson, 1993, p. 1). Content analysis of this document was undertaken to: obtain insight into various aspects of portfolio use; provide a better understanding of the portfolio concept; and inform the development of the Staff Development Program (SDP) at Curtin.

An initial analysis of the AAHE document (Anderson, 1993) sought to determine the purposes for which portfolios were used in the institutions profiled. More specifically, the accounts of campus practices were scrutinised to establish whether portfolios were used for the recognition, appraisal or improvement of

teaching in these institutions. The results are outlined in Table 4-1 below, which shows that of the 25 universities and colleges profiled in Anderson (1993) 17 (68%) used teaching portfolios primarily for appraisal purposes, whilst 12 (48%) used portfolios for the recognition or improvement of teaching.

**Table 4-1 Analysis of portfolio use in AAHE document (Anderson, 1993)**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Recognition</b>	<b>Appraisal</b>	<b>Improvement</b>
Ball State University	x		x
Cuny York College	x	x	
Dalhousie University	x		x
Doane College		x	
Evergreen State College		x	x
Fayetteville State University	x	x	
Gordon College			x
Harvard University Medical School	x	x	
Manhattanville College		x	
Miami-Dade Community College		x	
Murray State University	x	x	x
Otterbein College		x	x
Saint Norbert College		x	x
Syracuse University	x	x	
San Diego State University		x	
Texas A&M University	x		x
Tompkins Cortland Community College		x	
University of Colorado at Boulder	x	x	
Maryland University College	x		x
University of Minnesota-Twin Cities			x
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	x	x	
University of Pittsburgh, Greensburg Campus		x	
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse			x
Western Michigan University			x
York University	x	x	
<b>Total Portfolio Use</b>	<b>12 (48%)</b>	<b>17 (68%)</b>	<b>12 (48%)</b>

A number of these institutions (e.g. Murray State University, University of Nebraska, Dalhousie University, San Diego State University) indicated they introduced portfolios because of dissatisfaction amongst staff with reliance on student appraisal of teaching (Anderson, 1993). Some (e.g. Saint Norbert College, Doane College) noted that they perceived portfolios to be an improvement over existing (and limited) approaches to documenting teaching practice, and that complaints from staff had prompted a review of the institution's teaching evaluation practices.

Anderson (1993) pointed out that in moving beyond student ratings these institutions were taking a step toward sounder evaluation practice through the principle of collecting multiple sources of evidence of teaching effectiveness. Some universities also saw this as a step towards better peer review of teaching. For instance, the University of Pittsburgh implemented teaching portfolios as part of a larger initiative to institute peer review whilst Otterbein College's education department used portfolios as part of an effort to prompt greater collaboration and discussion of teaching, and more classroom visits (Anderson, 1993).

As shown in Table 4-1, 15 (60%) of the institutions profiled indicated they used portfolios for more than one purpose, often combining formative and summative evaluation on the basis of a portfolio. Anderson (1993) noted that, from these accounts of portfolio use, we may need to rethink the conventional wisdom that evaluation and improvement make poor bedfellows. For example, institutions such as the University of Nebraska initially introduced portfolios to increase

rewards for good teaching but then found their staff requesting to use portfolios for appraisal purposes. On the other hand, at Otterbein College where portfolios were implemented for appraisal purposes, staff reported that they also found them useful as a teaching improvement strategy.

The content analysis of these profiles, then, showed that the majority of institutions were moving towards the use of portfolio based assessment of university teaching. It was also apparent that the need for improved practices with regard to appraisal and improvement of university teaching, coupled with a need for greater reward and recognition of teaching, had led to the introduction of portfolio programs in these institutions. This analysis placed the trends in portfolio use discussed in chapter two in sharper focus, and confirmed the promise of the portfolio concept for formative and summative teaching evaluation.

### **Australian Context**

In Australia, the introduction of portfolios for any purpose was a more recent phenomenon, and no detailed accounts of portfolio use were available. However, in line with the higher education sector overseas, a perceived need for portfolios in Australia was linked with a need for improvements in teaching appraisal, improvement and accountability practices (Neumann, 1994; Ramsden et al., 1995). Federal Government policy statements had placed quality high in higher education on the national agenda and concerns were raised about the quality and appraisal of university teaching (Baldwin, 1991). This led the Senate Standing

Committee on Employment, Education and Training which reported on the 'Priorities for Reform in Higher Education' to recommend that the promotion of good teaching be designated a national priority area (Aulich Committee, 1990). The Committee went on to suggest that in developing their quality profiles, institutions should provide information on policies and programs they had implemented to achieve this aim.

To this end, the Australian Vice Chancellor's Committee (AV-CC) also published a widely circulated paper entitled 'Guidelines for Effective University Teaching' (Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, 1993). The AV-CC (1993) described university teaching as a profession and a scholarly activity, and urged academic staff to:

be appropriate role models and exhibit to their students a commitment to scholarly values, to life long learning, to professional and personal growth through critical reflection and self-evaluation, to accountability for their own professional activities, and to a responsible and ethical practice of their profession. (p. 1)

A number of other studies and reports on the Australian higher education sector at this time, point to the need for better practices for the recognition, appraisal and improvement of teaching. For example, a study undertaken at the University of Melbourne examined the impact of reforms implemented in 1987 designed to increase the recognition of teaching quality in academic staff promotion. They concluded that whilst these reforms had encouraged the Promotion Committee to pay more attention to teaching and applicants to provide more information on

their teaching, they had not led to an increased number of staff seeking promotion based on their teaching (Anwyl, Balla, & McInnes, 1991).

With regard to teaching appraisal, Paget, Baldwin, Hore, & Kermond (1992) surveyed supervisors and staff from 19 Australian higher education institutions, to ascertain their use of appraisal procedures for academic staff. This study was undertaken to determine if institutions had adopted staff appraisal procedures previously negotiated as part of a salary agreement under the 1988 Australian University Academic & Related Staff Award (Paget et al., 1992). They found tremendous variation in staff appraisal procedures between institutions and disciplines, as well as unevenness in understanding the purpose and requirements of staff appraisal. They concluded that:

The history of staff appraisal in Australia has been accompanied by dramatic changes in the structure of the higher education system, and it appears that these broader systemic changes have in many cases confused the specific issue of staff appraisal (Paget et al., 1992, p. vii).

The report findings suggest a wide divergence across institutions in practices for staff appraisal, and that the dust from the restructuring of the Australian sector, outlined in chapter one of this thesis, had not yet settled. Paget et al. (1992) further noted a lack of well-defined criteria and standards of teaching performance that could be used in the appraisal process.

Issues related to criteria and standards for the appraisal of teaching were also considered by Mullins & Cannon (1992), who studied principles and practices for

improved decision-making in the evaluation of teaching quality in Australian higher education. In their recommendations, they suggested that promotion committees need to be informed of the relative strength and weakness of different forms of evidence, such as student or peer evaluations of teaching and teaching materials in grading teaching performance. Their report highlights the complexities involved in making judgments about teaching quality, and emphasizes the importance of using evidence from a range of different sources for making these judgments (Mullins & Cannon, 1992).

Another study evaluated the validity of various assessment instruments used to measure teaching quality at the University of Western Australia (Lally & Myhill 1994). Lally & Myhill (1994) concluded that there was no existing student rating scale suitable for assessing the quality of teaching across the full range of teaching contexts. They further noted that whilst student ratings were reliable and valid measures of some aspects of teaching effectiveness, they ignored other important aspects and that factors such as class size or discipline area could bias the ratings. For these reasons they recommended:

that multiple sources of data, including student ratings, be used to evaluate academic staff members' teaching effectiveness (Lally & Myhill, 1994, p. 72).

The focus on issues related to the assessment of teaching continued throughout the early 1990's. For example, Warren Piper (1993) examined quality management in eight Australian universities. With regard to the procedures adopted for assessing the quality of teaching he reported that all the universities surveyed used formal

instruments for systematic assessment of teaching, particularly student or peer evaluations (Warren Piper, 1993). He also noted that a number of universities required staff to furnish evidence about the quality of their teaching when applying for tenure or promotion, and that this was often from a number of sources including feedback from peers and students (Warren Piper, 1993).

This examination of Australia's experience of teaching review and development practices reveals that while many universities appeared to be grappling with the issues, there was little uniformity in institutional response. One trend, though, was that many universities relied on student ratings but were considering or already widening their repertoire of evidence of teaching effectiveness. Moreover, as in the US and Canada, the demands for greater accountability and for practices to facilitate both the improvement and appraisal of university teaching, had led to recommendations for the use of teaching portfolios in Australian universities (Neumann, 1994; Ramsden et al., 1995).

The Federal Association of University Staff Association (FAUSA) had advocated the use of teaching portfolios as early as 1987, as noted in chapter two. In the preface to a guide for compiling a portfolio, FAUSA expressed concern that review committees did not always deal appropriately with evidence of teaching ability in comparison with evidence of research achievements. Suggesting that the use of teaching portfolios might help overcome this problem, the document goes on to say that FAUSA had provided the guide to assist its members to demonstrate their teaching skills to best advantage (Roe, 1987).



Some years later, a project exploring processes and procedures to enable the identification and reward of good teaching in Australian universities noted that the issue of evaluation was central to any institutional plan to recognise and reward teaching excellence (Ramsden et al., 1995). Thus, the project explored what materials may constitute evidence of effective teaching, what criteria should be adopted, and who should make the decisions. Ramsden et al. (1995) concluded that the base of evidence used to assess teaching should be broadened, and more use should be made of portfolio and peer assessment. They went on to suggest that the assessment of good teaching should be approached more creatively and that 'best practice' indicated the principal source for judging teaching competence should be a teaching portfolio (Ramsden et al., 1995).

This analysis of documentation on the Australian higher education sector identified an emerging demand for better practices for the appraisal, improvement and recognition of teaching in universities. It also showed that the demand was not being systematically addressed by the use of portfolio-based programs. There were indications, though, of a growing trend towards portfolio use for enhancing reward and recognition of teaching practices. For example, Ramsden et al. (1995) estimated that 10 of 35 universities surveyed in their study were using portfolio-based strategies as a teaching reward mechanism. However, few particulars of these programs were available, and there was generally a paucity of detailed information on the use of portfolios in Australian universities at that time.

## Curtin Context

At Curtin, a content analysis of relevant documentation on policies, procedures and practices for the appraisal, improvement and recognition of teaching was undertaken to determine the extent to which these practices were considered satisfactory. An initial scrutiny of the documentation revealed that these procedures were generally not clearly detailed or well promulgated, particularly on the appraisal of teaching. The policies and guidelines for academic staff promotion provided the most comprehensive account of Curtin's expectations for teaching. However, as outlined below, there was little information on performance with regard to appointment, staff review, or reward mechanisms related to teaching.

The following extract from the University's Policy, *Promotions - Up to Associate Professor*, details how teaching was appraised for promotion purposes.

### Areas of Contribution – Performance Measures

#### 2.2.1 Teaching

Subject to 2.1.3 (i) (a), the quality of an applicant's teaching will be evaluated by Divisional Promotions Committees on the basis of the following:

- The applicant's personal statement of teaching responsibilities, objectives and activities;
- Student appraisal of teaching – gathered by means of the standard Student Appraisal of Teaching questionnaire administered by the applicant in accordance with the procedures contained in the "Student Appraisal of Teaching: A Guide to Applicants for Promotion" pamphlet which is available from the Teaching Learning Group<sup>1</sup>;

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<sup>1</sup> Curtin's Staff Development Unit (TLG)

- Peer appraisal of teaching – gathered by means of the standard Internal Referee Report form and solicited by the applicant in accordance with the procedures contained in the “Guide to Internal Referee Reports” pamphlet which is available from the Teaching Learning Group;
- An evaluation by the Head of School, taking into account peer appraisal;
- Reports from persons nominated in accordance with Section 3.3 (i) (o), should the Divisional Promotions Committee require them. (Curtin University of Technology, 1994a, p. 191)

Teaching was one of four assessment criteria used in the promotions process at the University, the others being scholarship, service to the university/leadership, and external activities. As shown by the excerpt from the promotions policy document above, appraisal of teaching by peers, students, and the applicant’s head of school, were to be provided with the application.

Another guide on how to document teaching for staff seeking promotion was provided by the Teaching Learning Group (TLG) in the ‘Application for Promotion (Guidelines)’. This stated that the promotion application could include the following information on teaching responsibilities, objectives and activities:

- qualifications/enrolment in appropriate teaching and educational studies programs;
- modes of teaching internal, off-shore, distance, country contracting, open learning;
- supervision of honours, postgraduate and higher degree students with details of level of degree and supervisory role;
- contact hours and teaching formats (lecture, tutorial, laboratory class, clinical session, field trips, etc.);
- managerial/administrative responsibilities in regard to courses, teaching quality, teaching staff, etc;

- evidence of quality in the range of teaching activities engaged in, summary results of SAT/SOQ<sup>2</sup> and similar surveys or other evidence such as testimonials from postgraduate students, and Internal Referee Reports;
  - collaboration with other staff (e.g. team teaching) or acting as a mentor for less experienced colleagues;
  - development of new courses or units especially in response to community needs;
  - innovative use of new technologies to support teaching and learning;
  - development of guided self-study, distance education or open learning materials or courseware;
  - research into teaching and learning;
  - grants, scholarships or awards for research and development work in teaching and learning;
  - scholarship related to teaching (e.g. publications, conference presentations, etc.);
  - participation in programs intended to improve teaching practice;
  - invitations to teach for outside agencies or to act as a consultant on teaching and learning matters; and
  - preparation of educational materials, print and non-print based.
- (Teaching Learning Group, 1995)

These excerpts from the policy and guidelines related to academic staff promotion suggest that teaching played an important role in the promotion process at the University, at least in relation to the other criteria. It was evident that applicants were encouraged to supply a broad range of 'evidence' in support of their claims for teaching quality, and that the assessment of teaching performance encompassed appraisal from students, peers and the applicant's Head of School. On the basis of these documents it could be argued that, at least for promotion purposes, good teaching was rewarded commensurately with research at Curtin.

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<sup>2</sup> Student Appraisal of Teaching (SAT); Student Opinion Questionnaire (SOQ).

However, evidence from a number of other sources suggested that academic staff at Curtin did not generally perceive this to be the case. For example, in a comprehensive mail survey of all full-time academics at the University, Baker (1993) investigated academic staff perceptions of how teaching was valued across the University. He found that in over 30% of the comments, academic staff suggested that the quality of teaching would improve if there was less emphasis on research and more recognition of teaching excellence, particularly in the promotion process (Baker, 1993).

Other documentation supported this view. For example, a student and part-time lecturer in the University stated at a seminar on quality teaching:

The best supervisor I had – let's say Lecturer A – was a committed academic. Students always came first. Work was returned with in-depth comments (always constructive) and Lecturer A always had time to see students. Lecturer B was quite a different matter. Student neglect was the order of the day. It was a sort of 'do it yourself study' where I just had to get on with things (and somehow survived).

I have since had time to reflect on these past experiences. The most interesting observation is that Lecturer A (who was then a senior lecturer) is still a senior lecturer. However, Lecturer B has since been promoted to Associate Professor. I find this fascinating and somewhat disturbing. Lecturer A spent time in providing quality teaching. Lecturer B, however, spent time on research and consultancy work at the expense of quality teaching. (Percival, 1993, p. 24)

The above anecdote expressed the issue from the perspective of both staff and students, and appeared to reflect pervasive concerns of academic staff at Curtin. In summary, the concerns were that rewards for teaching were not commensurate

with those for research, and that the emphasis on research was at the expense of teaching quality.

In Baker's (1993) survey academic staff at the University indicated they perceived teaching to be undervalued, in comparison to research, by the University hierarchy, and that there was little or no recognition or reward for good teaching. Moreover, with regard to improving the quality of teaching at the university, he found that as well as staff wanting greater recognition of teaching, there

was the expressed desire for more time and resources to be devoted to teaching, and generally having more staff and/or fewer students (Baker, 1993, p. vii).

Furthermore, other discussion papers presented to the University Academic Board at this time also highlighted concern about the lack of recognition for teaching within the University. For example, in reference to Baker's survey, a paper presented by the University's Teaching and Learning Advisory Committee entitled '*Obtaining and Keeping Good Academic Staff: Report and Recommendations from the Teaching and Learning Advisory Committee*', stated:

Staff at all levels and across all promotional positions considered that, at the institutional level:

- teaching excellence was not given sufficient recognition in the promotional process;
- resources were tending to move to non-teaching areas;
- there was little visible support for or recognition of excellence in teaching. (University Academic Board, 1996)

Further analysis of documentation at Curtin revealed the main strategy for appraisal of teaching at the University was a Student Appraisal of Teaching (SAT)

form for appraisal of individual teaching performance, and a Student Opinion Questionnaire (SOQ) for evaluation of units or courses. Administration of both forms of student evaluation of teaching was organised by the University's Teaching Learning Group (TLG). As shown above, in the excerpt from the Guidelines, it was recommended that results from SATs and SOQs be included in promotion applications. However, the use of these instruments was not prescriptive for other purposes. Analysis of other relevant documentation, for example, the policies and procedure manuals of the University's Human Resource Department indicates there were no formal awards for teaching excellence in the University. Moreover, there were no clearly articulated guidelines for selection committees or supervisors to assist with evaluating the teaching performance of staff for appointment, promotion or review purposes (Human Resources, 1996).

On the other hand, scrutiny of the University's strategic plan for teaching and learning (Curtin University of Technology, 1994b), developed in 1994, indicated that the University had identified a need to implement improved practices for the appraisal and improvement of teaching, and to provide incentives for good teaching. With regard to the former, that is, teaching appraisal and improvement, the relevant objective and benchmarks in the University's plan states:

**Objective 3.** To encourage academic staff to become reflective practitioners in their undergraduate and postgraduate teaching.

Benchmarks relate to measures of reflective practice by staff, namely, the extent to which staff:

- are responsive to learners' needs;
- constantly monitor and seek to improve their teaching/postgraduate supervision;

- adopt an action research approach to their teaching/postgraduate supervision;
- adopt a collegial approach to their work. (Curtin University of Technology, 1994b, p. 5)

The plan further identified the need to develop and maintain systems and processes for the review and monitoring of performance as a strategic 'enabler' or initiative. Also, the review and improvement of student appraisal of teaching systems was designated a priority action for the 1994-1996 period. Another objective of the 1994-1996 strategic plan and associated benchmarks relevant to the present study concerned the teaching reward structure. This states:

**Objective 5: To promote, recognise and reward quality teaching and learning. Benchmarks relate to measures based upon:**

- staff perceptions of the importance placed on teaching and learning in the University's planning, operations and review processes;
- evidence of University recognition and reward systems;
- staff perceptions of the value the University places on teaching and learning relative to other activities;
- staff participation in relevant developmental activities;
- evidence of best practice in curriculum, teaching and learning and on and off-campus delivery (Curtin University of Technology, 1994b, p. 5).

The priority action to achieve this objective was, "to develop systems for identifying, recognising and rewarding good teaching, at Institutional, Divisional and School levels" (Curtin University of Technology, 1994b, p. 8).

Further analysis of Curtin's teaching and learning plan in relation to other documentation shows that it had not been fully operationalised during the planning period of the present study. There were also few details to indicate the



processes or procedures by which the objectives could be achieved or indeed measured, against the various benchmarks. However, in a follow-up paper on the survey of academic staff at Curtin (detailed above) Baker (1995) noted the potential for portfolios to promote teaching development and indicated:

The use of teaching portfolios to promote and help reward quality teaching, in addition to the teaching certificate, also seems likely to be adopted by the university in this study. (p. 8)

It was apparent then, that at Curtin, the teaching development context mirrored in many respects the higher education sector both in Australia and overseas. Whilst there were indications that issues such as the lack of recognition for teaching had been identified, no clear mechanisms or procedures were in place at this time to address the expressed concerns at the institutional level.

### **School of Nursing Context**

In the School of Nursing in which the present study was conducted, policy and planning documents that related to the appraisal, improvement or recognition of teaching were examined. A planning document, detailing the strategic goals in teaching and learning for the School stated in part, that one of the goals was to:

3. Achieve quality clinical as well as classroom teachers.

The accompanying strategies for achieving this objective were outlined as follows:

- a. Where possible standard selection criteria be applied for all academic staff employed in the School of Nursing (SON)
- b. Orientation, and support for any sessional staff be encouraged.
- c. Adequate funds be made available to improve sessional staff involvement in school/semester activities. (School of Nursing, 1994b)

This strategic goal emphasizes the importance the SON placed on clinical teaching and suggests the need to provide appropriate support for sessional staff had been identified. The SON employed clinical instructors who supervised students in clinical placements mainly as sessional staff. The strategies, outlined above, indicate that the School wanted clinical instructors to be subject to the same criteria as academic staff with regard to selection and that adequate orientation and resource support should be made available for new staff.

Another strategic goal for teaching and learning in the SON was:

4. The improvement in quality of teaching incorporating teaching competencies.

The accompanying strategy to achieve this goal was the:

Development of a set of teaching competencies in conjunction with the TLG. (School of Nursing, 1994b)

This goal highlights the imperative to improve teaching in the SON, as well as the perceived role of the Teaching Learning Group (TLG) in addressing this need. However, during the period of the present study, the teaching competencies

referred to in the Plan were not developed. Other relevant sub goals and strategies in the SON's strategic plan were as follows:

All academic staff to use some form of assessment to evaluate their teaching (i.e. SAT/SOQ (Student Appraisal of Teaching /Student Opinion Questionnaire), mentorship).

Workshops conducted in the use of SAT/SOQ.

A formal mentorship system be encouraged and expanded in conjunction with Peer Review. (School of Nursing, 1994b)

These indicate that the SON was moving towards a more formalised approach to the appraisal of teaching. The strategies were to promote the use of the University wide student appraisal of teaching methods, as well as expanding the use of peer appraisal and mentorship. This documentation highlights both the need for improved teaching appraisal practices in the SON as well as the role of the TLG in professional development of teaching within the University.

Finally, another goal of the School's strategic plan with relevance to the present context evaluation was:

4. Staff to be encouraged to develop new ideas re teaching learning.

An OSP (Outside Study Program) should be considered by staff when new innovative teaching learning ideas are to be developed. (School of Nursing, 1994a, p. 2)

The above objective was an attempt by the SON to encourage innovation in teaching through the use of Outside Study Programs (OSP). It should be noted however, that OSP, which was funded by the University, was restricted to one

member of staff at any time, and this strategy would be expected to have limited impact.

So, perusal of the SON's strategic plan and other documentation, such as relevant committee minutes, indicates that the School was moving towards the implementation of enhanced practices for appraising and improving teaching, such as the use of student evaluations of teaching. However, at the time this study was conducted, implementation of the SON's plan had not begun, and none of the strategies, such as the mentoring program for teaching improvement or the development of teaching competencies, had been formally adopted. Also, the documentation suggested that recognition of good teaching in the SON tended to be administered on an *ad hoc* basis, as was the review of teaching performance.

These issues were further investigated in a survey of academic staff (detailed in chapter three) in the SON in which they were asked to comment on the methods that they used to evaluate their teaching as shown in Table 4-2, below.

**Table 4-2**      **Methods used by SON staff to evaluate teaching**

<b>Respondent<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Response</b>
A1	I keep a portfolio/file. Evaluate through university SAT, SOQ, etc. Evaluate with School's clinical appraisal form.
A5	SATs, SOQs, student evaluation of clinical teaching. Keep them in a file.
A6	SAT forms from TLG. Formative and summative feedback from students. Assessment tools learnt in Post Grad Dip. Ed.
B3	SAT, student formal and informal written and verbal comments, group discussion when visiting students in clinical setting. Pass/fail rates in my subjects.
C1	SAT and SOQ and a mini-questionnaire I ask students to complete.
C3	Student feedback in relation to unit objectives.
C4	Teaching portfolio (outdated now) SOQ, SAT, Peer evaluation every semester since I've been here almost!

All 25 respondents to this survey mentioned at least one strategy they used for teaching evaluation. From the range of representative responses shown in Table 4-2, it can be seen that staff tended to emphasize the use of student evaluation of teaching, particularly the University forms of student appraisal (SAT, SOQ), or by obtaining qualitative student feedback. The use of a form for appraising clinical teaching was also mentioned by some. A few of those surveyed indicated they kept some kind of portfolio or file of teaching activities and evaluations, suggesting that some staff systematically documented their teaching practice. The

<sup>3</sup> Respondents A and B were SDP participants. C respondents completed the questionnaire but did not take part in the SDP.

survey also addressed the issue of how staff in the SON perceived teaching to be valued in the University, shown in Table 4-3 below.

**Table 4-3** Value placed on teaching in the SON

Respondent	Response
A1	Expertise often not recognised. People teaching subjects with no expertise in subject area. This leads to students not being exposed to quality teaching.
A3	It is not valued highly. Research, publications and qualifications are valued higher.
A6	It definitely does <u>not</u> have a high profile in the SON.
B2	It is not rated highly enough, especially clinical teaching. Since teaching is our primary commitment and funding is reliant on student numbers, I feel our expertise is of prime importance.
B3	I value both academic and clinical teaching and as nursing is basically a clinical profession I think we need to value clinical teaching more highly.
B4	Senior SON staff do not openly reward/value teaching in SON, especially clinical teaching. They are not role models and appear preoccupied with administration/meetings etc., keeping themselves 'abreast' with changes within SON and the politics of the SON.
C5	Generally teaching (classroom and clinical) <u>appears</u> to be undervalued.
C7	I think that due to the expectation by the university on research...there is more emphasis placed on research than teaching and curriculum development. This has a "snowball" effect on all schools.

Of the 25 responses, not one indicated that adequate value was placed on teaching in the SON. Table 4-3 shows the consensus of responses to this question that indicated dissatisfaction with the value placed on teaching in the SON, and in particular, the value placed on clinical teaching. These responses corroborate Baker's (1993) findings, described previously, as well as reflecting national and international trends in the higher education sector.

The content analysis of relevant documentation coupled with the survey findings shows a lack of coherent policies, procedures or practices for the appraisal or improvement of teaching at Curtin. Moreover, the findings demonstrate the paucity of established means for providing formal recognition or reward for good teaching at Curtin and in the SON. The findings also show that an analysis of relevant policies is insufficient by itself to determine an accurate picture of how policies are administered, or how these practices may impact on staff. For example, the findings from the analysis of reports and committee documents, provided a contradictory view to the University's promotions policy, which on the surface appeared to value teaching equally with research activities.

Overall, this investigation of the need for portfolios demonstrates there was widespread dissatisfaction with teaching development practices both in Australia and overseas, which had led some institutions to consider portfolio-based approaches for the appraisal, improvement and recognition of teaching. Other evidence from the input, process and product evaluations, described in subsequent chapters, reinforce the above findings.

## NEED FOR PORTFOLIO-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Chapter two outlined a general review of professional development in higher education. For the purpose of the context evaluation, a more specific review and analysis of relevant literature and documentation was undertaken in order to

determine whether professional development activities associated with portfolio use were necessary, and how these activities might best be approached. Brew (1995) noted that in complex organisations such as universities, the professional development needs of academic staff are both extensive and diverse, and that professional development was a growing area of focus on the international scene. Brew (1995) also identified that due to a lack of resources within universities staff development activities were becoming more centralised, systematic, and targeted, in order to meet the needs of staff.

An analysis of Anderson's (1993) accounts of portfolio-based activities in twenty-five North American universities, revealed a range of different approaches to professional development activities associated with portfolio use were employed in these institutions. The activities included:

- portfolio workshops conducted by external facilitators or 'expert' faculty;
  - provision of portfolio examples developed by faculty and made available for other faculty to use;
  - peer collaboration in portfolio development;
  - provision of guidelines for portfolio development;
  - guidance in portfolio development from senior academic staff;
  - procedures for compiling, organising and reviewing portfolios;
  - monetary incentives for portfolio development;
  - staff development support for individual and groups of faculty from university centres; and
  - mentoring programs for portfolio development.
- (Anderson, 1993)

As suggested by the range of approaches to portfolio-based professional development activities outlined above, the universities and colleges profiled responded to the needs of academic staff in a number of ways. For instance,



professional development was provided directly through centralized units, and indirectly via the provision of guidelines and portfolio examples. Some programs were individually based, whilst others encouraged peer collaboration. The fact that some institutions found it necessary to bring in external expertise attests to the lack of experience with portfolio use across the sector.

Within the Australian higher education sector, no detailed accounts of staff development programs based on portfolio use had been disseminated. Also, there was a bewildering array of staff development activities associated with teaching improvement, recognition and appraisal (Ramsden et al., 1995). In a number of institutions, staff appraisal was closely linked with professional development in teaching. This was the case, for instance, at the University of South Australia and The University of Queensland (Warren Piper, 1993). Also, whilst the Federation of Australian University Staff Association (FAUSA) supported moves to give increased emphasis to teaching skills, it was not convinced that staff development resources within university teaching and learning units were adequate (Federation of Australian University Staff Association, 1992). Furthermore, at Curtin, there were no portfolio-based staff development activities on which the proposed Staff Development Program (SDP) could be modelled.

The University's academic staff development (ASD) unit, a centrally based group of approximately five academic staff within the Teaching Learning Group (TLG), had sole responsibility for teaching development across the campus. Given the size and structure of the University, staff development resources were severely

strained, and teaching development activities tended to be delivered on an *ad hoc* basis. Nonetheless, the ASD unit attempted to address this issue and began to implement a devolved approach to staff development activities, part of which involved the provision of small grants from University Quality Funding for School based staff development. The rationale for these grants stated:

The 1994 Quality Review Report indicates general support for current staff development practices and sees them as a developing strength of the University. However, the Report also points to a variety of areas where staff development will be critical to the success or otherwise of the University's efforts to achieve continuous improvement. (Curtin University of Technology, 1995)

Thus, as noted in chapter one, opportunities for funding were becoming available to staff interested in undertaking professional development projects within their Schools. These funding opportunities targeted areas where the need for change was perceived to be greatest, and the document stated that it was timely for Curtin to revise and extend its professional development strategies (Curtin University of Technology, 1995).

Another aspect of the context evaluation involved semi-structured interviews with the Head of School (HOS) and the Coordinator of Academic Staff Development (CASD) in the SON. These interviews were undertaken to ascertain the views of key personnel on the need for portfolios, and the most appropriate approach to staff development activities on teaching portfolios in the School. Notes from these interviews indicate that the HOS, after an explanation of teaching portfolios and their propounded benefits, was enthusiastic about the idea of a portfolio-based approach to teaching improvement within the SON. She suggested a collegial

approach, which would encourage more cooperation and collaboration in teaching within the SON, as the most appropriate strategy. The HOS was, however, more cautious about the SON's commitment and the available resources, stating that the SON would not be able to underwrite the proposed program, and that funding from other sources would be required.

The Coordinator of Academic Staff Development (CASD) in the SON, had some understanding of teaching portfolios, and indicated that she thought staff development based on the preparation of a portfolio would be a very worthwhile and timely addition to already stretched staff development resources in the School. She emphasized the benefits of portfolio development in terms of reflective practice, and thought that the proposed program would have broad appeal within the SON. She noted that staff in the SON, who were predominantly trained nurses as well as academics, were already inculcated to be reflective practitioners by virtue of their training. She suggested a group-based approach to portfolio development, to maximize the use of available resources, and to provide an opportunity for all staff expressing an interest to be involved in the proposed program. The CASD also noted that she had sometimes found it difficult to get staff in the SON to attend professional development activities organized by the School's Staff Development Committee. She attributed poor attendance to a lack of incentive for staff to attend, and to a lack of common free time.

These interviews then, concurred with the findings from other aspects of the context evaluation, in that portfolio-based approaches appeared promising and

that staff development activities around the use of portfolios would be useful and necessary. However, these findings also highlighted some potential barriers and opportunities associated with the introduction of a portfolio-based staff development program, which are elaborated below.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND BARRIERS

As described in chapter three, a number of procedures were used to ascertain an understanding of the opportunities for, and barriers to, the implementation of the Staff Development Program (SDP) undertaken in the context of the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP). These findings were derived from a number of sources and included an analysis of accounts of portfolio programs in other institutions, as well as a survey of staff in the SON.

### Opportunities

Opportunities identified in other aspects of the context evaluation included the possibility of University funding and the support of key personnel in the SON, noted above. Moreover, a review of staff development support for portfolio implementation indicated considerable diversity between the institutions profiled in Anderson (1993) and identified a lack of institutional expertise as a potential barrier. In the Australian sector, there were no detailed accounts of portfolio use, however, a range of options were utilised for teaching development purposes. The options included centralised, as well as decentralised programs and tended to

emphasise the use of collaborative, discipline-based support for staff (Neumann, 1994; Rumsden, 1992).

The survey of academic staff in the SON (described above) elicited information on opportunities available to staff in the SON for enhancing their teaching practice. Some representative comments to this aspect of the survey are shown in Table 4-4, below. The main strategy identified to improve teaching by those responding to this part of the survey was attendance at the Teaching Learning Group (TLG) for teaching development seminars and workshops. Only one reply mentioned attendance at SON staff development seminars for teaching improvement. This was mentioned to the Coordinator of staff development in the SON during an interview. She replied that the professional development budget in the SON was inadequate to provide 'in-house' teaching improvement seminars, and that inquiries were generally forwarded to the Teaching Learning Group.

**Table 4-4 Opportunities available to staff in the SON to enhance teaching**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Response</b>
A1	Limited due to budget. I am very self directed and I believe creative in improving my teaching skills. I do this through reading lots and observing 'role models' in teaching/lecturing.
A4	Information from reading journals of education and attending sessions arranged by the TLG.
A5	The teaching itself. Access to equipment.
B1	In the SON currently nil. Teaching is spread too thinly across a number of semesters. Expertise not acknowledged. The Teaching Learning Group offer a very important service across campus.
B2	I would like to see workshops relevant to clinical teaching, I feel this is often neglected.
B3	Not enough – one reason why I'd like to know more about this Project.
C2	Limited by time. High teaching and administrative load. The Teaching Learning Group has been a very good resource for me and individuals on staff have also been helpful.
C3	Special interest groups. Staff development. Conferences.
C7	I think there is great scope to enhance your skills by your initiative to seek ways by either TLG, peers, mentors etc. Within our School we are given autonomy to do this.

Another feature of the responses to this survey was that a number of staff indicated that teaching improvement was left up to the initiative of the individual.

### **Barriers**

The issue of barriers to portfolio implementation was addressed through an examination of the profiles of universities and colleges in Anderson (1993) which described portfolio use in colleges and universities in the United States. Table 4-5 shows some of the barriers to portfolio use identified in these institutions. From this table it can be seen that there was a range of obstacles or problems identified with the use of teaching portfolios in these institutions. The barriers ranged from

time pressures (e.g. Doane College, Fayetteville State University), to concerns about how portfolios were to be evaluated (e.g. Doane College, Harvard University Medical School). Staff resistance to, or uptake of, portfolios (e.g. Syracuse University, Murray State University), and a lack of institutional support (University of Maryland, University College) were also noted as potential problems.

**Table 4-5 Barriers to portfolio use in 25 campuses profiled in AAHE document (Anderson, 1993)**

Institution	Barriers
Ball State University	Lack of adequate training and guidance to faculty in portfolio development. Adequate monitoring of portfolio program.
Cuny York College	Lack of relevant examples of portfolios. Evaluation of portfolios.
Dalhousie University	Evaluation of portfolios.
Doane College	Time required for portfolio development. Evaluation of portfolios.
Fayetteville State	Time required for portfolio development.
Harvard University	Standards for portfolio evaluation.
Manhattanville College	Documenting student learning in portfolios.
Miami-Dade College	Provision of timely assistance in portfolio development.
Murray State University	Time required for portfolio development. Staff up-take of portfolio concept.
Otterbein College	Time required for portfolio development. Staff up-take of portfolio concept.
Saint Norbert College	Staff frustration about their teaching experienced from portfolio development.
San Diego State	Time required for portfolio development and evaluation of portfolios.
Syracuse University	Slow progress in staff up-take of portfolio use.
Texas A&M University	Time required for portfolio development.
Tompkins Cortland	Staff up-take of portfolio use.
University of Maryland	Lack of institutional support for portfolio concept.
University of Nebraska	Resistance of staff.
University of Pittsburgh	Diversity of portfolios.
University of Wisconsin	Resistance of staff. Lack of time amongst staff.
York University	Evaluation of portfolios.

Another issue identified from this analysis concerned the adequacy of professional development activities to assist staff with the preparation of portfolios (e.g. Ball State University). On the other hand, five of the universities and colleges profiled in Anderson (1993) (e.g. Evergreen State College, Gordon College) did not specify any barriers to portfolio use within their institutions.

To determine barriers in the Curtin context, the survey of academic staff in the SON examined their perceptions of problems or disincentives they encountered in appraising or improving their teaching practice. Some representative responses to this aspect of the questionnaire are shown in Table 4-6, below.

**Table 4-6      Barriers to improvement and appraisal of teaching in the SON**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>A2</b>	Some staff scoff at the enthusiasm or methods others use in trying to make their teaching efficient and equitable.
<b>A3</b>	Time – lack of it to learn new teaching methods. Also other people's time when requesting that they evaluate a lecture/ teaching session so that weaknesses are pointed out.
<b>B1</b>	Power bases established by staff members without knowledge of education discipline. 'Anyone knows how to teach'. Lack of consultation with staff who can advise on educational issues.
<b>B2</b>	Teaching commitments probably interfere the most as well as other committees etc. I personally would like greater opportunity for networking with several other staff to discuss current issues.
<b>B3</b>	Everyone seems to be so busy 'doing' that we don't have enough time to reflect on how we are doing, and how we might do it better.
<b>B6</b>	Lack of time. Unable to schedule opportunities to improve teaching.
<b>C2</b>	The strong pull to have higher qualifications – Masters and PhD's and the high workload.
<b>C5</b>	Time, time and more time. Respect. Value. No rewards evident.



Table 4-6 shows that a lack of time featured strongly in the comments by staff, as did the lack of rewards for teaching. Some of the comments suggested that the respondents had other priorities, such as obtaining higher qualifications or undertaking research. A few mentioned lack of opportunities for teaching improvement or occasion to share expertise on teaching within the School.

The context evaluation, then, identified a range of opportunities for program development and a number of barriers and disincentives to program participation. These findings assisted with the planning and design of the Staff Development Program (SDP) as elaborated below.

## INTEREST AND DEMAND IN THE SON

In order to determine the extent of interest within the SON for participation in staff development activities related to teaching portfolios, a combined questionnaire/ application form (Appendix 3.1) was distributed to 43 eligible members of the academic staff in the SON, as outlined in chapter three. Responses were received from 25 (58%) of staff surveyed. The cover sheet to the questionnaire provided background details on teaching portfolios and some information on the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP). The survey sought the views of staff on relevant issues, irrespective of whether they intended to participate. Some of this data has been outlined previously in this chapter. The initial response rate to this survey of staff was considered encouraging, in that 58% of the eligible academic staff in the SON responded to the questionnaire, and subsequently 18

(41%) of these were found to contain expressions of interest for participation in the SDP. Respondents were requested to indicate their reasons for participation, selecting from a range of options, as shown in Table 4-7.

Table 4-7 Reasons given for participation in the Staff Development Program (SDP)

No.	Reason for Participation						Other
	Learning more about teaching portfolios	Developing teaching skills	Document teaching strengths	Sharing ideas about teaching	Learning new ways to evaluate teaching	Exploring recognition and reward of teaching	
A1	X		X	X		X	X <sup>1</sup>
A2			X			X	
A3		X	X		X	X	
A4	X	X	X	X	X	X	
A5	X		X			X	
A6	X			X		X	X <sup>2</sup>
A7	X	X	X		X	X	
B1	X			X		X	
B2	X		X		X		
B3	X	X				X	X <sup>3</sup>
B4	X						X <sup>4</sup>
B5	X	X	X	X	X	X	
B6	X	X	X	X	X	X	
B7	X	X	X		X		
C2	X	X	X	X	X	X	
C3	X	X	X	X	X	X	
C4	X	X	X	X	X	X	
C5	X	X	X		X		
Total	16 (89%)	11 (61%)	14 (78%)	9 (50%)	11 (61%)	14 (78%)	

X<sup>1</sup> All are suitable reasons

X<sup>2</sup> Exploring how the SDP may encourage quality teaching and promote its importance

X<sup>3</sup> All of the above

X<sup>4</sup> Probably all reasons

The table shows responses from all staff who completed the questionnaire irrespective of whether they subsequently took part in the Staff Development Program (SDP). Two groups of participants (A1-B7) later formed the two SDP groups. Participants C2-C5 were those who had initially expressed interest in participation but for various reasons (ie. other work commitments, loss of contract) did not take part in the SDP.

From Table 4-7 it can be seen that prospective participants in the SDP were primarily interested in learning more about teaching portfolios (89%), closely followed by an interest in documenting their teaching strengths and exploring the recognition and reward of teaching in the SON. Only half were interested in sharing their ideas about teaching, whilst 61% indicated they would like to develop their teaching skills and find new ways to evaluate their teaching practice.

Overall, the response rate and responses given to this aspect of the questionnaire indicated that there was sufficient interest and demand in the SON to warrant undertaking the proposed Staff Development Program (SDP). The findings were used in further planning of the SDP and assisted in determining program activities and informing the program design.

## SUMMARY OF CONTEXT EVALUATION FINDINGS

In accordance with the CIPP evaluation framework (Stufflebeam, 1991) the context evaluation built on the review of literature detailed in chapters one and

two of this thesis. It sought to identify needs, barriers and opportunities to inform the design of the Staff Development Program (SDP) and answer the central research question of the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP). The context evaluation found that the use of teaching portfolios in the higher education sector was introduced in response to three dominant needs both internationally and nationally as revealed in a review and analysis of relevant literature and documentation. These needs encompassed the improvement of practices and procedures associated with the appraisal, improvement and recognition of teaching in universities.

### *Appraisal of university teaching*

A need to establish improved practices for the appraisal of university teaching for personnel decision-making was the initial impetus for the introduction of teaching portfolios, particularly in North American colleges and universities. At first, the emphasis was on improving these practices by introducing the use of a broad range of evidence of teaching effectiveness, rather than relying on measures such as student appraisal of teaching as the sole source of information.

Portfolios, then, were seen to provide a mechanism by which teaching could be accorded equal status with research through the adoption of a more formal peer review process. That is, to adopt procedures for peer review of teaching based on established practices for peer review of research. Finally, it was also found that a number of institutions had introduced portfolio programs in response to calls for more open discussion of teaching across the sector.

### ***Improvement of university teaching***

However, it is also evident that the use of portfolios in the late 1970s and early 1980s was given further impetus by an increasing scrutiny of universities from government and other stakeholders, leading to demands for greater accountability in academic work. These calls for greater accountability were coupled with the demand for an improvement in the quality of teaching in higher education. Concerns about the poor quality of teaching in some areas of the higher education sector resulted in breaking down the notion of universities as 'ivory towers' and above criticism. Increasingly, key stakeholders demanded evidence of teaching effectiveness, and portfolios were seen to be one strategy to address this issue.

### ***Reward and recognition of good teaching***

More recently, academic staff have indicated a need for universities to review the balance between institutional rewards provided for research, with those provided for teaching, and to begin to view teaching as a scholarly activity, alongside research activities. In Australia, this call was acknowledged and supported by the Federation of Australian University Staff Association, who published a guide to portfolio development in 1987. Despite this initiative, it was to be some years before the implementation of any formal portfolio schemes in Australian universities. Nonetheless, in the absence of identifiable portfolio-based programs, there was still a general trend towards using evidence from a variety of different

sources in order to demonstrate teaching effectiveness and, it could be argued, this was a pre-cursor to portfolio-based assessment of teaching.

Thus, a lack of recognition for good teaching, coupled with a lack of satisfactory approaches or strategies for the appraisal and improvement of teaching, emerged as a theme throughout the course of this context evaluation. There appeared to be a need to redress these issues, and as outlined previously, teaching portfolio schemes had been suggested as one way of achieving this. Portfolio-based programs also appeared to offer a promising framework for staff development programs, offering a collegial and disciplinary-specific approach to development activities.

#### *Need for improved teaching development practices*

A review of the policies and practices at Curtin demonstrated that improved practices for the recognition, improvement and appraisal of teaching were required. For example, the University's strategic planning documents identified that little progress had been made in this regard, at the time this context evaluation was undertaken. However, the University did advocate the use of student evaluation of teaching as part of the promotional process, along with appraisals from peers and the head of school, although the procedures involved were not clearly defined.

The Universities' academic staff development unit within the TLG provided support for applicants for promotion, along with advice and guidelines for

documenting teaching. These guidelines recommended the use of a wide range of supporting evidence to include with applications for promotion. Moreover, although the documentation suggested that teaching was an important part of promotion and review procedures, staff perceived there to be an imbalance in the institutional reward structure, which they thought favoured research over teaching. Performance review of teaching was also not formalised and was at best, *ad hoc* in approach. Thus, a need for improved practices in all of these areas was evident.

### ***Need for portfolios and related staff development***

The need for improved practices for the appraisal and improvement of teaching led a number of other institutions, particularly in the United States to move towards staff development approaches based on teaching portfolios. The main advantages of teaching portfolios appeared to be that they offered scope for a more comprehensive approach to teaching development and appraisal, largely because they drew together evidence from a number of different sources. They were also seen to portray more accurately a teacher's strengths and weaknesses.

A portfolio approach was also seen to lend itself to teaching improvement by providing a mechanism for reflection that can lead to enhanced teaching practices. Institutions where portfolios were used in the context of teaching awards or honours claimed a rise in the profile of teaching. Portfolio preparation was also seen to foster a more comprehensive and 'scholarly' approach to the documentation of teaching practice. Some argued this approach was more comparable to that of documenting research activities and would help to redress

the imbalance of institutional reward systems that generally favoured research. Finally, in raising the profile of teaching and in documenting it more appropriately it was thought that a scholarship of teaching could be revealed, thus placing greater emphasis on this aspect of academic work and leading to greater recognition of university teaching.

The need for related staff development activities to assist staff in the creation of a teaching portfolio was established from findings that portfolios were a relatively recent innovation in the higher education sector, and that portfolios had not previously been used at Curtin or in the SON. Moreover, analysis of documented experiences from other universities and colleges implementing portfolio programs, as well as discussions with key personnel in the SON, confirmed that such a program would be both useful and necessary.

## CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the context evaluation findings, the questions to be addressed in the input evaluation were reviewed and revised. As discussed in the next chapter, the input evaluation was primarily to determine the resources required and the most appropriate strategies for implementation of the proposed Staff Development Program (SDP). Based on the findings from the context evaluation the following decisions could be made with regard to further planning of the proposed SDP and associated evaluation activities to be undertaken.



### **Issues to be addressed in project planning**

The findings from the context evaluation suggested that a number of issues related to teaching portfolios and their preparation would need to be addressed in the planning and implementation of a portfolio program. Moreover, if portfolios were to be used by academic staff as an alternative or adjunct strategy for the appraisal and improvement of their teaching practice, issues such as a lack of incentive and time for portfolio development would have to be taken into consideration in planning a staff development program.

It was apparent from the experience of North American institutions where portfolios had been implemented, from various reports on the Australian higher education sector, and from other context evaluation findings, that a lack of time and incentive was a significant barrier to the uptake of teaching portfolios by academic staff. This finding was validated by the views of academic staff in the SON who were interviewed as part of the context evaluation. Thus, heavy workloads and lack of resources were often cited as reasons why it may be difficult to get teaching staff in universities involved in staff development activities.

The 'novelty' factor of teaching portfolios was also seen as being a barrier to their implementation, as was the diversity of portfolio approaches and their structure and content. Although there appeared to be interest in the portfolio program in the SON it was evident that not all of those responding to the survey understood the

teaching portfolio concept. Thus, there appeared to be a lack of understanding of how portfolios could be used, or how staff could benefit from being involved in staff development activities based on portfolios. The different 'models' of portfolio use and format evidenced in the literature was also seen to create the potential for confusion that would need to be addressed in planning a portfolio-based staff development program.

Potential resistance by academic staff to the portfolio concept, especially with the time pressures noted above, was also identified as a potential barrier to staff participation in the proposed program. Opposition to portfolios from some quarters appeared to arise from a suspicion about how portfolios might be used or evaluated, and, in this regard, was seen to be related to resistance by staff to any form of performance appraisal. Nevertheless, the 'novelty' of portfolios and the lack of well-developed criteria or standards by which portfolios were to be judged in many institutions where they had been implemented, lent some credence to these concerns.

#### *Some initial assumptions in program planning*

On the basis of the context evaluation findings, it was decided that the optimum approach to staff development of teaching portfolios in the SON would be to adopt a collegial, group-based approach to portfolio development. Moreover, it was considered prudent to integrate portfolio development with existing practices for the appraisal and improvement of teaching at Curtin. This appeared to be the most efficient approach, as it would enable staff to review their teaching appraisal

and improvement practices and 'build' from this platform. It would also allow for the sharing of expertise about these practices within the proposed SDP. It was thought that this would assist in creating a 'critical mass' of staff in the SON with expertise in portfolio preparation and consequently begin a 'dialogue' on teaching and a more scholarly reflective approach to teaching development in the SON.

### **Program Objectives**

The context evaluation findings suggested that the program's objectives would need to incorporate provision for participants to be given clear explanations of portfolios and their use. Moreover, an opportunity to become familiar with the portfolio concept, due in part to the relatively recent introduction to the use of teaching portfolios in the higher education sector, was another requirement. Thus, the proposed objectives were initially quite broad in scope, and were seen to be exploratory in nature. The tentative SDP objectives were as follows:

- to introduce interested academic staff in the SON to the concept of teaching portfolios and their use in documenting university teaching;
- to explore the role of teaching portfolios in the appraisal, improvement and recognition of teaching practice with input from academic staff in the SON;
- to explore portfolio construction as a strategy for professional development of teaching practice with academic staff in the SON;
- to encourage reflective practice and collegial discussions on teaching amongst participants in the SON; and

- to explore how portfolios might best be used in the SON and within the University.

#### *Resources and further information required for project planning*

From the context evaluation findings it became apparent that time constraints would be a major barrier to project participation by academic staff in the SON, and that the SON could not provide financial resources for the proposed program. However, the context evaluation also revealed that funding was available from University Quality Funds, which funded staff development projects on a competitive basis. Accordingly, it was determined that funding would be sought from the University in order to provide for time release from teaching for SDP participants. This was undertaken as part of the input evaluation of the Teaching Portfolio Project and is detailed in chapter five.

Although the context evaluation established a case for the need to explore the role of portfolios in university teaching, further information on the nature of portfolios and associated professional development activities was required. Thus, other informational needs identified during the context evaluation included a need for further details of possible portfolio design (and contents) as well as information on staff development strategies used to assist staff in the preparation of their portfolios in other institutions. These issues were addressed in the input evaluation described in the following chapter.

## Chapter Five

### INPUT EVALUATION FINDINGS

*We feel that the teaching portfolio is an excellent means of improving teaching. Our attitude toward the teaching portfolio is encapsulated in the title of Donald Schön's book on teaching: The Reflective Practitioner. We believe that all of our faculty should be "reflective practitioners": teachers who think consciously about the relationship between pedagogy and their experiences as directors of student learning. The advantage of the teaching portfolio is that it leads faculty to be thoughtful in their approach to teaching and to assume a more flexible view toward pedagogy. (TPP Participant, PD7)*

### INTRODUCTION

The findings from the context evaluation highlighted the potential benefits of portfolio-based programs as a strategy for teaching improvement and appraisal of university staff. As noted in the previous chapter, and in the comments of the program director (quoted above), portfolios were introduced in the sector partly to encourage a more reflective and scholarly approach to tertiary teaching. The context evaluation also identified the need to elucidate the structure and content of portfolios, as well as the need to provide professional development for staff in the preparation of a portfolio. The input evaluation, therefore, was undertaken to determine the most appropriate design for the proposed Staff Development Program (SDP) at Curtin, based on available resources and findings from the context evaluation.

An input evaluation is used to identify and assess alternative program strategies and procedural designs, and system capabilities in terms of budget and activities (Stufflebeam, 1983). In the present study, the input evaluation served to determine the human and material resources required for implementation of the SDP and the relevance and feasibility of the Program's procedural design. Thus, through the input evaluation, the most appropriate scheme for implementing the SDP could be determined, in light of findings from an evaluation of competing strategies, similar programs, and available resources. In this regard, the input evaluation provided a basis for structuring the implementation of the proposed Program to address the needs, opportunities and objectives identified in the context evaluation.

### **Input Evaluation Questions**

Accordingly, the main research questions for the input evaluation were as follows:

- What strategies, resources, and program designs have been used by directors in other institutions for professional development programs similar to the proposed SDP?
- How are portfolios constructed in terms of style and content, and how are they assessed, in other universities?
- What resources are required, and are sufficient resources available, to implement the SDP in the School of Nursing (SON)?
- What program design, strategies and activities will best address the objectives of the SDP identified in the context evaluation?

Criteria relevant to the input questions focussed on whether the proposed program's structure, design, and activities were feasible, and if the program had the potential to meet its objectives. It was also necessary to determine if the available physical, material, and human resources were appropriate and adequate. The procedures used to address the input evaluation questions involved a survey of directors of comparable portfolio programs, an examination of profiles of institutions where portfolios had been implemented, interviews with key personnel, and a survey of prospective participants in the SON. These methods were fully outlined in chapter three. The findings are discussed below.

## COMPARATIVE PORTFOLIO PROGRAMS


Findings from the context evaluation showed that of the twenty-five institutions profiled in Anderson et al. (1993), seventeen (68%) used portfolios as part of their staff appraisal processes. This analysis further revealed that twelve (48%) of the institutions profiled used portfolios for improvement or recognition of teaching purposes. It was also found that most of the institutions used portfolios to serve more than one purpose, namely, in combinations of recognition, appraisal and improvement of teaching.

More specific information on various aspects of the use of portfolios was explored in a survey of portfolio program directors in twelve North American universities and colleges listed in Edgerton et al. (1991), as described in chapter three. Responses to an open-ended questionnaire were received from program directors

(PDs) in nine institutions. Documents such as policy statements, a range of materials for portfolio workshops, and articles on portfolios accompanied seven of the responses.

### **Purpose of Portfolio Programs**

The first question asked the program directors (PDs) to comment on the purposes for which portfolios were used in their institutions. Relevant extracts from the responses of program directors surveyed are shown below in Table 5-1. As this table shows, there was considerable diversity in the purposes for which portfolios were used in these institutions, bearing out the findings from the context evaluation discussed in the previous chapter.



A number of those surveyed (see for example, PD2, PD6 and PD8) emphasised the benefits of portfolio use in terms of reflective practice for teaching improvement and self-assessment. Others stressed the use of portfolios as a scholarly activity (PD8). It is also apparent from the responses that it was still 'early days' in portfolio uptake for some universities (PD 2 and PD5), and that in others portfolios were used only in some departments or faculties. For example, PD7 indicated that in his university responsibility for portfolio use was devolved to the departmental and school level, whilst PD9 describes portfolio use just in the Education Department. Finally, in four of the institutions surveyed, achieving tenure was tied to portfolio preparation (PD1, PD3, PD4, PD6).



Table 5-1 Portfolio use in surveyed institutions

Respondent	Response
PD1	Promotion, tenure, appointment, awards, plus for teaching improvement.
PD2	We feel that, in general, portfolios have value in promoting self-reflection about teaching. This is the primary 'use' of portfolios. All finalists for the teaching excellence awards each year are invited to prepare portfolios for submission to the awards selection committee. Most finalists (usually numbering 17-20 individuals) do prepare these.
PD3	Teaching portfolios are used throughout the College for the following decisions: tenure (called continuing contract in our system), promotions, Endowed Teaching Chair awards (we have 100 teaching chairs. Awardees hold a Chair for 3 years, 25 are awarded annually).
PD4	Uses of portfolios: promotion, tenure, merit awards, special teaching awards.
PD5	To date, I'm afraid, our efforts are fairly basic and we do not use portfolios in any formal way. They are not, for example, used in the promotion and tenure process and are merely recommended for use in job searches.
PD6	Primarily as a vehicle to enhance teaching-learning skills, to help instructors become reflective practitioners. Secondly, as a component of promotion/tenure applications.
PD7	It is important to stress that all decisions on adopting a teaching portfolio requirement as part of the review for promotion and tenure, are made at the departmental and school level. We hope that faculty will see their Teaching Portfolio as a mirror of their teaching career, which reflects their success as teachers through their constant striving towards excellence.
PD8	Teaching portfolios are more than a tool to document teaching. The process of portfolio development encourages faculty to reflect upon and access their teaching practices. When peers are involved in portfolio development it fosters mentoring, enhances teaching, and strengthens the review process.
PD9	...in order to engage faculty in the process of continual self-directed growth, to interconnect teaching and scholarly enquiry, and to place greater weight in field supervision as well as on other activities conducted in school settings, the Chair of the Education Department found it necessary to re-shape the College evaluation process by creating a portfolio assessment plan.

Of related interest was the question of whether portfolio use was mandatory in the institutions surveyed. As discussed in previous chapters, the uptake of portfolio use had been quite slow across the sector. A review of practices for teaching improvement and appraisal in higher education, highlighted concerns related to

combining formative and summative evaluation practices. For example, it was suggested that if the two purposes were combined, academic staff might be reluctant to prepare a portfolio and the potential for teaching improvement may be lost (Smith, 1995). On the other hand, others argued that portfolio uptake would continue to be slow if their use was not mandated, given the competing pressures on staff time (Cox, 1995). Responses from those surveyed are shown below in Table 5-2.

**Table 5-2 Mandatory versus voluntary use of portfolios in institutions surveyed**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Response</b>
PD1	Mandatory in some faculties
PD2	Faculty who are up for promotion may submit portfolios as supportive documentation; however, portfolios are not required by any assistant dean. There is no effort under way at present to require portfolio preparation for any personnel decisions.
PD3	Portfolio use is mandatory
PD4	Portfolios are not always called such, and are not uniform in format. In some form, as parts of the annual review process, they are mandatory, but the material in them varies greatly.
PD5	Not mandatory
PD6	Voluntary
PD7	The Faculty Teaching Excellence Program takes no part whatsoever in determining policies concerning the teaching portfolio. We do indeed point out to Chairs and Deans the advantages of the portfolio, but only in relation to our conception of it as an instrument to improve teaching, not as a means of evaluation
PD8	Portfolio development is a voluntary activity undertaken in the context of peer-mentoring.
PD9	Mandatory in the Education Department

The responses show that, as with portfolio use, there was variability between institutions as to whether the use of portfolios was prescribed or voluntary and in

some cases there was variability within the institution. For example, PD1 and PD9 indicated portfolios were prescriptive for a particular purpose or in particular departments. Five of the nine project directors surveyed indicated that the use of portfolios was mandatory in their institutions. These five also generally specified that this was the case in certain contexts, such as for tenure or annual review. Further analysis of the responses shows that portfolios tended to be mandated in institutions where portfolios were used for staff appraisal purposes. For example, PD4 stated that portfolios were required for annual review processes, whilst PD1 and PD9 said portfolios were mandatory in some faculties or departments for the summative evaluation of staff.

To summarise then, an analysis of the responses from directors of programs on the use of portfolios indicated that portfolios were used for a range of different formative and summative evaluation purposes in their institutions, including tenure, promotion, awards and teaching improvement. The responses also emphasised the potential benefit of using portfolios for reflective teaching practice. In situations where portfolios were used for staff appraisal purposes, their preparation was generally mandatory.

### **Support for Portfolio Preparation**

Another question in the survey of program directors sought to elicit data about the nature of activities and support provided for academic staff in the preparation of their portfolios, as shown in Table 5-3 below.

**Table 5-3 Support for academic staff with portfolio preparation**

Respondent	Response
PD1	Workshops, institutes <sup>1</sup> , one-to-one consultations, print materials.
PD2	Faculty who wish to prepare them can obtain information about portfolio development from our office and also have administrative staff review and critique drafts of portfolios.
PD3	Teaching Learning Centers provide workshops on portfolio preparation. On larger campuses, faculty receive compensation to act as resources for their colleagues. There is a lot of informal assistance as well.
PD4	The University Teaching and Learning Center has offered seminars that people may take. More than thirty departments (out of about sixty total) participated in a local Project on Rewarding Teaching. Departments were provided with print resources and opportunities for discussions that covered varied sources of data for reporting on teaching philosophy, practices, and outcomes.
PD5	...general materials (supplied <sup>2</sup> ) that we distribute to teaching fellows and faculty members who are preparing their teaching credentials.
PD6	Director of Faculty Development facilitates workshops and serves as a "coach" in the portfolio building process.
PD7	We have instituted a Teaching Portfolio Consultation Service which has the primary goal of assisting faculty members who are creating a Portfolio for the first time. In creating their Portfolio faculty are guided as they develop a narrative statement of their approach to teaching. We suggest that they include an overview of their teaching from a historical perspective: what their attitudes and techniques were when they began teaching, how both have altered through experience, and what aspects of their teaching they would like to enhance in the coming years.
PD8	Portfolio development and teaching enhancement are facilitated through an established mentoring program. We...have found that the process of shadowing is an efficient and effective process for mentor preparation. Wherein future mentors observe and interact with an experienced mentor as they assist mentees in portfolio development.
PD9	Faculty are encouraged to work with colleagues (peers, department chairs, and teaching improvement specialists) in the preparation of their portfolios.

<sup>1</sup> A brochure with details of the five-day faculty institute was attached to this response. The schedule was as follows:  
 Day 1, 9:00 – 12:00 Introductory Workshop: Recording Teaching Accomplishment, 1:00 – 5:00 Individual portfolio development;  
 Day 2, 9:00 – 5:00 Individual consultations with facilitators, personal portfolio development;  
 Day 3, 9:00 – 12:00 Consultations and portfolio development, 2:00 – 4:30 Second group sessions: The Developing Portfolio; Peer consultations;  
 Day 4, 9:00 – 5:00 Second round of individual consultations with facilitators and further portfolio development;  
 Day 5, 9:00 – 12:00 Portfolio revisions, consultations as necessary, 12:00 – 12:30 Closing luncheon. Discussion of the 'process' and the 'outcome'. Presentation of certificates of completion.

<sup>2</sup>The materials provided included suggestions on how to compile a teaching portfolio, the services available to assist staff in developing their portfolio documentation, and references to books and articles with examples of portfolios.

This aspect of portfolio programs was of interest in the planning of the proposed Staff Development Program (SDP) in order to assess the efficacy of various approaches and their potential for application in the Curtin context. This part of the questionnaire, then, sought information on general aspects of assistance provided. Relevant extracts from the responses of program directors to this question are shown in Table 5-3 above.

Their responses reveal that a range of approaches had been adopted by the institutions surveyed, to assist staff with the preparation of a portfolio. Support services included the provision of workshops and seminars (PD1, PD3, PD4, PD6), materials on how to compile a portfolio (PD2, PD4, PD5), as well as individual consultations (PD7) and mentoring programs (PD8, PD9). PD3 mentioned that "faculty receive compensation to act as resources". Detailed programs of portfolio institutes (PD1) and seminars (PD4) were provided with some responses, as well as a range of brochures, policy documents and materials from workshops.

A follow-up question to the program directors surveyed sought to determine the extent of support provided for portfolio development. They were asked if the support activities and programs provided in their institutions were group or individually based, and whether they were interdisciplinary in nature. Extracts from their responses are summarised in Table 5-4 below. As shown in this table, seven of the project directors responded to this aspect of the questionnaire. The assistance provided to staff with the preparation of portfolios ranged from group

workshops to individual consultations, although where specified, most mentioned group based, multi-disciplinary approaches. The time involvement for staff taking part in these programs ranged from two-hour sessions to five day workshops.

**Table 5-4 Nature of support for portfolio preparation**

Respondent	Response
PD1	Workshops (3 hours), Institute (5 days) Group, departmental, and interdisciplinary.
PD2	Faculty who wish to prepare them can obtain information about portfolio development from our office and also have administrative staff review and critique drafts of portfolios.
PD3	Workshops are approximately 3 hours. Individual help as needed. Workshops are structured by portfolio type (i.e. promotion vs. Endowed Chair) and are mixed discipline.
PD4	Programs have been both individual and group based.
PD6	1½ day workshops – interdisciplinary.
PD7	Individual consultancy – time taken varies depending on individual faculty needs.
PD8	Generally 2 hour workshops.

What emerged from these responses was that the institutions surveyed had responded in various ways to providing assistance to staff for portfolio development. Each university appeared to provide assistance with portfolio preparation according to available resources, using centralised or devolved approaches depending on the particular strategy adopted. The responses also highlighted the need to provide materials, guidance and information to assist staff in portfolio preparation.

### Assessment of Portfolios

An understanding of the criteria and standards against which portfolios could be judged was important in this study, insofar as it aimed to explore how teaching portfolios may be used for summative evaluation of teaching. As discussed previously, if good teaching is to be recognised or rewarded, it must also be delineated, that is, there needs to be standards to assist in the determination of what constitutes teaching quality (see for example, Ashcroft, 1995).

**Table 5-5** Criteria and standards for assessment of portfolios

Respondent	Response
PD3	I have a large document* that details criteria and procedures for submission, Committee review (*subsequently obtained).
PD4	Each Department will be responsible for developing criteria.
PD6	No formal standards.
PD8	We are in the process of developing guidelines for portfolio assessment, involving faculty who have prepared a portfolio. A portfolio assessment summary sheet is attached.
PD9	Renewal, tenure, and promotion decisions involve a review of a cumulative portfolio by the Education Department Evaluation Committee as well as by the Chair.

Furthermore, knowledge of current policy and practice in the review of portfolios would assist in the development of the proposed Staff Development Program, and inform the central research question of the Teaching Portfolio Project. Five of the project directors addressed questions about criteria against which portfolios were assessed in their institutions. Relevant extracts from their replies are detailed in Table 5-5 above.

With the exception of PD3, where quite detailed criteria had been developed, this data indicates that the majority of institutions surveyed had not begun to tackle the development of criteria by which portfolios were to be assessed. One reason for this was alluded to by a program director who noted, "Assessment of teaching has always been a problematic issue in our university and it is acknowledged that no one 'universal' method is accepted" (PD8). The program directors were also asked if the criteria or standards used to assess portfolios in their institutions were based on institutional, departmental or disciplinary requirements. Responses to this question are shown below in Table 5-6.

**Table 5-6**      **Details of criteria and standards in other institutions**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Response</b>
PD1	Varies at level of departments and faculties.
PD3	Institutionally based.
PD4	Criteria differ greatly from department to department and college to college.
PD8	Criteria will differ depending on purpose and departmental requirements.
PD9	Departmental.

Of those addressing this aspect of portfolio assessment, all but one program director indicated that the criteria and standards were departmentally or faculty based. From the above responses, coupled with those outlined previously, it can be ascertained that with the exception of PD3, the portfolio programs in the institutions surveyed were in many respects in their infancy. Given that these institutions were considered 'exemplars' by the American Association for Higher Education in 1991, the responses provided in 1996 in the context of the present



study, indicate that many had made little progress in the implementation of their portfolio programs. Another feature of the responses was that in the implementation of portfolio programs in these institutions, combinations of centralised and devolved approaches were often adopted. Finally, the program directors surveyed as part of the input evaluation were asked to comment on the benefits and disadvantages of the portfolio programs in their institutions. This question elicited a mixed response as shown in the extracts in Table 5-7 below.

**Table 5-7**      **Pros and cons of portfolio use**

Respondent	Response
PD1	Helps focus on, define, reward, effective teaching.
PD2	...faculty who have completed portfolios are our most vocal advocates of portfolio construction. Most feel they have gained considerable insights into themselves from the process of developing these documents.
PD3	I'm afraid my opinion on the program is mixed. Conceptually, I unreservedly recommend the portfolio as a vehicle for decision making as well as a way the College can display to non- teachers internally and interested outside parties what teaching REALLY entails. On the negative side many of our faculty detest the process of portfolio preparation. In my opinion the "bad press" has 2 sources: (1) the official College requirements for the portfolio contents and organization are a little over zealous and result in too much attention to the "busy work" of putting one together, masking the potential of their use as a self-reflective document for the faculty member. (2) unless all involved (faculty compiler, decision-making administrators and committees) implement the spirit of the program, there is bad decision-making with the portfolio being inappropriately blamed for the results.
PD4	The value of the portfolio has also varied greatly from unit to unit. In my own unit (English) there has been strong resistance to any systematic inclusion of data from peers.
PD6	Portfolios have enhanced teaching-learning skills, tenure/ promotion applications, and collegial communication about teaching-learning.
PD7	We feel that the teaching portfolio is an excellent means of improving teaching. Our attitude toward the teaching portfolio is encapsulated in the title of Donald SchOn's book on teaching: <i>The Reflective Practitioner</i> . We believe that all of our faculty should be "reflective practitioners": teachers who think consciously about the relationship between pedagogy and their experiences as directors of student learning. The advantage of the teaching portfolio is that it leads faculty to be thoughtful in their approach to teaching and to assume a more flexible view toward pedagogy.

Clearly, this question elicited differing responses from the program directors. Some were more reserved in their endorsement of portfolios than others. The most enthusiastic response was from PD7, who emphasised the potential for portfolio use to encourage reflective practice amongst academic staff. Others, such as PD3 and PD4, highlighted some potential problems in terms of staff resistance to the concept. PD3, in particular, cautioned about the use of making the requirements for portfolio use too onerous. Since PD3's institution was also identified as one of the most advanced with the implementation process, with detailed criteria for the assessment of portfolios, the observation that the College requirements were "over zealous" resulting in "busy work" takes on added significance.

In summary, although in the institutions surveyed portfolio programs had been in place for over five years, most had not formally integrated portfolio use with institutional teaching development procedures. Moreover, although the number involved in this survey was small, potential problems with the implementation and evaluation of portfolios were highlighted, and useful materials and ideas were obtained that could be applied in the design of the portfolio-based Staff Development Program (SDP) in the SON. For example, as noted above, seven of program directors surveyed supplied a range of materials with their response. Scrutiny of these materials provided insight into potential strategies and activities that could be adapted for the planned SDP, as detailed later in this chapter. Finally, the responses outlined above and the accompanying materials accentuated the variability in approach to the construction and assessment of portfolios, and confirmed the findings of the context evaluation which also demonstrated

disparate institutional practices in providing support for staff with the preparation of a portfolio.

## PORTFOLIO STYLE AND CONTENT

In light of the variability of responses from the program directors, a content analysis of accounts of portfolio use, detailed in *Campus use of the Teaching Portfolio: Twenty-Five Profiles*, was undertaken to shed further light on issues related to the preparation and assessment of portfolios (Anderson, 1993). These accounts were examined to ascertain practical and procedural aspects of portfolio design in order to determine the most appropriate approach to adopt in the SON. This analysis also helped to inform the structure and content of this study's proposed Staff Development Program (SDP). As discussed in previous chapters, there were numerous models of portfolio style and format in use across the higher education sector. It was noted that, as more universities were moving towards the use of teaching portfolios, individual institutions were developing their own practices (Ramsden, Margetson, Martin, & Clark, 1995). This was also reflected in the responses from program directors described above.

In an Australian context, Moore and Smith (1994) identified four different styles of teaching portfolios in a draft guide for academic staff at the University of South Australia. They described these as:

- an evaluated resume of teaching activities and achievement;
- a display of best work;
- a self-reflective essay; and

- reflections on selected work samples.

Moore and Smith (1994) go on to say that the particular style chosen will depend to some extent upon the reasons and purposes for compiling the portfolio. Moreover, it was found in the context evaluation, that the move towards portfolio-based documentation of teaching practice was at least in part precipitated by the need to provide evidence from a broad range of sources to assess teaching performance. Another impetus for portfolio use was a perceived need to encourage academic staff to adopt a more scholarly and reflective approach to their teaching practice. Such an approach also necessitated portfolio documentation from diverse sources. Items for inclusion in a portfolio, then, were many and varied, and often predicated on the style and purpose of the document.

In the following four sub-sections, exemplars of portfolios are shown, classified according to the styles suggested by Moore (1995) from the accounts of portfolio use described in Anderson (1993). Thus, the styles in use in these institutions are illustrated by extracts from the descriptions of portfolio design and contents portrayed in Anderson's (1993) profiles of campus practice.

### **Portfolios as Evaluated Resumes**

Some of the institutions profiled by Anderson (1993) adopted portfolio design and content representative of Moore's (1995) classification of portfolios, as an evaluated resume of teaching activities and achievements. Exemplars of this

portfolio style are shown in excerpts from accounts of portfolio use at Doane College and Harvard University, as follows.

Portfolios at Doane are structured. Faculty follow the "Portfolio Review Worksheet" contained in the Faculty Handbook. Items for inclusion are outlined under four categories: scholarship (vitae, official transcripts activity reports, record of attendance and presentations at professional meetings, publications); teaching (course objectives/goals, syllabi, tests); student performance (student course evaluations, examples of student work/exams/summaries, alumni evaluation summaries); and college and community service (record of service on committees, new course/program design, advisee evaluation summary). An evaluation sheet filled out by the dean on her first visit to the instructor's classroom. (Anderson, 1993, p. 19)

As shown above, portfolio use at Doane goes beyond the documentation of teaching and learning. They also included items related to research, scholarship, and community service. For each category, there is an evaluative component, which for teaching comprises student and alumni evaluations. The integration of a teaching portfolio with other aspects of academic work sets the Doane example apart from others outlined in Anderson (1993). Nevertheless it can be classified as an evaluated resume of teaching activities and achievements, as it contains these elements, as well as extending the concept to other sections of an academic resume.

Another example of this portfolio style is illustrated by the way portfolios are used at Harvard University Medical School. The move towards portfolios was prompted by the need to recognise the contributions to teaching made by clinical and laboratory staff in the Medical School. At Harvard, academic staff are required to assemble two sets of documents. One set includes information from

others, such as evaluative information from students and peers. The other set comprises materials assembled by the staff member. Thus, the Medical School required their teacher-clinicians to document teaching as detailed below.

Portfolios consist of two sets of documents. One set is assembled from materials collected in the department head's office, including data obtained from student evaluations, evaluations by other faculty members, solicited letters and an enhanced vita. The second set of materials is compiled by the faculty member in the form of self-report about her or his contributions that are local ....and regional, national and international contributions (educational and professional leadership). (Anderson, 1993, p. 33)

The information provided by Doane College, and the Harvard University Medical School, show that in these institutions the portfolio requirements focus on a range of items which are essentially evaluations of various aspects of teaching performance that are based around a resume. The Harvard example, however, raises another potential dimension of portfolio classification, that is, the personal and public aspects of portfolio documentation. When used in a summative context, staff portfolios would generally be open to public scrutiny by review panels or committees. However, the use of two sets of documents, one maintained by the department and the other compiled by the staff member, raises questions concerning potential industrial issues related to privacy and freedom of information about work performance.

In the Australian sector, despite continuing calls for accountability from some areas, academic staff and the National Tertiary Education Union would be unlikely to find this approach to appraisal of teaching either acceptable or appropriate. Nevertheless, the Harvard profile does comment on the fact that the

procedures and criteria for portfolios were developed in consultation with the faculty, the administration and the faculty development office, suggesting that this was acceptable to all parties.

### **Portfolios as Display of Best Work**

The notion of using a portfolio to present materials representative of best performance is in many respects in line with how portfolios are used by professional groups such as artists or architects to display their work. Two institutions where portfolios may be classified as a display of best work are summarised below. At the University of Maryland, portfolios are used in the selection of teaching award recipients, and in this regard, would be expected to reflect elements of exemplary teaching practice.

Each nominee receives a list of the criteria considered by the Excellence in Teaching Award selection committee: nomination letter (s), statement of teaching philosophy, evidence of community service, participation in faculty-development activities, syllabi/exams, peer visits, student evaluations, grade distribution, and a recommendation from an assistant dean or program manager. (Anderson, 1993, p. 71)

Thus, at Maryland, the portfolio items are designed to showcase teaching at its best, as shown by entries such as letters of nomination and recommendations from colleagues, as well as evidence of efforts to improve teaching. These portfolios also focus on learning outcomes through the inclusion of grade distributions. Furthermore, the portfolio is prepared in relation to a list of criteria, and the items are then used to support the claims made by the nominee against each criterion.

Structuring the portfolio in this way facilitates comparison between nominees, and allows different aspects of teaching performance to be assessed.

- Although portfolio items are prescribed at Maryland, at Manhattanville College, portfolios are used for teaching appraisal purposes and staff are free to select items they consider representative of their best work.

Portfolio contents usually are contained in a notebook or large accordion folder similar to those used for student portfolios. A description of achievements, written by the faculty member, prefaces the portfolio entries. There is no particular structure to the portfolio nor any required items. (Anderson, 1993, p. 351)

At Manhattanville, then, portfolio entries are used to support a written statement of achievements. The contents are not prescribed and no criteria are provided although they are used for teaching appraisal. A potential problem with this style is that these portfolios are likely to include a wide range of materials, making comparison between staff difficult. This contrasts with portfolio use at Maryland where, as noted above, portfolio entries are selected against the criteria for the Excellence in Teaching Award. On the other hand, the example from Manhattanville points to the flexibility attributed to the portfolio concept. That is, staff can portray their work in different teaching contexts, at different academic levels, and across various disciplines. Nevertheless, at both institutions, the portfolio style can be classified as a display of best work, albeit for different purposes.



### Portfolios as A Self-reflective Essay

Accounts from universities where staff are encouraged to use portfolios for self-reflection are exemplified in excerpts from universities such as Western Michigan and Ball State. The potential for portfolios to encourage reflective teaching practice in university staff has been discussed previously, as have the reasons for why this was considered important by university administrators. At Western Michigan staff are required to compile a range of items in their portfolios that include:

evidence of several different aspects of reflective practice: (1) items that show a grasp of course content, e.g., lesson plans, handouts, quizzes, exams; (2) items that demonstrate teaching competence and student learning, e.g., student papers, student logs, peer observations; and (3) personal observations and reflections, e.g., notes and comments from conferences with the TA supervisor,....[and] a personal reflective statement. (Anderson, 1993, p. 97)

The example from Western Michigan emphasises the requirement to demonstrate a scholarly approach to documenting teaching, through reflection on work samples, and to articulate the thinking behind teaching practice. At Ball State the portfolio contents highlight the relationship between reflection and teaching development, as follows:

contents are dictated by individual needs. Suggested items include...statement of teaching philosophy...self-evaluation of teaching... syllabi; teaching grants/awards; student and peer evaluations; ...course ...development and innovations. For faculty-development purposes...reflections on, and analysis of, methods and objectives is stressed. (Anderson, 1993, p. 8)

The Ball State model encourages self-reflection and analysis on various aspects of teaching practice such as teaching methods and strategies. In the universities profiled above, portfolios are primarily used for teaching enhancement or formative evaluation purposes. Hence, portfolio contents tend to be developed on the basis of individual needs. That is, areas in which improvement is required help to determine the focus and content of this portfolio style. However, as with previous portfolio styles, the University of Western Michigan is more prescriptive than Ball State, showing that within each style there appear to be a range of prescribed items.

### **Portfolios Reflecting on Work Samples**

This style of portfolio is similar to that advocated by Edgerton et al. (1991) who, under the auspices of the American Association for Higher Education, provided examples of reflection on work samples from a range of discipline areas. At York College, one of the senior colleges of the City University of New York (CUNY) system, staff are advised to model their portfolios, at least in part, on this document. According to the CUNY profile:

The current model calls for the following entries: (1) a "framing statement," indicating the individual's teaching roles and responsibilities...(2) a personal, reflective/ philosophical statement; (3) two entries built around a work sample (e.g., syllabus, student paper, handouts), accompanied by reflective commentary explaining the thinking behind the work sample (entries modeled on examples in AAHE's *The Teaching Portfolio*); (4) two entries that provide evidence from others (e.g. student ratings, letters from students, peer visitation reports); (5) an enhanced curriculum vita; (6) a letter to the reader... if appropriate (Anderson, 1993, p. 10).

The CUNY model overlaps with other portfolio categories, both in terms of the requirements and focus. For example, this style resembles the portfolio as an evaluated resume. It requires both a curriculum vitae and student evaluations of teaching. However, a distinctive feature of this portfolio style is the emphasis on illustrating the rationale and approach to teaching practice through entries that show reflection on syllabi and course materials.

Another example of portfolio design, that exemplifies Moore's (1995) classification of reflections on work samples, is at Gordon College. There, portfolio requirements centre round reflective samples and syllabi:

Portfolio development follows some of the guidelines put forth by outside sources and consultants, but the main thrust of portfolios is reflection on "lessons learned" at Gordon College. Required entries include reflective samples and syllabi. Optional items include videotapes and examples of specific teaching exercises. Additional suggested items include course evaluations by peers and students and the dean's evaluation. (Anderson, 1993, p. 31)

Evaluative materials from peers and students were considered of secondary importance at Gordon College, in contrast to other portfolio styles described above. The emphasis and focus of portfolios here is reflection on, and about, one's teaching practice. However, at the University of Minnesota, as detailed below, staff are required to provide primary documentation (which may be considered the 'raw' data) of work samples, and staff reflections on these as secondary documentation.

Primary documents are those produced in the act of teaching: syllabi, assignments, student work samples, examinations. Secondary documents are those that reflect on primary documents: peer-observation reports, teaching journals, goal and philosophy statements. (Anderson, 1993, p. 74)

As shown in the examples above, some variability was evident amongst the portfolio style designed to encourage staff reflection on samples of their work. As with other portfolio styles, the classification was not straightforward. It was also apparent that Moore's (1995) classification of portfolio types was not exhaustive, and other potential models could be identified.

### **Other Portfolio Styles**

A number of other portfolio styles were evident from the analysis of Anderson's (1993) profiles of campus use of portfolios. In some institutions, the portfolio requirements emphasised the establishment of goals or objectives for teaching as part of portfolio preparation. In the context of a formative evaluation approach to teaching development, portfolio preparation can motivate staff in the establishment, monitoring and achievement of goals. One such example of portfolio style is exemplified in the following excerpt from Otterbein College.

The Education Department's guidelines for portfolios require the following entries: (1) an outline of objectives for teaching, scholarship, and service to the department, college, community, students; (2) descriptions of how these objectives can be accomplished and the support needed to fulfill them; (3) evidence or materials that show ways of accomplishing goals, and (4) a narrative summarizing whether or not goals were met. The department chair recommends that reflective pieces on teaching be included, as well as peer reviews. (Anderson, 1993, p. 44)

At Otterbein, staff are required to set objectives for their teaching, describe how they will attain them, and demonstrate whether the objectives have been met. This institution also recommends the inclusion of a reflective component in their portfolios. On the other hand, at Syracuse University in another example of goal orientated portfolios, a less prescriptive model is exemplified. Here, suggested portfolio entries revolve around the achievement of teaching goals.

There is no university-wide prescribed model for the teaching portfolio. The Center for Instructional Development suggests entries that convey information about the teaching context; a statement of current goals; an action plan to be worked out with the chair; and current evidence of the achievement of teaching goals (Anderson, 1993, p. 56)

The Syracuse model has the advantage of allowing schools and departments to determine their own portfolio entries, as considered appropriate for their teaching context. On the other hand, this style may make the comparison of portfolios from staff in different departments problematic, and may preclude university-wide comparisons. For some purposes, such as departmental review, this may not cause a problem, however, in the context of university-wide teaching awards, difficulties may arise.

Finally, a further dimension to portfolio classification is noted in the University of Wisconsin's model, which describes the use of a course portfolio, albeit in an early stage of development.

As yet, no standard guideline for portfolio development exists. One model being explored is the "course portfolio". [This] focuses on a single course and includes (1) a statement indicating the relationship between the professor's teaching goals and his or her instructional practices; (2) the course syllabus; (3) examples of key assignments and learning activities; (4) samples or summaries of student work; (5) student feedback on teaching and learning in the course; and, (6) a self-assessment statement. (Anderson, 1993, p. 88)

The portfolio style in use at Wisconsin, although not standardised, focuses on the attainment of goals but in the context of a course, rather than on the individual instructor. This style has the advantage of enabling a teaching team to compile a portfolio, and encourage more discussion on teaching amongst colleagues. In this regard, the Wisconsin model has the potential to encourage a more collaborative and collegial approach to teaching development by reflecting the attainment of individual achievement in relation to course goals.

What becomes apparent from the above analysis of portfolio styles is that the classification of portfolios is not clear-cut. A number of the institutions profiled in Anderson (1993) described portfolios comprising elements of more than one portfolio type. For example, at Otterbein College, staff are obliged to outline teaching objectives and their attainment. They may include teaching reflections. Similarly, the CUNY model contains elements of the evaluated resume and reflection on work samples.

On the other hand, in all the profiles examined, there were certain items included in portfolios, such as a personal statement of teaching roles and responsibilities, and student evaluations. In this regard, 49 possible items for inclusion listed in

Edgerton et al. (1991), provided a useful basis from which to consider portfolio entries. Nevertheless, with respect to the question of what should be included in a portfolio, Anderson (1993) cautions against the use of what he terms, "a partridge-in-a pear-tree portfolio", in which prescribed entries include one syllabus, two student papers, and so on. He notes that grounding portfolio development around the use of categories of items for inclusion is a 'modest' and 'feasible' way to start in the development of a portfolio program, but not where one would want to end.

What is wanted in the longer term are portfolios that reflect some campus or departmental agreement (no doubt evolving and always under discussion) about what effective teachers know and can do. (Anderson, 1993, p. 5)

In the present study, the 'conventional' categories of portfolio items described in Edgerton et al., (1991) such as the products of good teaching, material from oneself, and information from others, were incorporated in the design of the Staff Development Program (SDP). The categories were used to focus the group discussions and to begin a dialogue on what constitutes good teaching in the SON. That is, the categories were adapted for use in the SDP to explore how portfolio entries may relate to different portfolio styles, and to inform program participants about a range of approaches to portfolio construction. As described below, this formed the basis of some of the activities in the SDP. Therefore, the most appropriate content and related activities to explore this aspect of portfolio use in the proposed SDP was ascertained from the analysis of portfolio styles and relevant literature.

## ASSESSMENT OF PORTFOLIOS

Part of the input evaluation required a broader perspective on current policies and practices in the assessment of portfolios in institutions with established portfolio programs. This was gained from a review of the profiles of portfolio use in Anderson (1993) and the survey of directors of comparative programs detailed above. Anderson points out that "It has become a truism of portfolio use that putting them together is easier than knowing "what to do with them once you've got them" (1993, p. 3). He goes on to note, that based on his observations of institutions he had visited and the profiles of campus use of portfolios, this precept was not borne out, and that on some campuses:

the process of reviewing portfolios has prompted a desire to specify "criteria of excellence" by which to judge faculty performance, plus a new interest in discussing and clarifying standards. (Anderson, 1993, p. 3)

Thus, an analysis of the profiles revealed that as with the institutions surveyed, these campuses were at varying stages in the development of policy and practice for portfolio assessment. Pertinent findings from this analysis, focussing on the development of criteria against which portfolios were assessed and related review procedures, are discussed below.

A number of the universities and colleges profiled in Anderson (1993) indicated they were currently exploring issues around the review of portfolios. For example, Ball State University said there was considerable discussion surrounding the use of teaching portfolios for personnel decisions, and that a number of issues



regarding portfolio evaluation were still to be resolved. Similarly, Murray State University said some departments were currently developing criteria for portfolio assessment, whilst at Dalhousie:

no standardized criteria exist for the evaluation of teaching portfolios. Departments have their own guidelines and are at different stages of outlining criteria. (Anderson, 1993, p. 17)

This was also the case at the Greensburg Campus of the University of Pittsburgh. Evidently these institutions were in the early stages of portfolio use, and still in the process of developing criteria for portfolio assessment. Also they acknowledged the need to develop criteria and standards for portfolio evaluation and were taking steps to resolve this situation. Moreover, at York University, there were no guidelines "since they are still too new. At this point, an overall assessment of the dossier is made" (Anderson, 1993, p. 103).

However, in institutions where portfolios were used for appraisal purposes (Murray State, University of Pittsburgh and York University), the need for criteria was more apparent. In these institutions judgements about portfolios tended to be based on a review typically undertaken by an individual or a committee. What is not clear from these accounts is the basis of the decision-making process. Given that portfolios were a relatively recent innovation in higher education, in the absence of clear guidelines or criteria, personnel decisions using portfolios could prove problematic. Nevertheless, from information provided in Anderson (1993) it appeared that some institutions had made progress in the development of criteria for the evaluation of portfolios.

At CUNY York College portfolios were evaluated according to the same criteria that are used across the CUNY system, mandated by a collective bargaining unit. At Manhattanville College the criterion for evaluating portfolios was excellence, determined by a Faculty Status Committee. Western Michigan University evaluated teaching portfolios according to three criteria:

(1) the clear articulation of goals for the course and the particular students being taught; (2) the skill and imagination with which the TA achieves these goals; and (3) the extent to which the TA's goals and strategies fit departmental expectations and reflect current thinking about the teaching of composition (Anderson, 1993, p. 97).

What emerges from these accounts is that these institutions were at varying levels of sophistication in portfolio assessment, ranging from those at Manhattanville College where criteria were described as one of (undefined) 'excellence', to Western Michigan University which expounded several criteria in relation to course goals.

Finally, in a number of the institutions profiled, portfolios were either not used for summative evaluation purposes or they had not considered the issue of portfolio review. Thus, Texas A&M University noted that, for promotion and tenure, staff were not required to prepare a portfolio. At Tompkins Cortland Community College where portfolios were used as part of a teacher certification program and mentoring program, it was participation in these programs that was reviewed rather than the portfolio *per se*. Also, at the University of Minnesota and

Syracuse University portfolios were used primarily for teaching development and were not subject to formal appraisal. In these institutions no systematic attempt had been made to develop criteria and it appeared that portfolios were used primarily for teaching improvement purposes. It emerged from this analysis that where portfolios were not used for personnel decisions, there was less urgency to develop standards or criteria for portfolio assessment.

The accounts of institutional approaches outlined above are representative of the responses these campuses had made to the evaluation of portfolios. Clearly, portfolio assessment appears to be one area of portfolio use requiring further exploration, especially as one of the propounded benefits of portfolio use is that it leads to better decision-making about the evaluation of teaching performance (Centra, 1993; Neumann, 1994). With regard to the proposed Staff Development Program (SDP) the above findings were used to inform and structure the activities around the establishment of criteria against which portfolios developed in the School of Nursing (SON) could be assessed.

## RESOURCES FOR PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Part of the input evaluation of the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP) involved determining and obtaining appropriate resources to conduct the Staff Development Program (SDP). Resources deemed necessary to conduct the proposed SDP were as follows:

- *Physical and material resources* – Physical resource requirements for the SDP included a suitable venue and equipment such as whiteboards and overhead projectors. Material resources included program folders and contents and the preparation and printing of questionnaires, activity, and feedback sheets for program sessions as described in chapter three.
- *Human resources* – Human resource requirements included a program director and session facilitator, as well administrative support for conducting the proposed SDP. As discussed in chapter three, the researcher adopted the roles of director and facilitator, and the SON provided administrative support. Program participants were another resource, and their participation required the cooperation of those responsible for the allocation of workload in the SON's teaching programs.
- *Financial resources* – As described in chapter three, funding was obtained from the University for time release for academic staff in the SON to participate in the staff development program. The funding allowed for 192 hours of staff replacement. Other costs associated with the program, such as the researcher's time and material costs were to be borne by the SON.
- *Informational resources* – The findings of the context and input evaluations provided a range of resources in terms of information regarding portfolio use, as well as materials used in similar programs in other higher education institutions. Thus, the analysis of policy and practice undertaken in these evaluations provided information on teaching portfolio use across the sector, and subsequently helped to shape and determine the content and activities undertaken by the participants during SDP sessions.

Based on resources identified and acquired as part of the context and input evaluations, it was determined that adequate and appropriate resources were available to finalise the SDP's procedural design and begin implementation.

## PROGRAM DESIGN, STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

The SDP was designed to facilitate the achievement of a number of objectives as outlined in chapter four. These objectives, determined in the context evaluation, were:

- to introduce interested academic staff in the SON to the concept of teaching portfolios and their use in documenting university teaching;
- to explore the role of teaching portfolios in the appraisal, improvement and recognition of teaching practice with input from academic staff in the SON;
- to explore portfolio construction as a strategy for professional development of teaching practice with academic staff in the SON;
- to encourage reflective practice and collegial discussions on teaching amongst participants in the SON; and
- to explore how portfolios might best be used in the SON and within the University.

Aspects of the context and input evaluations, then, involved the development of a feasible program design and suitable strategies and activities for the attainment of SDP objectives. A survey of academic staff in the SON was conducted to determine the practicability and appropriateness of the procedural design. The survey, details of which were provided in chapter three, elicited information about

the preferences of prospective participants with regard to the structure of various aspects of the program.

### **Information from Prospective Participants**

Responses to this survey (Appendix 5.1) show that finding common free time was difficult given the high teaching loads and other commitments of staff. However, it was considered critical to the successful implementation of the program to accommodate all interested staff. Based on the information provided by prospective participants two program groups (A & B) were formed to meet on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 12-2pm.

Participating staff were also requested to indicate whether they wished to take part on an individual or group basis, and the size of group they preferred to work in (Appendix 5.2). Most staff indicated either no preference, or chose to be in a group of between 6-8 individuals. As this group size was feasible, in line with similar programs, and could be managed within the available budget, it was decided to conduct the SDP with two groups of seven participants each. It should be noted that two staff members who indicated they preferred to work in a small group, or individually, were contacted before the program commenced. The rationale for the program design and hence the reason for the proposed group size was explained. Both indicated they still wanted to take part in the SDP.

Finally, prospective participants were also canvassed as to the amount of time they would be willing to commit to take part in the proposed staff development activities (Appendix 5.3). Four staff indicated one hour weekly, three suggested two hours weekly, and seven indicated a preference for two hours on a fortnightly basis. Given the previously mentioned constraints, the program sessions were conducted on a two-hour fortnightly basis. Thus, the SDP was structured to accommodate the requirements and preferences of participating staff. Other aspects of the program's design were established from discussions and interviews of staff in the SON.

### **Discussions with Key Personnel**

During the course of the input evaluation, discussions and interviews were conducted with key personnel in the SON to ascertain the accessibility of resources and to elucidate aspects of the procedural design. The Head of School indicated resources such as the venue and administrative support would be made available. She also suggested that the SDP be put on the agenda for a meeting of the SON's Management Committee to seek support for the program and the cooperation of other department heads. Members of the Management Committee were generally enthusiastic in their endorsement of the proposed program at this meeting, and arrangements for the time release of participants were put in place.

On the recommendation of the Management Committee, the researcher attended a meeting of the School's Staff Development Committee to outline the proposed

SDP and to present the findings of the survey of SON staff. The researcher also sought the Committee's views on aspects of the program design, such as the number of sessions and the content to be included in the sessions. Members of the Staff Development Committee made a number of useful suggestions. It was suggested the program be spaced over the course of a semester so that staff participating in the SDP could incorporate a variety of teaching activities and assessments in their portfolio preparation. They also invited the researcher to address the Committee on completion of the SDP.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In summary then, the survey of directors of comparable programs in other institutions coupled with a content analysis of accounts of portfolio preparation and assessment at other universities and colleges, found a broad range of professional development program designs had been implemented. There was considerable variety in the strategies used in other institutions to assist staff in the preparation of their portfolios and the nature and extent of assistance was diverse. These findings concur with those of others researching portfolio use in higher education (Centra, 1993; Cerbin, 1994; Gibbs, 1992; Katz & Henry, 1993; Seldin et al., 1990).

It was also apparent from the input evaluation that staff developers and administrators in higher education were engaged in a robust and vigorous debate and exploration of issues surrounding the use of portfolios. This was particularly



the case in the United States where the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) championed the introduction of portfolios and published details of portfolio use on different campuses (Anderson, 1993; Edgerton et al., 1991) which proved a useful resource for this evaluation. Consequently, aspects of the input evaluation of the present study focussed primarily on details of portfolio use in American universities and colleges. However, there were a growing number of advocates for portfolio use in Australian higher education (Baker, 1995; Ramsden & Martin, 1996; Wijesundera, 1995) and across other sectors and teaching and learning contexts (Loughran & Corrigan, 1995; Wildy & Wallace, 1998; Wolf, 1994). Evidently, there was sufficient scope and flexibility in the portfolio concept for institutions to develop programs tailored to their own needs and priorities.

From these findings, the design for the proposed Staff Development Program (SDP) emerged. The design incorporated a range of strategies such as collegial discussion and group-based activities to address the objectives of the SDP and accommodate the needs of prospective participants. These strategies were deemed the most appropriate for the SDP based on the information obtained from other program directors and the preferences and reasons for participation obtained from the survey of academic staff in the SON. Development of the SDP was further informed through an analysis of portfolio style and content adopted in other institutions. This analysis showed considerable variation in portfolio style and content between institutions and indicated that most institutions were adapting portfolio requirements to suit their own needs. Other elements of these findings

were also incorporated into program activities and materials as discussed in the following chapter. Finally, the practicability and feasibility of the design was determined from an inventory of available resources, through procuring additional resources, and from information obtained from staff in the School.

That is, the procedural design and program activities were determined from: a survey of program directors of comparable programs; the analysis of portfolio use in other institutions; discussions with key personnel; responses to a survey of academic staff in the SON; and, an inventory of available resources. Using the information obtained in the course of the input evaluation, the Staff Development Program (SDP) was designed to maximise the achievement of program objectives and the use of resources. The SDP aimed to enable participants to have the opportunity to prepare a portfolio in a collegial and supportive environment. The size and timing of groups was also designed to be conducive to the aims of the SDP.

In addition to informing the development of the SDP, the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP) also aimed to explore the role portfolios might play in the appraisal and improvement of teaching in the SON. A number of the activities undertaken in the SDP (for example, exploring portfolio style and content with the participants) thus served a dual purpose. Furthermore, the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP) also aimed to obtain a better understanding of the use of portfolios within a university setting. Another aim therefore, was clarification of the role of portfolio preparation in professional development programs. In this regard, it is

worth mentioning again, that the participants in the SDP were fully informed at all stages of their involvement in the program of the purpose of the Teaching Portfolio Project, namely:

- to explore the role of portfolios in the appraisal, improvement and recognition of university teaching; and
- to determine the usefulness of portfolios as a strategy for professional development in teaching.

It was therefore clear to participants they were taking part in a research study on the design, implementation and evaluation of a portfolio-based Staff Development Program (SDP) in which issues surrounding portfolio use were to be explored.

Based on the information obtained from other program directors, a survey of prospective participants, an inventory of resources, and findings from relevant literature the implementation of the proposed Staff Development Program (SDP) could begin. In accordance with the CIPP evaluation framework the implementation and conduct of the SDP was evaluated by means of a process evaluation. The findings of the process evaluation are described in the following chapter.

## Chapter Six

# PROCESS EVALUATION FINDINGS

*I'm just finding it very exciting. I'm getting a lot more insight into things that we do. It's clarifying a lot in my mind when I sat down and I thought... what things do I do to enhance my teaching, I put this, this, and this, down and then... you see a lot more... some of the things that I've saved for no good reason, they've sat in the bottom of the drawer, cards and different things that students have sent...just deeper insight into what's going on with the students and how we can improve the process of teaching a lot more. (SDP Participant B22<sup>1</sup>)*

## INTRODUCTION

The context evaluation established a need to review practices for formative and summative evaluation of teaching within the School of Nursing (SON) and found that professional development based on the use of teaching portfolios had been introduced in a number of universities to address this need. The input evaluation identified that appropriate and adequate resources were available to conduct a portfolio-based program and there was sufficient interest and demand for participation amongst staff to warrant the implementation of the Staff Development Program (SDP). The input evaluation also provided background information on various issues related to portfolio use to inform the SDP content and activities. Based on these findings, the most appropriate design for

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<sup>1</sup> Refers to participant group (A or B); Participant code no. 1-7; Session no. ie. B22 is Group B, Participant 2, Session 2.

implementation of the proposed SDP was determined, which, in accordance with the CIPP evaluation framework, was evaluated in the process evaluation.

A process evaluation, as the name suggests, examines the procedures involved in the implementation phase of a program. According to Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (1985), a process evaluation enables the researcher to identify defects in the design and implementation of a program, and record and judge procedural events and activities. Thus, the process evaluation phase makes it possible to detect potential and actual problems during program implementation and determine the merits or otherwise of the procedural plan by monitoring and observing program activities.

### **Process Evaluation Questions**

The central questions to be addressed in the process evaluation were as follows:

- Was the Staff Development Program (SDP) implemented according to plan?
- How useful were program activities, tasks and strategies in terms of facilitating portfolio construction?
- Were the program objectives addressed and were participants satisfied with the SDP sessions?
- What suggestions can be made for improvements or changes to the SDP and further program development?

Criteria against which the process findings were judged included determining the appropriateness and effectiveness of program activities and design, the extent to

which program objectives were obtained, and the strengths, weaknesses, costs and benefits of the program processes and procedures.

Procedures for the collection and analysis of process evaluation data included: the administration of various questionnaires and feedback forms to ascertain the reaction of participants to program sessions. They also involved participant observation, the maintenance of a journal to record program attendance, activities, and observations of group interaction and participation, and audio tape-recording, transcription and analysis of transcripts of SDP sessions. These methods are fully described in chapter three.

In accordance with findings from the context and input evaluation phases of this study, two groups (A and B) of seven academic staff were formed. Each group met fortnightly in two-hour sessions for a series of seven sessions of staff development activities based on the preparation of teaching portfolios. The overall aims of the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP) were to explore the role of teaching portfolios in the appraisal and improvement of university teaching, and in the professional development of academic staff. Moreover, as noted in the previous chapter, the specific objectives of the Staff Development Program (SDP) were to:

- introduce participants to the concept of teaching portfolios;
- explore with participants the role of teaching portfolios in the appraisal, improvement and recognition of teaching practice;
- investigate the process of portfolio construction as a strategy for professional development of teaching practice;

- encourage reflective practice and collegial discussions on teaching amongst participants in the SON; and
- consider how portfolios might best be used in the SON and within the University.

Materials provided to participants before the commencement of the SDP comprised details of the project aims, as well as selected materials on teaching portfolios (detailed in chapter three).

The process evaluation findings are described below, and, unless stated otherwise, findings from the two SDP groups have been combined. This was done because an initial scrutiny of the data indicated that in most respects there were few critical differences between groups A and B and hence no benefit in describing the process of the groups separately.

## PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

The program for the staff development sessions was developed over the course of the context and input evaluations of the Teaching Portfolio Project in accordance with the CIPP model and discussed in the previous two chapters. The program comprised seven sessions as detailed in Appendix 3.4. Within each session, activities were designed to facilitate an understanding of portfolios and assist participants with the preparation of their portfolio. Figure 6-1 shows a typical plan for a program session. It indicates tasks completed by participants on the contents and use of teaching portfolios and the setting of personal and group goals. For

example, the activity 'describing what we already do' was designed to provide a platform from which the construction of portfolios could commence. That is, by establishing the resources available within the project groups for formative and summative teaching evaluation in the SON these practices could be disseminated and shared amongst group members.

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|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Overview of program, informed consent, confidentiality etc. (10 mins)</li> <li>2. Introductions - participants introduce themselves, describe briefly the areas in which they teach and what they are hoping to get out of the program. (10 mins)</li> <li>3. Definition, rationale and overview of teaching portfolios, purposes for which portfolios may be constructed, general issues. (10 mins)</li> <li>4. Describing what we already do – questionnaires for individuals to list current practice in evaluating, enhancing, and rewarding teaching – Whiteboard main points for discussion. (30 mins include - break)</li> <li>5. Overview of current practices - related to potential portfolio components. (15 mins)</li> <li>6. Individual activity – questionnaire - portfolio contents. (10 mins)</li> <li>7. Getting started - Examples of portfolio contents related to next session - i.e. information from oneself. (10 mins)</li> <li>8. Setting goals – questionnaire - individual and groups goals. (10 mins)</li> <li>9. Session evaluation - feedback form. (5 mins)</li> <li>10. Concluding comments.</li> </ol> |
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**Figure 6-2**      **Session One Outline**

Over the course of the seven sessions, responses to various questionnaires and activities undertaken by participants (discussed in further detail below) were collated and provided as feedback for discussion at the beginning of the following session. For example, session two began with a discussion of the summarised findings from session one. These included the individual and group goals for both



groups and the responses to the questionnaires on practices for appraisal, improvement and reward of teaching. Furthermore, each session commenced with a review of progress, and provided an opportunity for addressing issues or questions arising from the previous session.

Examination and analysis of the project journal, session transcripts and outcomes of the program activities reveals that, on the whole, the procedural aspects of the program design were executed in accordance with the plan. Thus, with a few exceptions, the planned activities were accomplished within the timeframe of the sessions. During the intervening period between sessions, participants were encouraged to work on aspects of their portfolios and the facilitator had time to compile and collate the materials for the next session.

The exceptions indicated above included session one for group A, in which the session ran over time. This was noted and addressed before the first session with group B. It was also noted that two group A participants had to leave one hour early in sessions three and four, having been assigned to take clinical classes. This was despite having informed the undergraduate course coordinator of their time release entitlement for participation in the SDP. The project journal also notes the absence of one group B participant in session four due to illness. In each case the researcher arranged to meet with these participants at another time to bring them up to date with program developments.

The program also diverged from the plan for both groups in the final session. Two days before session seven, four of the non-tenured participants received letters terminating their contracts. Three of these were members of group B and one was from group A. As a consequence, planned activities such as the discussion on standards and criteria for assessment of portfolios were to a large extent overtaken by talk about the dismissals and there was considerable anger and frustration expressed in the groups. The findings from session seven need to be considered in this light.

Overall the data reveals that the SDP generally ran smoothly, had adequate resources, and was appropriately designed to fit in with the workloads and commitments of the participants. Further insight into procedural aspects of the program design is provided below in a discussion of program activities and participant satisfaction.

## PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

A range of activities was developed for the SDP to assist staff with the preparation of a portfolio. One of the objectives of these activities was to provide a better understanding of how portfolio development may be integrated with existing practices for teaching improvement, appraisal, and recognition in the SON. Moreover, the effectiveness of various strategies undertaken in the SDP has relevance for directors of similar programs, and for the planning of future staff development activities for portfolio preparation. As noted previously, the

responses to all questionnaires and forms used during program sessions (detailed in chapter three) were collated and the compiled summaries were addressed at the commencement of the next session either for noting, or for discussion.

In the first session, participants were asked to list methods they used to improve and appraise their teaching, as well as strategies used at Curtin for teaching reward and recognition. These tasks were designed to provide participants with a platform from which to begin the preparation of their own portfolios, as well as helping to determine how portfolio preparation could be integrated with existing practices for teaching development. Responses to this activity were categorised according to a list of 'possible items for inclusion' in teaching portfolios cited in Edgerton, Hutchings, & Quinlan (1991). The categories used were 'products of good teaching', 'material from oneself', and 'information from others'.

Table 6-1, below, shows the range of strategies used by academic staff in the SDP to enhance their teaching practice, as well as the number of staff who were using these strategies. The individual lists compiled by participants ranged from a minimum of four strategies to a maximum of ten. The table shows a compilation of these strategies. The group discussions focussing on teaching improvement strategies revealed that individual lists were not exhaustive. For example, a number of the participants commented they also used strategies mentioned on the group list, but had not thought of these when compiling their individual lists. In general, strategies used to improve teaching practice were predominantly in the category of 'material from oneself'.

**Table 6-1 Strategies used for Improving Teaching**

Strategies For Improving Teaching	Number of Staff
<b>Information from others:</b>	
Students – Formal e.g. student appraisal of teaching forms; student opinion questionnaires	6
Students – Informal e.g. qualitative feedback; discussion with students	7
Colleagues – Formal and informal e.g. Peer assessment; discussions with colleagues	5
<b>Material from oneself:</b>	
Use of different/innovative teaching methods or strategies	11
Attending workshops on teaching e.g. TLG <sup>2</sup>	6
Further studies in education e.g. tertiary teaching	7
Reading journals, other material	6
Reflecting/thinking about teaching	4
<b>Products of Good Teaching:</b>	
Assessing student learning e.g. pre-post classes	5

Another feature of the responses is the relatively high number (seven) of staff involved in further studies in education and the use of innovative teaching strategies to improve teaching. This finding suggests that staff participating in the program were those with a particular commitment and interest in teaching. As noted in previous chapters the University provided few incentives for good teaching and there was no requirement for teaching qualifications. In this regard, participants in the SDP could not be considered representative of academic staff in general. The implications of this finding are discussed below.

<sup>2</sup> Refers to Teaching Learning Group – The University's Academic Staff Development Unit.

The participants were also asked to list methods that they used to evaluate or appraise their teaching. The items listed in this activity are shown in Table 6-2 below. Two to six strategies were listed in the individual lists. Again, the categories of portfolio items proposed in Edgerton et al. (1991) served to classify the responses.

**Table 6-2** Methods used by staff for appraising teaching

Methods used for Teaching Appraisal	Number of Staff
<b>Information from others:</b>	
Students – Formal e.g. student appraisal of teaching forms; Student opinion questionnaires	13
Students – Informal e.g. qualitative feedback; discussion with students	11
Colleagues – Formal and informal e.g. peer assessment; discussions with colleagues	8
<b>Material from oneself:</b>	
Reflecting/thinking about teaching	4
<b>Products of Good Teaching:</b>	
Assessing student learning e.g. work produced by students	5
Same methods as for Improving Teaching (See Table 6-1)	4

Four of the participants indicated that the methods they used for appraising and improving their teaching were the same. There was also considerable overlap in the lists, particularly in the area of student feedback. As noted previously, staff development and portfolio construction may serve both formative and summative evaluation purposes (Anderson, 1993). The findings above imply that some participants perceived strategies they used for appraising or improving their teaching as related activities. During the group discussions the dual role of some strategies were explored further. From the discussions it emerged that practices

such as peer appraisal and qualitative feedback from students were perceived by the participants to have the most promise for both improving and assessing their teaching.

As also shown in Table 6-2, all but one of the participants used Student Appraisal of Teaching (SAT) forms. The distribution of SATs was organised routinely each semester by the University's Teaching Learning Group (TLG). In light of this, and the University's promotion policies, which as noted in chapter four, recommended the inclusion of SAT data, it would be expected that staff would obtain this form of feedback. However, in the group discussions it became apparent that whilst the participants regularly used SATs, many of them found this feedback to have limited value, either for assessing or improving their teaching. The comments from some participants indicated they felt SAT forms were too general and that the results could not be related to improvements in teaching in a meaningful way. For example,

*(SATs) are useful to give a general idea of how you're going with your teaching...I find focus discussions with students in a tutorial and in clinical or [the use of] open-ended questions more helpful to improve my lectures or tutes (B33<sup>3</sup>).*

Thus, outcomes from this activity show that within the two groups participants were using a range of strategies for teaching appraisal and improvement. Moreover, although there were discrepancies between group members in the extent to which these practices were used, all could identify at least some potential

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<sup>3</sup> Refers to participant group (A or B); Participant code no. 1-7; Session no. 1-7. I.e. B33 is group B, participant 3, session 3.

items for their own portfolio. As one participant stated toward the end of the session,

*at least I know I've got a start (with a teaching portfolio) and don't have to begin from scratch (A41).*

However, whilst most participants appeared to have little difficulty in listing strategies they used to appraise or improve their teaching practice, most found it hard to think of ways in which their efforts were recognised or rewarded by the institution, at either the School, Divisional or University level. Their responses to the question, which addressed strategies for reward and recognition of good teaching, are summarized in Table 6-3.

**Table 6-3 Strategies for reward or recognition of good teaching**

Strategies for the Recognition or Reward of Good Teaching	Number of Staff
Excel/Alumni Awards	3
Recognition from peers/feedback from students	2

In the group discussions surrounding teaching reward and recognition mechanisms, staff commented the University provided few incentives for the improvement of teaching practices. Furthermore, although some participants mentioned the Excel or Alumni awards for good teaching, none had a clear idea of how these were judged or the basis on which they were awarded. This finding supports those from the broader survey of academic staff in the SON, discussed previously and those of Baker (1993) discussed in the context evaluation.

## Individual and Group Goals

**Table 6-4 Individual and group goals for group A participants**

No	Individual Goals	Group Goals
A1	Begin a teaching portfolio. Gain an understanding re contents/design of portfolios. Design a specific portfolio for clinical teaching.	Agree on design/contents of teaching portfolio. Work out how clinical teachers can make the best use of teaching portfolios.
A2	An understanding of how to formally document teaching achievements. Development of a teaching portfolio.	Constructive feedback about teaching strategies. Help with developing the portfolio.
A3	To be able to assemble documentary evidence to substantiate teaching achievements.	Assist each other with developing portfolios.
A4	Construct my own portfolio. Find out more about teaching portfolios. Improve my CV.	Share ideas about teaching strategies. Learn more about teaching from others in the SON.
A5	During the course of this project I want to begin a teaching portfolio, and look at ways in which I can improve my teaching skills.	Work together on improving our teaching, i.e. collaborate with others who would like to observe/be observed teaching and get some constructive and honest feedback on how we teach.
A6	Improve the way I document my teaching for applications etc. Start to collect materials for my teaching portfolio.	Discuss some common problems we have in teaching large groups and 'difficult' students and get feedback on my ideas.
A7	Find out more about teaching portfolios. Start a portfolio. Find out how to appraise my teaching in ways which are constructive – to improve.	Get a shared understanding of what is good teaching and who are good teachers in the SON.

The importance of individual goal setting in professional development programs has been highlighted as a strategy for keeping participants on track and focussed during a program, and as a means for assessing both the progress and achievements of those involved (Hekimian, 1984; Kirkpatrick, 1994; Kydd, Crawford, & Riches, 1997). The individual and group goals set by Project



participants of Group A and B are shown in Table 6-4 above, and Table 6-5 below, respectively.

**Table 6-5 Individual and group goals for Group B participants**

No	Individual Goals	Group Goals
B1	Look at developing expertise and having this recognised. (Developing requires teaching in the area, reading extensively in the topic, consulting colleagues in other institutions)	Support group. Develop strategies to establish expertise in the School.
B2	Enhance/improve teaching. Provides opportunity to debate current nursing education issues. Provides opportunity to debate current SON education practices. Develop a dynamic teaching portfolio. Assist formulation of self reviews and CV.	Identify constraints of School teaching loads. Look at clinical teaching index and under valuing of clinical teaching. Collaborate with peers in the formulation of portfolios. Obtain peer support and innovations in the formulation of portfolios.
B3	Development of a teaching portfolio of past and present teaching. Develop an awareness of a process to continue to add to teaching portfolio. To increase knowledge about how to record teaching achievements on a CV.	Development of a discussion group regarding teaching achievements and methods of evaluation of teaching.
B4	Focus on my clinical teaching and seeing how to improve and stay 'expert' in the field. Develop better understanding of portfolio use in clinical teaching.	Provide recognition for clinical teaching. Share ideas as a group.
B5	To be a good teacher. To improve skills and interaction with students. To be able to give/support students with what they need.	To support each other with teaching improvement. To demonstrate the difficulties/reality of contextual issues and factors on the quality of teaching.
B6	Clarification of my teaching, reflection via written data.	Unloading our frustrations!!! and helping each other cope.
B7	Learn how to document my teaching better. Establish a 'benchmark' for my teaching in comparison with others.	Help each other by sharing tips etc. for how we can teach better under difficult circumstances.

Although the goals for group A in Table 6-4 show considerable variability with regard to individual and group goals, most participants' individual goals included the development of a portfolio. Two participants (A5, A7) indicated they wanted

to improve their teaching, and the group goals also focussed on collaborative work on teaching appraisal and improvement. One participant (A1) focussed on clinical teaching in her goals for group A.

Table 6-5, above, shows the individual and group goals for the group B participants. As with group A, participants in this group had a range of individual and group goals. Four of the group B participants (B1, B2, B4, B5) set individual goals for the improvement of their teaching. Moreover, most group B participants set goals for the group that related to mutual support and collaboration in teaching improvement. Two participants (B6, B7) expressed their group goals in terms of providing assistance to others in coping with the demands of their teaching role. Other participants (B2, B4) focussed on clinical teaching.

The transcripts from the group discussions also provided insight into the reasons for staff participation. As mentioned above, teaching improvement was an aim for some participants and this was also reflected in the discussion that took place in both group sessions. For example, a participant in group A stated:

*...apart from being able to record our teaching of students, this [the teaching portfolio] seems to be an excellent device for initiating and maintaining reflective practice. If you are constantly having to think about what you are doing and why you are doing it, and how you are doing it ...(A71).*

Similarly, in group B the following comments were made:

*... self-review is what prompted this [participation in the SDP]... when I saw this advertised because I was in the middle of doing a peer review... ...and it's very hard documenting how good you are at*

*teaching, or how bad you are I mean, whatever. I thought this would be a great way of being able to say, hey this is what I do and this is how I do it. (B61)*

*...What I am hoping to get out of this [participation in the SDP] is to improve my teaching and learn from my mistakes or what I do well and, as many of the people here, to document something for my portfolio. (B31)*

As suggested by these comments and the goals set by group members outlined above, the participants appeared eager to use their participation in the program to reflect on their teaching and to hone their teaching skills. Although the improvement of teaching was not an explicit objective of the SDP, the role of portfolio preparation in teaching reflection and development was an important consideration.

### **Items for Inclusion**

A series of questionnaires, based on a list of portfolio items cited in Edgerton et al. (1991), were designed to provide a better understanding of portfolio contents. These questionnaires, detailed in chapter three, asked participants to indicate if they thought a particular item was essential for inclusion in a portfolio and whether they already had that item. The information was then compiled and used to stimulate and focus discussion on portfolio contents in the SDP sessions to develop a profile of what portfolios in the SON might contain. Another objective of this task was to establish the resources (ie. availability) within each group with respect to particular items. The activities based on portfolio contents were undertaken over five sessions, with categories on 'information from oneself',

'products of teaching', 'colleague feedback', 'student feedback' and a 'miscellaneous' category. The collated responses to these questionnaires from the two SDP groups are shown in Appendix 6.1 and discussed below.

### *Information from oneself*

Combined responses from both groups to the questionnaire on 'information from oneself' show that over half the participants considered the following items essential for inclusion in a portfolio:

- reflective statement on teaching philosophy, practices, and goals (93%);
- participating in seminars, workshops and professional meetings intended to improve teaching (86%);
- maintaining a record of the changes resulting from self-evaluation (78%);
- participating in course or curriculum development (78%);
- list of course titles and numbers, unit values or credits, enrolments (71%);
- reading journals/books on improving teaching and attempting to implement acquired ideas (64%); and
- conducting research on one's own teaching or course (57%).

However, items considered essential for inclusion in portfolios were not necessarily those participants already had. Noteworthy in this regard was the reflective statement about teaching, which all but one participant (93%) considered important to include, but only one participant (7%) stated she already possessed. Similarly, not all items identified by a majority of participants as

essential for inclusion, for example, 'information on availability to students', were items they had. The portfolio items mentioned by most group members as ones they already had were:

- list of course titles and numbers, unit values or credits, enrolments (100%);
- information on availability to students (86%);
- participating in course or curriculum development (78%);
- participating in seminars, workshops and professional meetings intended to improve teaching (71%); and
- maintaining a record of the changes resulting from self-evaluation (57%).

The collated responses also show that items such as, 'description of how films, computers or other non-print materials were used in teaching', 'exchanging course materials with a colleague from another institution', or 'editing or contributing to a professional journal on teaching one's subject', were not considered important for a portfolio and were also items the participants did not have. In the group discussions on this category of portfolio items participants stated that whilst all items could be included, they considered some more important than others, and the items noted above were given low priority by most participants.

### ***Products of good teaching***

In session three, the groups focussed on the category of portfolio items, 'products of good teaching'. The responses to this questionnaire show that items most likely

to be considered essential for inclusion in a portfolio by participants were as follows:

- student essays, creative work, and project or field-work reports (100%);
- students' scores on teacher-made or standardised tests, possibly before and after a course has been taken as evidence of learning (64%);
- evidence of help given to colleagues on teaching improvement (57%);
- setting up of or running a successful internship program (50%); and
- documentary evidence of help given by the lecturer to students in securing employment (50%).

Notably, all participants listed the item, 'student essays, creative work and project or field-work reports' as being materials they thought should be included in a portfolio, although only five (36%) indicated they had these materials. The discussion on this category of portfolio items highlighted the importance placed by the participants on clinical teaching. This was particularly evident from the discussion on the item, 'Setting up of or running a successful internship program', during which group members involved in clinical teaching emphasised the importance of documenting and evaluating this aspect of their work for a portfolio.

In general, the collated questionnaire responses indicate that few participants possessed materials in this category for their portfolios. Apart from examples of student work, noted above, other categories mentioned were:

- documentary evidence of help given by the lecturer to students in securing employment (28%); and
- setting up of or running a successful internship program (36%).

The project journal shows that during session three there was quite a detailed discussion on issues related to portfolio items that constituted products or outcomes of good teaching. This was also evident from the transcripts of this session. For example, both groups discussed issues related to the use of student work in their portfolios, shown in excerpts from group A transcripts:

*...but I don't think we can take responsibility for a student's good work, although we could perhaps use examples to show that we can improve their work. (A63)*

*I think you could take some credit. There's a whole lot of issues involved, but if you get the student's permission and can show how the work is related to your teaching... in the way you set up the assignment, or before and after you've given feedback.... (A13)*

Similarly, in group B this view was reflected in the transcripts as follows:

*... you're saying that this is a product of good teaching,...this might be the product of a good student, nothing to do with your teaching. She might have done a better assignment with someone else, how would you know? (B33)*

*...but you would include work samples to illustrate your approach to assessment or setting assignments wouldn't you? Not just to say this is what my students can do... if you pick the best one are you going to put in the worst as well... and who would get the credit for that? (B23)*

As indicated by the above exchanges there were often lively debates over the pros and cons of various items and it was evident participants problem-solved ways in

which materials might best be presented in a portfolio. Also evident from the transcripts was that portfolio development was at times an intensely personal process and that divergent values and views could be accommodated within the overall concept.

### *Colleague feedback*

The responses to portfolio items related to feedback from peers and colleagues show that the item: 'statements from colleagues who have observed teaching either as members of a teaching team or as independent observers of a particular course or who teach other sections of the same course', was endorsed by all participants as essential to include in a portfolio. Other items in this category participants considered important to include were:

- honours or recognition such as a distinguished award or election to a committee on teaching (86%); and
- evaluation of contributions to course development and improvement (57%).

As with the previous category, fewer participants indicated they already had these items. Six (43%) of the participants indicated they had 'statements from colleagues who have observed teaching either as members of a teaching team or as independent observers of a particular course, or who teach other sections of the same course'. Moreover, three (21%) had 'honors or recognition such as a distinguished teacher award or election to a committee on teaching', for their



portfolios. In the discussion on these items participants shared ideas and suggestions for portfolio preparation. For example:

*I suppose for the last few years I've had a drawer in my filing cabinet that I've been using...if I get invited to go on a working group or give a talk at the TLG<sup>1</sup> I just photocopy it and put it in there and then when I am writing up my review...it is all there. (A24)*

and

*You know I was just thinking, for Aboriginal Health I asked [...colleague] to do three lectures in this unit as that's her area of expertise. And you know I sent a memo off to [...Course Coordinator] so that she would be aware of it but now I realise that I haven't acknowledged her [colleague's name] help in doing it. Now I'm thinking she could have used that for her portfolio...but you get so locked into the schedule, the day to day running of things...(A64)*

As suggested by these comments, group members in the SDP were exploring new strategies for documenting their teaching practice whilst engaged in these activities.

### ***Student feedback***

The category of portfolio items, 'student evaluation of teaching', solicited lively debate from project participants in both groups. The items that all participants agreed were essential (100%) and which most (86%) also had were:

- Student course and teaching evaluation data which suggest improvements or produce an overall rating of effectiveness or satisfaction.

Another item many participants (64%) thought important to include in a portfolio and already possessed (71%) was:

- Unstructured (and possibly unsolicited) written evaluations by students, including written comments on exams and letters received after a course has been completed.

As discussed previously, most of the SDP participants used the University's standard student evaluation of teaching forms, the Student Appraisal of Teaching (SAT) and Student Opinion Questionnaire (SOQ), which were administered centrally through the Teaching Learning Group (TLG). Whilst discussing this category of portfolio items, some of the limitations of these forms were raised, particularly with respect to their applicability to the evaluation of clinical teaching. Three group B participants undertook to investigate student appraisal of clinical teaching and to report back in the next session. There was also a consensus amongst participants in both groups that open-ended feedback from students, irrespective of how it was obtained, generally provided more useful information in terms of teaching improvement.

During the group discussions, comments were made about the kind of problem-solving occurring around issues associated with student feedback. For example,

*What about satisfaction with out of class contacts? One of the examples you could use could be say, a statement from a student... perhaps where a teacher had run a test in chemistry for a class and*

<sup>4</sup> Teaching Learning Group – The University's Academic Staff Development Unit

*found that the grades were very low so at no additional cost to the student they made extra sessions...they gave of their own time outside of normal class contact to tutor these students...and that is something we quite often do...you know you have a very weak student and you spend an hour or two with them and you may get thanks for putting in that extra time. (A45)*

Another participant described her experience of using student evaluations of a unit she coordinated in these terms:

*I'll just show you what I've done with the student evaluation of Nursing Studies xxx. What I did at the beginning [of the evaluation] is that I stated the unit objectives and then I asked the students if they felt we had achieved the objectives. ... (A75)*

This participant went on to describe other aspects of student perceptions of teaching that were covered in her evaluation of this unit. Her observations included whether the material covered in the unit acknowledged the students' previous knowledge base. She went on to say:

*So these are areas I wanted to cover because they are not areas that can be measured by the SOQ<sup>5</sup> or SAT<sup>6</sup>. Once I got the replies back from the students I put them in a folder with other anecdotal notes from that unit. (A75)*

Again, the discourse of the group sessions provided insight into the nature of the processes involved in portfolio preparation and how this may relate to portfolio-based teaching development in a group setting.

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<sup>5</sup> Student Opinion Questionnaire.

<sup>6</sup> Student Appraisal of Teaching.

*Miscellaneous items*

In session six, the participants considered the final category of portfolio items, 'other sources', which includes things such as 'statements about teaching achievements' and 'invitations to contribute to the teaching literature'. The collated responses from both groups show that unlike previous categories of portfolio items, no items in this category were endorsed by a majority of participants. This is perhaps not surprising considering the nature of these materials, and, as might be expected, there were few items in this category that participants already had to contribute to their portfolios.

From an analysis of the discussion surrounding portfolio items it appears evident that group members became knowledgeable and discerning about portfolio components, and that basing activities around potential portfolio items served to provide participants with a better understanding of portfolio contents and styles. Thus, notes from the project journal indicate that basing activities on the categories of items for inclusion provided a useful framework for the discussion and in the preparation of a portfolio. For example, it made some participants think about other materials they already had for their portfolios, the nature and use of particular items could be clarified, and participants could see from the questionnaire feedback that each had something to contribute to the discussion. These observations are also evident from the session transcripts. For example, a participant from group A noted:

*I think it [the portfolio] will have my philosophy in it and it will have things that I have found helpful in the past... like keeping unit outlines*

*and perhaps copies of good essays... because I've found unless a student sees a good example of what other students do, they don't realise how poor their own work is. Usually when they have come to complain and they're angry with you because you gave them a lousy mark, if you just show them look, this is the standard other students have attained in the past, then they are all apologetic. (A23)*

Considerable enthusiasm and interest was also evident in the groups during the process of deliberating on portfolio materials. Findings from the outcomes of these activities, as well as the project journal and session transcripts, show that this strategy provided a comprehensive and productive approach to portfolio preparation, as well as a better understanding of the pros and cons of particular portfolio materials.

### **Characteristics of Good Teaching**

As described in chapter three, participants were given open-ended questionnaires (Appendix 3.14) that were designed to elicit ideas about attributes of good teaching in different contexts, as well as exemplars of best teaching practice. In these questionnaires, participants recorded characteristics of effective teaching in different teaching modes and contexts, including tutoring, lecturing, clinical teaching, laboratory teaching, and thesis supervision. This was undertaken at the conclusion of session six as a prelude to a consideration of the standards and criteria that may apply to the assessment of a teaching portfolio. Involvement in this activity appeared to be influenced by intervening events unfolding in the SON, described previously, which led to staff cuts. Five members of group A and four from group B subsequently returned completed forms.

The combined, collated responses to these questionnaires are shown in Appendices 6.2 and 6.3. During session seven, the responses to this questionnaire were discussed in pairs and threes in both program groups. Each small group was instructed to discuss, reflect on, and record comments on each teaching context, before providing feedback to the combined group. The main points arising from this activity are discussed below, in relation to the different teaching modes addressed in the open-ended questionnaire.

### *Tutorials*

From the descriptors listed for good teaching in the context of tutoring, attributes such as being knowledgeable and having appropriate interpersonal skills to promote discussion and student participation were considered important. In the responses to what makes for a good tutorial, respondents highlighted the importance of creating an environment conducive to student discussion, interaction and participation, and the need to use a variety of teaching strategies. The notion of integrating, or expanding on, materials covered in the lectures was also mentioned in this category.

### *Lectures*

The attributes considered by participants to be important in the context of lecturing, included being knowledgeable, with a good command of the subject matter, as well as an ability to impart the material with clarity and coherence. Features considered important in relation to lectures included good organisation,

careful selection of the material to be presented, and the appropriate use of audio-visual aids. The small group discussions also highlighted these attributes, and emphasised the importance of planning lecture content to synthesise significant concepts and integrate the material with related tutorials, laboratories and clinical placements.

### *Clinical instruction*

Participants emphasised attributes such as having relevant clinical expertise and being a role model as important for instructors in clinical settings. An advocacy role for good clinical instructors was also suggested by some of the respondents. For good instruction to occur in clinical areas, the respondents noted aspects such as the application and practicing of skills, as well as maximising the experiential nature of learning in this setting. Key concepts arising from the questionnaire responses and the group discussion, were the proactive nature of clinical supervision, where clinical instructors had to liaise with clinical staff in the practice setting to ensure students were exposed to experiences appropriate to their educational level. In this regard, good networking, teamwork and interpersonal skills were considered essential.

### *Laboratory teaching*

The next section of the questionnaire sought to determine the characteristics of good laboratory instruction. The responses indicate that participants thought laboratory instructors should be able to demonstrate skills to the students with a

high degree of competency and, in this context, emphasised experience and knowledge as key attributes. Important aspects of instruction in a laboratory setting were considered to be the provision of facilities for students to practice, clear instructions and assessment criteria, and up to date equipment. In discussion, it was apparent that the latter was considered important in the preparation of nursing students, in order for them to enter the workforce with experience in the latest in technology and equipment, and to add 'currency' to laboratory instruction.

### *Postgraduate supervision*

Participants were also requested to suggest attributes of good postgraduate supervisors and postgraduate supervision. Qualities such as being supportive, experienced in research, and providing constructive feedback were considered important attributes of thesis supervisors. During the group discussions some participants indicated they had omitted this item because they were not involved in the School's postgraduate programs. However, most were themselves postgraduate students, and from this perspective reiterated the importance of a supportive and stimulating learning environment.

### *Units of study*

In this category, participants deliberated on the characteristics of good units of study and attributes required of unit controllers. Attributes considered important for units of study were clear objectives, appropriate assessment criteria, and



vertical and horizontal integration of units of study within the curriculum. The responses also highlighted the importance of meeting the learning needs of the students. For unit controllers, participants emphasised the importance of leadership, organisational, coordination, and teamwork skills as essential attributes.

### *Other teaching contexts*

Finally, participants were also provided with an 'other' category, and two responded to this section. One participant (A1) used this category to describe characteristics of good teaching in the context of self-directed learning packages, whilst another (A1) listed attributes she considered important across all categories of teaching. Feedback from the small group discussions also focussed on 'generic' attributes of good teachers and teaching, and qualities such as being knowledgeable, enthusiastic, committed and supportive, featured in most group lists.

Overall, these exercises produced animated discussion and useful information on which to base the development of criteria against which portfolios could be assessed. For example, from the overview of attributes of good teaching outlined above, clear differences between teaching modes and contexts can be ascertained. Moreover, the attributes identified by program participants also accorded with those identified in the literature as characterising effective university teaching that were discussed in chapter two (Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee, 1993; Boyer, 1990; Ramsden, 1992). Although it was beyond the scope of the present

study to apply this information to the assessment of portfolios, it does point to a method of developing criteria that involves those whose work is being assessed, and which enables teaching in all its different modes and contexts to be reviewed.

### **Teaching Vignettes**

In another task undertaken by participants they were asked to record examples of good teaching practice. These vignettes were used as the basis of a group activity during session seven, which explored strategies for documenting teaching practices in a portfolio. This task was a corollary to the previous activity and both tasks aimed to provide a platform from which the participants could discuss the development of standards and criteria for the assessment of portfolios in the SON.

Vignettes from eight group members (four each from group A and B) were chosen by the researcher as representative of a range of different teaching situations to use as 'triggers' for the discussion. These vignettes (see Appendix 6.3) were transcribed and provided to participant pairs, with instructions to discuss and outline the attributes of good teaching embodied in the examples. They were also instructed to record strategies for documenting the attributes for a portfolio. At the conclusion of this activity participants reported back to the larger group.

The outcomes of this activity provided further insight into aspects of good teaching practice in the SON, and demonstrated that participants could readily identify ways of documenting the elements of good practice exemplified in the

vignettes. This was shown by the responses generated by the small groups, in which a variety of portfolio entries were suggested in relation to each of the exemplars provided. Furthermore, in the ensuing discussion it was evident that this was also a valuable 'brainstorming' task, in which group members could share ideas and debate various issues surrounding the preparation and content of a portfolio. This finding supports the work of other researchers advocating the use of vignettes or cases for teaching development (Brady, 1999; Shulman, 1992).

However, with regard to establishing criteria and standards for the evaluation of portfolios, the session was curtailed by the events noted previously. Thus, a planned activity for the second half of the final session was to explore with the groups the 'minimum' expectation and requirements for a portfolio in the SON. However, a number of participants indicated during the final session that they would be leaving early, and others commented they had little interest in standards of good teaching in light of the perceived impact of the redundancies on their teaching practice. Consequently, although most participants stayed for the whole session, this aspect of the program remained as unfinished business requiring further investigation.

## PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION

An open-ended questionnaire (described in chapter three) was administered to participants at the conclusion of each session. This feedback from both groups was examined immediately after the session. The combined and collated

responses to this feedback form are shown in Appendix 6.4. The feedback was used to monitor program activities and to make adjustments during the implementation process as appropriate or required. As the responses showed considerable overlap between groups, unless noted otherwise, they were combined to provide an overall perspective on the operation of the program.

One feature of the feedback was that the forms contained less information as the sessions unfolded so that by the fourth session only a few were returned, and these contained cursory comments. When the facilitator commented on this, a participant quipped, "Don't worry, if we're not happy you'll be the first to know!" Nevertheless, information from the feedback forms, supplemented by notes in the project journal, and analysis of the session transcripts, formed the basis for determining participant satisfaction with the program. An overview of this data, focusing on the most salient points, is presented below.

Data on the first session indicated that the aims were achieved, all planned activities were completed, and the feedback from both groups was generally very positive. However, the feedback from group A reflected the fact that the timing of the session had not been optimal and the session had run overtime. This was noted before group B's first session, and the facilitator was able to make appropriate adjustments to the timing. The journal notes and transcripts attest to the enthusiastic atmosphere evident in both groups and indicate that group cohesion was developed in the early sessions. This was no doubt aided by the fact that

participants were familiar with each other, and many had worked together over a number of years.

The feedback on session two emphasised the importance of group interaction and how this may relate to participant satisfaction. Thus, a number of participants mentioned the benefits they derived from the input of group members and suggested that they had learnt from the contributions made by others. The feedback indicated that members were generally satisfied with session two. There were no suggestions for improvement and few unanswered questions. It was also evident that members from both groups were engaged in discussion on the program between sessions. The facilitator had encouraged this in the first session. It was further noted in the journal that the groups were 'productive', that the session contents were covered and there was sufficient time for participants to complete the questionnaire for the next category of portfolio items. The atmosphere amongst group members was recorded as being enthusiastic, relaxed and very positive. In a representative comment, one member said,

*I'm just finding it very exciting. I'm getting a lot more insight into things that we do. It's clarifying a lot in my mind when I sat down and I thought... what things do I do to enhance my teaching? I put this, this, and this, down and then... you see a lot more... some of the things that I've saved for no good reason, they've sat in the bottom of the drawer, cards and different things that students have sent...just deeper insight into what's going on with the students and how we can improve the process of teaching a lot more. (B22)*

Overall, then, the findings from the second sessions demonstrate that the program was 'on track' and that participants appeared committed and keen to prepare their portfolios and explore some of the issues raised.

In session three, the groups continued to work well together. It was evident that the dialogue between group members both within and between the two groups, noted above, was continuing. However, some participants mentioned that they were not making as much progress as they would like with their portfolios, attributing this to heavy teaching commitments and a lack of time. Nevertheless, all participants indicated they felt confident on how to proceed and most said they had started to search for, and compile, portfolio materials. The feedback on this session was brief, and as noted above, this was a trend that continued over the ensuing sessions. However, the feedback indicated satisfaction with the session, and raised some issues regarding the size and organisation of portfolios for discussion at the next session.

The transcripts from session four show some divergence between groups A and B with respect to the discussions and activities undertaken. The group and individual goals were reiterated at the beginning of the session. Group B participants agreed that they would like to focus on assisting each other in documenting clinical teaching whilst members in A were happy to focus on more general aspects of teaching. The findings also suggest that these sessions provided the participants a supportive environment in which group members could air their concerns, canvas ideas, and enlist support for the preparation of their portfolio.

As with the previous session, the feedback forms showed no suggestions for improving session five. There were also few 'outstanding' issues remaining at the

end of the session. Participants continued to appear positive and enthusiastic about the way in which the program was unfolding. Notes in the project journal and an examination of the transcripts confirmed this. Three group B participants had undertaken to explore other forms of getting student feedback on clinical practice and they reported back on this during the session. The transcript shows this kind of initiative was actively encouraged:

*For the last couple of sessions we've talked about how clinical teaching is undervalued in the School and suggested ways this could be overcome...this [exploring student evaluation of clinical teaching]...seems a really good way of looking at how you could best document your clinical teaching for a portfolio and how to get meaningful feedback from the students. (B Facilitator 5)*

The transcripts and journal indicate there was full attendance for both groups in session five and that enthusiasm and participation of members was still high. Most participants said they were confident about completing the assembly of their portfolios although not all were clear as to what form their portfolio might finally take. The discussion indicated that most viewed the collection and selection of portfolio items as only the beginning of portfolio development. One member said she felt that she now knew what she needed to obtain for her portfolio but the hard work would involve making sense of the collected items. Towards the end of session five the discussion began to focus on the final category of portfolio items and the criteria and standards for the evaluation of a portfolio.

In session six the findings continued to reflect some divergence of focus between the two groups, with clinical teaching still an emphasis for group B. Also during

this session, there was discussion about a staff meeting where the School's financial problems had been highlighted and staff redundancies foreshadowed. Thus, session six was characterised to some extent by discussion unrelated to the program. There was some debate in both group sessions about the staff meeting and it was evident it had raised some anxiety amongst staff in the SON. With a budget deficit looming, staff had been requested to 'do more with less', and were advised to expect 'down-sizing' of staff. There was speculation and conjecture about these recent developments and the implications for participants and the preparation of a portfolio.

*...we will be finding out what happens to contract staff next week.  
(A56)*

*...and this has to do with teaching portfolios because if we don't get jobs here we should still do it. (A36)*

*Yes, even if you go for a job somewhere else to have a document ready...you could take it to the interview for a start...you can say in your application you've got a teaching portfolio. (A56)*

Towards the end of session six, participants were asked to consider characteristics of good teachers and teaching in various contexts and to think about teaching vignettes that exemplified excellence in teaching practice. This activity generated a lot of discussion and all participants made a start on compiling their lists. However, not everyone completed the activity during the session. A few participants stayed behind after the session to finish the activity. Some undertook to provide the information before the next session. Also, as the next session was to be the last, participants in both groups volunteered to bring a plate of food to celebrate the program's conclusion. In the feedback a number again highlighted



the 'supportive' nature of group participation, and although not all activities were completed the session was still productive and lively.

This was in sharp contrast to the final session, which took place at a tumultuous time in the SON. Four of the fourteen participants had received a termination of their contract two days before. Consequently, the session did not go to plan and was quite disorganised in both groups. Some participants left early and others discussed issues unrelated to the project both during and after the group activities were completed. The atmosphere in the groups was also in marked contrast to previous sessions. Only a few feedback forms were returned and these had only cursory remarks on them. At the request of the participants only part of these sessions were recorded. In group A the recorder was turned off after 65 minutes and only 55 minutes of the group B session was recorded. Some of the following observations, therefore, come largely from detailed notes taken by the researcher during the sessions and from reflections recorded afterwards.

Although it was initially attempted to conduct the final sessions as 'normal' it was apparent that this would not be appropriate, given the high level of feelings expressed by group members. Some were angry and some distressed and although most agreed at the beginning of the session that it should continue, the discussion kept turning to the events of the past week. Two group A members left after the first hour, and three group B participants left at various points in the second hour. Of these, two whose contracts had been terminated, arranged to

meet with the facilitator at another time, indicating they wanted some feedback on their portfolio.

Under these circumstances it was difficult for me to stay impartial, and the boundaries between the various roles of researcher, colleague, group facilitator, and evaluator were almost impossible to maintain. The implications of this will be discussed in further detail in the final chapter.

Finally, participants had previously been informed they would be sent questionnaires asking them to comment on the Staff Development Program (SDP) after the final session. This was reiterated at the beginning of session seven, as was a request to meet individually with participants to view their portfolios at a later time. Group members were also informed that, as noted on the consent form they had signed, they could withdraw from the project at any time.

Overall, then, what emerged from an analysis of the records of the SDP was that, for the most part, participants were very satisfied with the sessions as evidenced by the feedback, the transcripts and the project journal. Moreover, although the final sessions did not run smoothly it was very evident that the groups had become very cohesive and that group members were very supportive of each other. Other findings also demonstrate participant satisfaction with the program, as evidenced by high levels of attendance, enthusiasm, and interest over the course of the program sessions. Further information attesting to the satisfaction of participants

with the conduct of the SDP is provided in the product evaluation, which examined other aspects of program outcomes.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the record of program events indicates that the Staff Development Program (SDP) was operationalised in accordance with the original plan, that the program was adequately and appropriately resourced and that the groups provided a setting conducive to the collaborative preparation of portfolios. Moreover, implementation of various program activities generally followed the planned timetable. The SDP records also demonstrate that participation and involvement of group members was maintained at a high level throughout the program, as was the completion rate of various activities. Both the transcripts and the project journal attest to the high energy levels within the program groups during the sessions.

As noted above, feedback on the SDP indicated that participants were by and large very satisfied with the sessions. Observations recorded in the project journal and perusal of the transcripts support this view. The findings also suggest that there were good outcomes in terms of group cohesion and climate, fulfilling the aim of providing a supportive and collegial group environment. Thus, examination of this data shows that the integrity of the program process was maintained insofar as:

- the portfolio concept was understood by participants as evidenced by observations that they could readily articulate portfolio contents and styles;
- the role of portfolios as a strategy for teaching appraisal and improvement was explicated through program activities which explored portfolio use in different teaching contexts, and built upon existing practices used by participants for enhancing their teaching;
- the SDP provided a comprehensive framework of professional development activities based on the preparation of a teaching portfolio, contextualised for staff in the SON;
- the sessions facilitated collegial discussion on teaching and encouraged the use of a reflective approach to teaching practice; and
- various models for the use of portfolios at Curtin could be ascertained from the SDP record.

In general then, the findings show that the objectives of the program had been achieved. However, there were also suggestions that the program could be improved, which are discussed below.

## Program Development

Participants in the Staff Development Program (SDP) made a number of suggestions on how the sessions could be improved, particularly in the earlier stages of program implementation. This formative evaluation of program sessions was invaluable to adjust and refine program activities and enabled a responsive approach to participants' needs as they arose. For example, after the first session with group A, the feedback indicated that certain aspects of portfolio development required clarification and this was undertaken at the beginning of session two. However, in some instances this meant a larger investment of time between sessions than was originally planned. Thus, if group members were unable to attend all or part of a particular session, arrangements were made to meet with them at some other time. Whilst feasible in the context of this study, economies of size and scale may preclude this kind of follow-up in other programs.

The findings also suggest that for some activities more time could be allowed. In most sessions participants stayed behind to clarify points or continue discussion after the session concluded. Although increasing the length of the sessions beyond the two hours allocated was not practicable in the context of this program, consideration for longer or more frequent sessions may be advisable in some circumstances. On the other hand, it was also evident that if a particular portfolio model had been prescribed, some aspects of portfolio preparation could be expedited. That is, if participants were provided with specific guidelines for a portfolio style with prescribed contents, the preparation of a portfolio would be

more straightforward. Given the exploratory nature of the present program design this was not deemed appropriate in the present study. It could also be argued that the 'richness' of the collegial discussion surrounding different portfolio styles evident in the group sessions with the associated benefits for teaching development might be diminished.

As noted above, the climate in the SON was dramatically affected by the dismissal of ten staff members just prior to the final sessions, four of whom were SDP participants. Consequently, there was demonstrably less enthusiasm for participation and portfolio preparation in these sessions. This also resulted in some unfinished business with regard to the exploration of standards and criteria for the evaluation of portfolios, a discussion of which was to form part of the final session activities. It became apparent that events external to the program which impacted on the work environment of the participants, such as the budget cuts and the dismissal of staff, impacted directly on the program's functioning. The effect on both the morale and participation of group members was evident. The implications of this finding are discussed in the final chapter.

In conclusion, the process evaluation findings, derived from the analysis of feedback from project participants, the project journal and the session transcripts, provide considerable insight into the use of portfolios for academic staff development. The findings also highlighted the role of group processes in facilitating portfolio construction. It was evident that portfolio preparation could provide a very effective strategy for teaching development in the context of a

carefully planned program and with a group of enthusiastic and committed staff. The findings also show that the sessions provided a supportive environment where problems and issues related to both formative and summative evaluation of teaching could be explored. In the next chapter, these findings are further elaborated in the product evaluation, which explores the effects and outcomes of the Staff Development Program.

## Chapter Seven

# PRODUCT EVALUATION FINDINGS

*I think that one of the benefits of this group is that we actually...have the time to sit down and...clarify to ourselves what things we should be doing or what things we are doing and what things we can do better....We've been allocated two hours of time to sit down and actually clarify our own efforts. Sometimes we are going so fast that we can never catch up with ourselves, and so we have this time to share our thoughts. (SDP Participant B71, Emphasis added)*

## INTRODUCTION

The present study investigated the use of teaching portfolios for appraisal, improvement and recognition of university instruction, and as a strategy for professional development of academic staff. According to some advocates of portfolios, approaches to teaching development based on portfolio preparation are an improvement over existing strategies for the enhancement of university teaching and documenting teaching excellence. They point out that portfolios generally incorporate evidence from a range of different sources and may be used in both formative and summative teaching evaluation contexts (Anderson, 1993; Boyer, 1990; Gibbs, 1992; Murray, 1997; Seldin, Annis, & Zubizerreta, 1995).

The context evaluation established a need for improved practices for formative and summative evaluation of teaching, and provided insight into some of the



potential benefits and pitfalls associated with portfolio use. The input evaluation identified the resources required for conducting a staff development program based on teaching portfolios, and provided a basis for determining the program objectives, activities and design. Findings from the process evaluation pointed to the successful implementation of the staff development program. This evaluation also provided insight into the effectiveness of various strategies and activities to facilitate portfolio construction. The process evaluation further highlighted the benefits of a collaborative approach to portfolio preparation and showed how organisational change may impact on portfolio development. Together, the context, input and process evaluation findings provided the framework for informing the design, implementation and evaluation of the Staff Development Program (SDP) which was central to the present study. Moreover, each evaluation contributed data for answering the central research questions of the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP), which were:

1. How useful are teaching portfolios for teaching development purposes in a university context?
2. What are the outcomes and benefits for academic staff and universities of a professional development program based on the preparation of a teaching portfolio?

In accordance with the CIPP approach, the findings of a product evaluation provided further information about the outcomes and impact of the SDP and shed light on the usefulness of portfolio-based teaching development and the outcomes and impact of the TPP.

### Product Evaluation Questions

In Stufflebeam and Shinkfield's (1985) CIPP evaluation model, the product evaluation addresses project outcomes and determines their worth or merit in light of context, input and process evaluation findings. This can be achieved by various means, including the collection of judgements of outcomes from stakeholders and by performing both qualitative and quantitative analyses. Moreover, the information obtained from a product evaluation may be used in decision-making,

for deciding to continue, terminate, modify, or refocus a change activity, and to present a clear record of effects (intended and unintended, positive and negative). (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1985, p. 170)

Thus, a product evaluation can inform institutional decision-making through the analysis of information obtained from key stakeholders and previous evaluation phases. Accordingly, the main questions addressed in the product evaluation were:

- What were the effects of the Staff Development Program (SDP) on participants?
- What were the outcomes of the SDP for participants with regard to portfolio development?
- How does the teaching environment impact on portfolio-based professional development?
- What recommendations can be made for changes to the SDP and further program development?

The methods employed in this product evaluation are fully described in chapter three. Data was obtained by the administration of an open-ended questionnaire, interviews with SDP participants and other key stakeholders, a journal record of program activities, examination and classification of participants' teaching portfolios, and a review of the context, input and process findings. Whilst the product evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the CIPP approach it was also informed by other approaches to the evaluation of professional development programs such as those advocated by Kirkpatrick (1994).

## PROGRAM EFFECTS

The previous chapter discussed the formative evaluation of the Staff Development Program (SDP) such as obtaining feedback on sessions. In the product evaluation, a summative evaluation of the SDP was undertaken, which included participants' retrospective views on the SDP and their perceptions of program effects (Ayers, 1989). Two weeks after the final SDP session an open-ended follow-up questionnaire (Appendix 3.17) was sent to all participants in the SDP. This questionnaire, which sought to elicit feedback on the program's structure, content, resources, and the facilitator's performance, asked the participants to comment on:

- the structure of the program (number and length of sessions, time frame, group size, etc.);
- the discussion topics (content areas) covered;
- the resources provided (i.e. materials, time release);
- the group facilitator's performance (i.e. running of sessions, project management, etc.);
- their personal objectives and the extent to which they were achieved;

- whether the program sessions provided adequate support and resources and further support or resources required;
- barriers or problems participants thought they may encounter in portfolio development;
- whether these were adequately addressed in the program sessions;
- the potential advantages or disadvantages in developing a teaching portfolio;
- the purposes for which they would like to see portfolios used in the SON;
- whether they would recommend the SDP to the SON Staff Development Committee or to other academic staff; and
- any further comments they may have.

Scrutiny of the responses suggested there were no apparent differences between groups A and B. Thus, the reactions to the program from group A and B members were combined, as discussed below.

### Program Structure

In question 1(a) participants were asked to comment on the program in terms of the structure (that is, number and length of sessions, time frame, group size etc.). All respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the structure of the overall program. A number also commented on the atmosphere in the sessions in their responses. Representative comments from groups A and B participants about the program's structure include:

*Did not have a problem with this. Group size was right so was the time frame. I think we needed the number of sessions we had to get through the material. Sessions were informal and non threatening which was good. (Group A participant<sup>1</sup>)*

*Session length and number were fine – gave lots of opportunity for*

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<sup>1</sup> This questionnaire had A and B forms but did not identify individual participants

*informal networking and discussion. Group size also good – wouldn't like it to be larger but were enough people to give scope for small group activities. The whole thing was very well organised. (Group A participant)*

*Well structured, there was sufficient time to discuss and cover the material. The group size was great, with too many people it makes opportunities for discussion difficult. (Group B participant)*

*Group was a comfortable size. The length and number of sessions allowed for some valuable extra-curricular discussions (even side tracking a little) and meant we didn't feel rushed. Very informal, relaxed and supportive. (Group B participant)*

The responses above confirm the feedback and observations of the process evaluation findings outlined in chapter six. For example, most participants indicated they enjoyed the sessions and attendance was high throughout the program. Group size and the fortnightly meetings were similarly favourably commented on. Also, a number of participants suggested that they would like to continue with the sessions beyond the formal program, and a couple indicated they had arranged to meet informally to keep each other 'on track' with their portfolios.

### **Program Content**

Question 1(b) focused on the content of the sessions, and sought comment on the topics covered in the program. Typical responses on program content are outlined below.

*Very pertinent topics discussed. Provided an opportunity to gather insight into other's teaching methods. Areas discussed made me aware of other strategies to implement myself. (Group A participant)*

*Content was appropriate and gave me some idea as to the type of materials that could be included in a portfolio. It was very good to be able to discuss various issues with others in the group and exchange ideas about teaching strategies and ways to do things better. (Group A participant)*

*I appreciated especially the ideas of other people and copies (handouts) of their ideas. Maybe more discussion commenting on what each had done; e.g. I especially enjoyed getting and giving feedback on portfolio. We all benefit from this type of feedback. (Group B participant)*

*Excellent. All areas covered more than adequately. (Group B participant)*

As illustrated by these responses, the participants were generally satisfied with the session content, and many commented on the value of the discussion generated by the activities undertaken in the context of the program. It was also evident that a number of participants felt they had learnt new strategies for teaching from the session discussions, in addition to learning about the preparation of a teaching portfolio. This finding is significant in view of the propounded benefits of portfolios with respect to teaching improvement. It also suggests the potential benefits of collaborative approaches to portfolio development. On the other hand, as indicated by one participant above, provision for receiving more feedback from colleagues could be an important consideration in future program development. In this regard it was evident from materials received in a survey of directors of portfolio programs in other institutions (detailed in the input evaluation) that one institution incorporated peer consultation on portfolios in their program.

## Program Resources

In the next question, 1(e), participants were asked to comment on the resources provided in the program. Representative comments to this question include:

*Appropriate and adequate resources. Sometimes difficult to get to sessions because of other commitments (despite time release). (Group A participant)*

*Did not have any difficulty with time release this semester but only because I'm not doing clinical. Materials were relevant to the development of a portfolio and people could use as much or as little as they needed to. (Group A participant)*

*Very useful! The time release made all the difference in being able to attend. All information required to complete my own portfolio is there. (Group B participant)*

*Program was well resourced – plenty of handouts and time release was adequate. (Group B participant)*

The illustrative comments above point to the importance of time release for the participation of academic staff in professional development activities. The feedback also showed that with regard to materials, adequate and appropriate resources were provided throughout the program. Some participants mentioned they had kept the materials provided during the SDP for later reference. The adequacy of resources can be attributed to the input evaluation, which determined the requirements for the informational, physical, financial, and human resources required for the program.

## Program Facilitation

Another aspect of the follow-up questionnaire of SDP participants sought comment on the researcher's performance as group facilitator. As noted in chapter three, these questionnaire responses were anonymous in order to encourage participants to provide a frank opinion on the SDP's functioning.

Typical responses to question 1(d) included:

*Excellent – created a relaxed and supportive atmosphere which made the sessions very enjoyable. Pacing of material was very timely.*  
(Group A participant)

*Group facilitator always helpful and very sensitive to needs of group members – while still keeping in mind the purpose of the sessions.*  
(Group A participant)

*Stimulating, encouraging, accepting, challenging and knowledgeable. The atmosphere was conducive to sharing ideas (without threat). Very enjoyable.* (Group B participant)

*Sessions were relaxed and not didactic. Sometimes the group sessions wandered off into other agendas or non-related issues but the facilitator usually managed to re-focus us.* (Group B participant)

Overall the comments on the researcher's performance in facilitating the group sessions were positive. These findings also confirmed the observations discussed in the previous chapter that the group climate had been enthusiastic, productive, and pleasant for most sessions.



## Goal Attainment

The follow-up questionnaire also addressed the goals participants had set for themselves at the beginning of the Staff Development Program (SDP), and issues related to support they required or barriers they anticipated to achieving these goals. It will be recalled that in the first session of the SDP, participants were asked to determine goals for themselves and their group, as discussed in the findings of the process evaluation.

In the first part of this question, 2(a), participants were asked to list the goals they had set themselves for participation in the SDP and the extent to which they believed these had been met. As responses to this questionnaire were anonymous, the goals listed in this questionnaire could not be matched with the initial goals listed in chapter six. Two of the respondents indicated that they could not recall their initial goals (see comment from group A participant, below). Typical responses to this question from group A are shown below.

*1. To be aware of what exactly a teaching portfolio is. 2. How to compile one. 3. How a teaching portfolio can be used. 4. To start work on compiling one of my own. I've achieved 1-3 and have made a start on 4 – but only just! (Group A participant)*

*Can't remember exactly, but I achieved a lot and learnt a meaningful structure for the development of a teaching portfolio and new ways to evaluate my teaching. I think my teaching will be better because of taking part in this project and I can use my portfolio to demonstrate this. (Group A participant)*

Representative responses from group B participants included:

*1. To discover exactly what material goes into a portfolio. 2. To learn how to arrange my own portfolio. 3. To learn how to best use a portfolio i.e. in applications. – All met. (Group B participant)*

*To evaluate what I do and how well I do it and maybe what else I need to do. It made me start a portfolio of articles, conference papers, outside presentations and it's made me realise just how much we do for so little credibility. It wasn't an original objective but I do want to get some peer review of my teaching now. (Group B participant)*

All of the participants indicated they had achieved at least some of their goals, and most suggested that they had made a start on their portfolios. As noted in the comments above, some had revised their objectives during the course of the SDP, and there were a number of comments that implied some felt their teaching had improved as a result of their participation. It was also clear from a number of responses that the participants had started to think about the purposes for which they might use their portfolios, for example, in relation to applications for appointment.

### **Program Support**

The next question of this evaluation, (2b), focused on whether the support made available during the SDP was adequate for the participants to achieve their objectives. Some representative responses to this question were:

*The TPP certainly did provide the necessary resources required and the environment was very supportive. I do not think I needed anything more. (Group A participant)*

*Most definitely. It would not have been possible to achieve what I did without the support we received, both from the facilitator and other group members. (Group A participant)*

*As always time was a problem, otherwise yes. (Group B participant)*

*Definitely. When my portfolio is complete I would like some feedback on my attempt. (Group B participant)*

The responses from all participants to this question indicated they felt they received sufficient support and resources over the course of the program. As shown by the group B responses, those indicating they required further support suggested they needed more time or wanted feedback on their portfolio.

### **Barriers to Portfolio Development**

Participants were also requested to consider potential or actual barriers or problems they perceived that might hamper their progress with portfolio preparation, in question 3(a). Eight (57%) said they envisaged no problems or barriers to further portfolio development. Some typical responses from those who mentioned obstacles to portfolio preparation are shown below.

*I prefer a bulk amount of time to organise, read, and then think about putting a portfolio together. It is not something I would rush through during the semester. Once organised, I feel I could build the portfolio each semester. A problem I have is actually finding time to address/collect student evaluation of my teaching. It is always required during the busiest time of semester. (Group A participant)*

*Time mainly, just being able to get down to doing the stuff in view of the fact that there are often other activities/tasks that have to be attended to. (Group B participant)*

As the responses show, time was seen as a scarce resource for a number of the participants. This has also been noted in previous chapters, where lack of time

emerged as being a significant factor arising in different guises in each evaluation phase.

In part 3(b) of this question, participants in the SDP were asked to comment on how any barriers raised in 3(a) could be addressed. The responses to this part of the questionnaire suggested that participants viewed this issue in terms of motivation as shown below.

*These are self motivation and time management issues. (Group A participant)*

*If a portfolio was required for something, e.g. a job application, I'm sure I'd manage to find the time to complete it. (Group A participant)*

*I think the time issue was addressed in TPP sessions, now it's up to me. (Group B participant)*

As implied by the comment from a group A participant above, some participants indicated that if a portfolio was required for a particular purpose, they could find the time to complete it. As noted by the group B member, time-management for portfolio preparation was something addressed in SDP sessions. Also, every effort had been made in the program design to integrate portfolio development with practices that were already in place within the SON. This, coupled with the motivational aspects, was explored further in the next set of questions, which looked at the advantages, disadvantages and purposes of portfolios.

## Advantages and Disadvantages of Portfolio Development

In question 4(a) participants were asked to consider the potential advantages and disadvantages of developing a teaching portfolio for academic staff. In general, more advantages than disadvantages were noted:

*Brilliant resource – record of one's career and useful addition to a CV and for job applications, self review and growth through monitoring changes in teaching, strategies, philosophy etc. One disadvantage is that perhaps difficulties/problems encountered in career if documented could be seen negatively by a reviewer. (Group A participant)*

*Can't see too many disadvantages – one has to be systematic and orderly in the compiling of it and put the time into it. The advantages are that it provides a record of teaching activities which may be helpful when seeking promotion or applying for another job, and contributing to the University Teaching/Learning strategic plan. (Group A participant)*

*Excellent tool but the risk is they will be copious volumes that no one will read. Great for self development and review but will need to get the Head [of School] to understand the concept so that we can be confident it will be fairly viewed and we won't be disadvantaged in any way. (Group B participant)*

*In the current economic situation I think the development of a portfolio is a must. (Group B participant)*

As shown above, in a number of responses to question 4(a), participants mentioned the advantages of portfolio preparation in relation to their own development in teaching. Some also alluded to the need for others to be trained in portfolio use, so that the portfolio could be appropriately reviewed.

## Use of Portfolios

In question 4 (b), the participants were asked to consider the purposes for which they would like to see teaching portfolios used in the SON. The most frequent response advocated that portfolios be used in the University's annual staff review and development discussions recently implemented at Curtin. In other responses, participants focussed on how portfolios might be used in a reward system such as promotions or teaching awards. For example:

*1. To support annual/tenure review. 2. Perhaps we could have a prize for the most innovative, well presented portfolio. 3. To share with others regarding achievements and innovative ideas. (Group A participant)*

*Annual review. Self development. Promotions. (Group A participant)*

*Use in annual review discussion. To record excellence in teaching. For promotion and tenure purposes. (Group B participant)*

*To document development in teaching. For promotions and job stability. (Group B participant)*

A theme apparent in most of the responses to question 4(b) was the notion of using a portfolio as a strategy for self-development to enhance one's teaching practice, as well as for personnel purposes. This theme supports previous findings in this study, in that the formative and summative use of a portfolio was not seen to be mutually exclusive by participants. That is, most participants noted more than one use for their portfolio.

## Recommendations

The final question in the overall program evaluation, 4(c), asked participants if they would recommend the program to the SON's Staff Development Committee or to other academic staff. This question was in two parts, giving them the option of recommending the SDP in its present format or, alternatively, suggesting another format. All but one of the participants noted they would recommend the program in the form it had been conducted. One group B participant indicated that although the format had suited her it might not suit everyone, and a group A member stated:

*I will definitely recommend it in its present format, although I would also like to see a complementary program of one-on-one support because not everyone is going to be comfortable with sharing all of their portfolio with every other member of staff, especially in this competitive climate we now face. (Group A participant)*

This comment raises the issue of the environment in which portfolio programs are designed and conducted. Although the climate within the Staff Development Program (SDP) had been supportive and non-competitive, it was apparent towards the end of the program that there had been an environmental shift, and that this was related to the retrenchment of four participants. Under these conditions it could be more difficult to gain support from staff for a collaborative approach to professional development such as the one described in this study. This is particularly the case if staff feel they are in competition for positions. These findings also highlighted the importance of monitoring the environmental context in designing and implementing professional development activities, especially

where these activities may have an impact on an individual's career.

Nevertheless, responses to the program evaluation questionnaire show there was a consensus amongst participants that the SDP had met their needs and that the sessions had been conducted to their satisfaction. This finding supports the formative aspects of the process evaluation findings. In the process evaluation, observations recorded in the project journal, transcripts of group sessions and session feedback forms demonstrated that participants were generally pleased with the SDP and felt they had benefited from their participation.

## PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT

As outlined in chapter three, the participants in the Staff Development Program (SDP) were interviewed between three to five months after the return of the final questionnaire. The purpose of these interviews was to review the progress participants had made with their portfolios. Another purpose was to determine the impact of the staff development program on the participants, and to ascertain their views on various issues related to portfolio use.

The context and input evaluation findings revealed there were numerous models of teaching portfolios in use across the higher education sector. The process evaluation showed that participants had not been given a prescribed format for a portfolio during the Staff Development Program (SDP). This gave participants in the SDP considerable scope to develop portfolios suited to their own needs and



preferences. Moreover, in the absence of any formal requirement for portfolios for any purpose, either in the SON or within the University, there was also no extrinsic incentive for participants to produce a portfolio. It was of interest, then, to follow up the participants and view their portfolios to determine if they had continued with the development of a portfolio and to ascertain the extent of their progress in these circumstances. The views of SDP participants on how portfolio preparation might impact on their teaching practice were also canvassed.

As discussed in chapter three, evaluation of the SDP sessions was guided by Kirkpatrick's (1994) model, whilst the broader project issues were addressed within Stufflebeam's CIPP evaluation framework. The interview schedule included the following open-ended questions:

- What progress have you made on your portfolio since last year?
- What factors influenced your progress?
- How satisfied are you with the present state of your portfolio?
- For what purposes (have) will you use your portfolio?
- How has the preparation of a portfolio impacted on your teaching?
- How has the preparation of a portfolio impacted on your career planning?
- How should your portfolio be judged (evaluated)?

The findings discussed below are based on detailed notes taken by the researcher at the time of interview and the classification of the interviewees' portfolios in accordance with a system created for this study. The responses given by participants in the follow-up interviews are discussed below.

## Progress

The interviewees indicated varying degrees of progress in portfolio development. Most implied they considered their portfolio 'a work in progress' and over half (8) indicated they would have liked to be further advanced. In follow-up questions, the researcher probed the participants' views of what further advancement in portfolio development meant to them. Generally the participants said that further refinement of their portfolio and/or further reflection on portfolio contents was required. For example, as one participant stated:

*I've got the raw materials here... now I really need to sit down and think about what it all means. (A3 participant)*



Another participant suggested:

*I haven't actually reflected on what I have...I think there's a lot more I can do with it. (B6)*

## Factors Influencing Progress

Lack of time, followed by a lack of incentive were the most common factors identified as being problematic in the completion of a portfolio. Of the five who indicated that their portfolios were 'complete' at the time of interview (36%), all had had occasion to use their portfolio, either in applying for another position or for their annual review interview. Also, it must be kept in mind that many of the participants viewed their portfolios as an ongoing task (see above) and in this

regard 'completion' was clearly in the eye of the beholder. For some participants the state of their portfolio was mainly a question of 'degree of completeness'. A follow-up question examined this in terms of participants' satisfaction with the present state of their portfolios.

Only six (43%) of the participants indicated during interview that they were satisfied with the current state of their portfolios. This was often attributed to lack of time and none of those interviewed said they were unclear as to how to proceed. On further questioning, those dissatisfied with their progress mentioned certain aspects of their portfolio they felt needed strengthening. Five (36%) said they had no feedback on their teaching from colleagues. This point often led to discussions of peer observation and appraisal of teaching and the resources available within the University for this to take place as well as any perceived barriers or problems associated with peer review of teaching. As mentioned previously, there was no formal system in place (outside of the promotions system) for feedback from colleagues on one's teaching. However, during the SDP, resources for peer evaluation of teaching had been made available, and different approaches to peer appraisal of teaching were discussed during the sessions. Three of those interviewed indicated they had taken advantage of these resources to obtain peer feedback on their teaching.

### **Use of Portfolio**

As noted above, some of the participants had already used their portfolios for job

applications and annual review purposes. Previous findings of the present study also suggested participants viewed portfolios as a useful tool for self-development purposes. In most instances interviewees required little prompting to highlight the benefits of portfolio preparation for self-development. This was also evident in the process evaluation where participants made a number of references to the use of portfolios for self-development. In fact, of staff taking part in the program, the majority (86%) mentioned the benefits they obtained from preparation of a portfolio, irrespective of their stage of portfolio development. In this regard, they perceived the 'process' of portfolio preparation to be more important than the 'product'. Nevertheless, in addition to self-development purposes, over half (64%) of those interviewed stated they intended to use their portfolios for annual review purposes and two (14%) were considering using it in applications for promotion.

### **Impact on Teaching Practice**

Most of those interviewed could readily identify both tangible and intangible effects of portfolio preparation on their teaching practice. A number of participants referred to a heightened awareness of practical suggestions and ideas they had gained from the sessions, many of which had been incorporated into their teaching practice. For example, four mentioned a form they had started to use (discussed in the SDP sessions) to obtain feedback on their clinical teaching from students. Some participants had met outside the session times to adapt this feedback form to suit a clinical teaching context, and they had subsequently

trialed it. They indicated they were using the information they obtained from this feedback to improve their clinical teaching and the students' learning experience.

As one interviewee noted:

*I found [from using the form] that there were gaps in the students' preparation for clinical...which I could address. (B6)*

### **Impact on Career Planning**

Most (86%) participants in the Staff Development Program (SDP) had not thought about their portfolios in the context of career planning, and the question appeared to take some by surprise. However, once they started to think about it, most implied in their responses that they thought their portfolios would be a useful aid for career planning and development. One, who had used her portfolio in a job application, stated that she would have found it very difficult to prepare a portfolio at short notice, and she was grateful for her involvement in the program. Two interviewees, who had consciously developed a portfolio with career planning in mind, described their portfolios as an integral aspect of documenting their academic work. They envisaged updating it in much the same way as their résumé and thought of the portfolio and résumé as complementary documents. One noted that she had used the preparation of her portfolio as an opportunity to set goals in teaching which would assist in providing a better focus for her teaching activities. Nevertheless, it appears that for the participants in this study the use of a portfolio for career planning was not a priority.

## Appraisal of Portfolios

Only one participant had been in a position where her portfolio had been evaluated when applying for a position at another university. Most of the others had not considered this aspect of portfolio use. A number of the participants commented that they would modify their portfolio to suit the criteria against which it may be judged, and pointed to the advantages of having prepared a portfolio to facilitate this process. On further questioning it appeared that many of the interviewees had kept materials from the program (e.g. The AVCC Guidelines for Effective University Teaching) for reference, although none had consciously used these documents in preparing their portfolios. Some commented that because the portfolio provided more comprehensive documentation of their teaching achievements they would be advantaged in a competitive situation. Many expressed the view that because portfolio use at Curtin was not established practice, they were not confident that people viewing their portfolios (such as the head of school) would be able to make sound judgements about it. They also lacked confidence in their own ability to assess a teaching portfolio. As noted in the previous chapter, portfolio appraisal was not addressed as planned in the Staff Development Program (SDP). These responses from participants at the follow-up interviews highlighted the need for further work on the appraisal of a portfolio particularly if they were to be used in the summative evaluation of staff.

## Classification of Portfolios

The input evaluation canvassed a preliminary classification of teaching portfolio styles. Categorisation was based on content analysis of documents on portfolio programs and a review of literature on the use of teaching portfolios. This preliminary classification was subsequently refined in light of the findings from the process evaluation, where participants in the SDP discussed what they considered to be essential components of a portfolio. It was then further refined based on work by Tomkinson (1997), who proposed a taxonomic structure for categorising teaching portfolios.

Table 7-1 lists the dichotomous factors identified in Tomkinson's (1997) classificatory scheme.

**Table 7-1** Portfolio classification (Adapted from Tomkinson, 1997)

<i>Style</i>	Descriptive	Reflective
<i>Structure</i>	Informal	Formal
<i>Scope</i>	Narrow (teaching)	Broad (professional)
<i>Purpose</i>	Developmental (formative)	Evaluative (summative)
<i>Confidentiality</i>	Personal (closed)	Public (open)
<i>Content</i>	Focussed	Comprehensive
<i>Timing</i>	Discrete	Continuous

Tomkinson (1997) notes a number of problems in treating these factors as dichotomies. For example, with regard to purpose:

Might a portfolio...be multi-purpose? Would a *Record of Achievement* count as a portfolio and, if so, is its purpose developmental or evaluative? (Tomkinson, 1997, p. 3)

Furthermore, with regard to portfolio styles Tomkinson asks:

How much reflection is needed before a portfolio becomes reflective and not purely descriptive? Is a portfolio that features *analysis* rather than *reflection* to be categorized as descriptive rather than reflective? (Tomkinson, 1997, p. 3)

The findings of the present study suggest that the portfolio concept is both multi-faceted and complex. Moreover, the need to develop a taxonomic structure for the classification of portfolios is critical, as the portfolio concept will not progress without clarity and a common language amongst educational developers and researchers. For the purpose of classifying the portfolios of SDP participants, then, Tomkinson's (1997) scheme was adapted to include aspects of portfolio classification identified in the literature and the findings from previous evaluation stages in the present study, detailed in Table 7-2 below.



**Table 7-2** Classification scheme of portfolio elements

CATEGORY	ELEMENT
<b>Style:</b> refers to the main features of the constructed portfolio.	Descriptive – organized written account of teaching describing activities, materials, etc.
	Reflective – organized written account of teaching activities with reflection on teaching practice.
	Discursive – non-organized written account of teaching activities, materials etc.
	Collective – selected teaching materials, artifacts and evaluations representative of recent teaching activities.
	Archival – structured collection of teaching materials representative of teaching career.
	Non-selective – unstructured collection of any/all materials pertaining to teaching
<b>Constituents:</b> refers to what is contained in a portfolio	Items/artifacts – original documentation and samples.
	Written account – no materials included.
	Combination – written account + items/artifacts.
<b>Structure:</b> refers to the level of organization exhibited in the portfolio	Informal – little or no structure exhibited in text or materials.
	Formal – highly structured text or teaching materials.
<b>Scope:</b> refers to the range of professional activities included in a portfolio.	Narrow (teaching) – includes only text and material relevant to teaching.
	Broad (professional) – includes text and material covering the full extent of scholarly academic activities.
<b>Purpose:</b> refers to the uses of the portfolio.	Developmental (formative) – used for professional or self-development purposes.
	Evaluative (summative) – used for applications such as appointment, promotion, accreditation etc.
	Combined – used for both formative and summative evaluation purposes.
<b>Confidentiality:</b> refers to the level of access to a portfolio by other people.	Personal (closed) – portfolio documentation is for private viewing only.
	Public (open) – portfolio documentation is available for public scrutiny.
	Mixed – aspects of portfolio documentation for both private and public scrutiny.
<b>Content:</b> refers to aspects and areas of teaching practice incorporated in the portfolio.	Focussed– documentation confined to few aspects of teaching only.
	Comprehensive – documentation drawn from all aspects of teaching is incorporated in the portfolio.
<b>Timing:</b> refers to the development processes of portfolio preparation.	Discrete – portfolio developed as a one-off document.
	Intermittent/sporadic – aspects of the portfolio are worked on from time to time.
	Continuous – portfolio is an ongoing maintenance task.
<b>Stage:</b> refers to whether or not the portfolio is viewed as a finished product.	Complete – portfolio documentation is complete at a particular point in time.
	Incomplete – portfolio needs further work to bring to completion.

The classification scheme detailed in Table 7-2 has brief explanatory notes of the elements comprising the scheme. These elements were used to classify the portfolios of SDP participants. Despite the comprehensive nature of the Table 7-2 taxonomy, judgements of the portfolios on some dimensions were not always clear-cut. If in doubt the researcher conferred with the interviewee. If there was still doubt the researcher took the stance that the portfolio's owner should have the final say. The outcomes of this analysis, in Table 7-3, shows how the participants' portfolios were classified using the scheme summarised in Table 7-2.

**Table 7-3 Taxonomy of participants' teaching portfolios**

Element		Portfolios	
		Number	%
<b>Style</b>	Descriptive	2	14
	Reflective	4	28
	Collective	6	43
	Discursive	1	7
	Archival	2	14
	Non-selective	0	0
<b>Constituents</b>	Items/artifacts	7	50
	Narrative	3	21
	Combination – narrative + items/artifacts	4	28
<b>Scope</b>	Narrow (teaching)	14	100
	Broad (professional)	0	0
<b>Purpose</b>	Developmental (formative)	8	57
	Evaluative (summative)	1	7
	Combined	5	36
<b>Confidentiality</b>	Personal (closed)	3	21
	Public (open)	6	43
	Mixed	5	36
<b>Content</b>	Focussed	9	64
	Comprehensive	5	36
<b>Timing</b>	Discrete	4	28
	Intermittent/sporadic	9	64
	Continuous	1	7
<b>Stage</b>	Complete	5	36
	Incomplete	9	64
<b>Structure</b>	Informal	5	36
	Formal	9	64

The evaluation of participants' portfolios, detailed in Table 7-3, took place three to five months after the conclusion of the Staff Development Program (SDP). From the adapted classification system a picture of a 'typical' portfolio developed by the SDP participants emerged. Briefly, this was a collection of teaching items and artefacts, narrow in scope, developmental in purpose and open for public scrutiny. Moreover, the portfolio contents tended to be focussed, developed sporadically and incomplete at the time of viewing. Given the small numbers involved in this study, no firm conclusions can be drawn. Furthermore, it was evident the 26 elements that comprise this classification scheme were not mutually exclusive. In some cases portfolio elements may better be represented as a continuum, for example, the stage of portfolio completion. Nevertheless, the scheme does represent an improvement over other portfolio classification systems, in that it forms the basis of a comprehensive taxonomy.

Further analysis of the contents of participants' portfolios found that all of them incorporated student feedback. This tended to include both quantitative (standardised student evaluations of teaching) and qualitative (open-ended questionnaires), as well as reviews of units taught and teaching activities. Most portfolios included teaching materials, such as unit outlines, examples of set assignments, and tutorial activities developed by the staff member. A few included feedback from peers, colleagues or the head of school. Many of those interviewed recognised 'gaps' in their portfolio documentation, and the discussion in these interviews often centred on how additional portfolio materials could be obtained.

In summary then, all staff involved in the Staff Development Program (SDP) had developed some form of portfolio, although the stage of preparedness varied depending on the participant's personal circumstances. As mentioned previously, only six of the fourteen participants were satisfied with their portfolio at the time it was viewed, and many attributed their limited progress with portfolio development to a lack of time. Overall, however, all acknowledged that they had derived benefit from their participation in the SDP and the preparation of a portfolio.

In relation to Kirkpatrick's (1994) four-level model of evaluation, the following effects of the SDP on participants were demonstrated.

- **Reaction** – establishes how participants felt about the program. The findings show that those taking part in the Staff Development Program (SDP) felt they had derived benefit from their involvement and had enjoyed the experience. All expressed satisfaction with the program activities and commented favourably on the procedural design and the facilitator's performance. These findings are validated by those reported in the process evaluation, which also found that participants expressed satisfaction in session feedback forms.
- **Learning** – determines if stated objectives have been achieved and learning has taken place. The findings show that all participants felt they had achieved at least some of their personal objectives through their participation in the SDP. In regard to learning, it was shown that all involved in the program

knew how to prepare a portfolio, understood the categories of portfolio content, and appeared to understand the various purposes for which portfolios could be developed.

- Behaviour – focuses on effective transfer of development and training activities to the work environment. It was demonstrated that all participants exhibited some level of behavioural change with regard to collecting materials for their portfolios, collating these materials, and undertaking other activities related to portfolio preparation. Also, that transfer from the SDP to the work environment had taken place, was demonstrated by the fact that between three to five months after the completion of the program, all were still involved in some form of portfolio development, albeit sporadically in some cases.
- Results – establishes how a program has impacted on the organisation. This level of evaluation was not specifically addressed. Nevertheless, a conclusion that may be drawn from the program outcomes is that the school in which the study was set now had a ‘critical mass’ of ten staff with expertise in the use of teaching portfolios. If portfolios were to be introduced at Curtin, these staff would be a potential resource for further program development. Moreover, the dissemination of the findings of the present study in verbal and written reports also had the potential to impact at the institutional level.

The impact and outcomes of the program, described above, show that the portfolio-based staff development activities, undertaken in the present study, led

to a range of benefits for the participants and the School of Nursing. Furthermore some of the findings from this evaluation highlight how organisational factors in which a program is conducted may impact on program outcomes. These issues are discussed below in relation to findings from the context, process, and input evaluations.

## TEACHING ENVIRONMENT

This study aimed to explore the role of teaching portfolios in the appraisal, improvement and recognition of university teaching, and in the professional development of academic staff. The outcomes of the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP) detailed so far in this thesis have shed light on the issues involved in the role portfolios may play in teaching development. The TPP, involving as it did four distinct evaluations, elucidated some of the issues in detail. Thus it became apparent during the course of the TPP that the institutional environment in which a program is developed may affect the outcomes. In periods of organisational change, such as those forming the backdrop to this study, the effects of the changes may have far-reaching implications. Moreover, an understanding of the factors that impact on portfolio-based professional development has relevance for others considering such an approach.

### **Valuing University Teaching**

It has been well documented that universities in recent decades have tended to

value and reward research activities over teaching, as evidenced for example, by appointment and promotion decisions (Anwyl, Balla, & McInnes, 1991; Aulich Committee, 1990; Baker, 1993; Boyer, 1990; Ramsden, Margetson, Martin, & Clark, 1995). Findings from the context and input evaluations show that this was also the case at Curtin University. The findings show that participants in the Staff Development Program (SDP) perceived little in the way of recognition or reward for good teaching, either from within their School or from the University. The session transcripts supported this view. For example:

*... It is not easy because you are doing your full-time teaching load, you are trying to study part-time, you are trying to go to the library regularly, plus you are trying to publish. All that without getting any recognition. (A54)*

Clearly, academic work differs across disciplines, as does the emphasis on areas of teaching that academic staff perceive valued at a school or departmental level. In the School of Nursing (SON), a perceived lack of recognition for clinical teaching was evident in the transcripts of the group sessions of the SDP. For example, a participant in the SDP stated:

*And if you are clinically experienced and go out there, your teaching is much richer. The fact that you can use anecdotes that are recent, that are appropriate, and it makes your teaching much more credible. And I don't know why it is devalued. (B52)*

Moreover, some participants expressed enthusiasm for using their portfolio as a means of gaining recognition for clinical teaching. This is indicated by a comment from one SDP participant in describing an entry for her portfolio:

*I [was thinking about] clinical teaching and the fact that there was no value for it and there's no recognition for it and there's no measurement for how well we do it.... I've got an example... . (B62)*

However, decisions made during the period this study was in progress by the School's management regarding the re-organisation of clinical teaching within the SON, demoralised participants who were involved in clinical teaching. For example, the School's management committee had decided that financial considerations precluded using academic staff for clinical teaching and this information was disseminated to staff as a *fait accompli*.

Participants in the SDP, who felt strongly that academic staff in the School should be involved in teaching both the clinical and theoretical components of the course, were angry that this decision had been taken. They also became somewhat discouraged in their attempts to document clinical teaching in a portfolio. This highlights the need for academic staff involvement in a consultative process, both in terms of decision-making processes when considering changes to teaching, and also in portfolio development. That is, if academic staff are aware of a School's teaching and learning goals, their portfolios may be directed towards, and could reflect these goals, and some of the frustration experienced by the participants in the SDP could be avoided.

### **Budgetary Constraints**

Moses (1995) noted that "Most academic staff still do not relate to concepts like performance indicators, quality assurance, total quality management, international



standards, stakeholder, customer or client, input and output" (p.11). In this study, staff were aware of the changing terminology in universities but did not always endorse the concepts it encapsulated. For instance,

*What with all these cuts and with the HECS fees going up, and maybe full fee-paying postgraduate students.....the consumer is going to be a different consumer. They're going to expect quality and we're going to be short-staffed and put under a lot more pressure because of those cuts, but the customer is going to expect more. (B52)*

Others shared the concerns raised by this participant. They expressed concern that these changes would impact negatively on the quality of teaching. As one participant said,

*I suspect that what will actually happen though is that to meet their demands we will compromise the quality.....and they (the students) will be satisfied because they've got the piece of paper but they won't have the quality or the integrity of the program. (B42)*

Participants in the Staff Development Program (SDP) were very aware of the financial constraints on their teaching. They could see the need for changes both in the way they taught and in the way teaching loads were allocated. Nevertheless, it was also evident that there was considerable apprehension about these changes, and some questions as to how these constraints may impact on teaching practice and documentation in a portfolio. This finding points to the need for teaching to be contextualised in a portfolio in such a way that the reader or reviewer of the portfolio can understand the constraints that may impact on the teacher's work.

## Academic Work Patterns

The above concerns, expressed whilst discussing the constraints on budgets which followed the announcement of Federal Government funding cuts to universities, were also echoed in discussions on the way in which work was allocated within the School. For instance:

*But I find it very unsettling when I'm teaching across six units, and you've got three meetings to go to, one for each [semester] and then a subject meeting.....and you haven't got a clue about any other part of the curriculum, [and] from semester to semester with people changing, you don't know who is teaching what. I haven't got a clue. (B61)*

Changes to work allocations had resulted in staff being assigned to teach in units of study outside their area of expertise. Of note here is a 'tongue in cheek' comment by O'Neill (1995) in a paper on the changing terminology in the higher education sector: "Here we are, working our butts off to introduce multi-skilling and broad-banding, as much in the interests of staff as to make the institutions lean and mean - that's what corporations are all about" (O'Neill, 1995, p. 48). However, participants in the SDP did not perceive the notion of multiskilling with humour. Consider, for example:

*.....the way we perceived it was... it started to come around the corridors, multiskilling, multiskilling.... there was never a meeting to say we're changing our direction and we're not going to become experts, we're all going to become multiskilled. (A23)*

There had been a lack of consultation in the change in academic work patterns in the School from staff teaching in areas of expertise to becoming 'generalists', and

this resulted in staff becoming confused and frustrated. The comments below reflect these feelings:

*So I've gone from an expert to multiskilling and then I'm told that I am ducking and diving to avoid [teaching] in my area of expertise. (B62)*

*[teaching across six units]...It makes crap of quality teaching,... makes a nonsense of trying to teach in an area that you feel comfortable with, [or] in an area that you have knowledge about....it is just so difficult. (B72)*

Whilst this issue may not directly influence portfolio development it is apparent that in documenting teaching, the expertise and subject knowledge of the teacher is an integral part of evidence which attests to the teacher's competence. Thus, if required to teach outside one's subject area, teaching quality may be compromised and this may be reflected in a teacher's appraisal.

### **Academic Work Loads**

Similar problems and reactions appear to have resulted from increasing class size in the SON. Following directives from the University administration to 'do more with less' one of the responses from the School was to increase the number of students per tutorial group. Again, the reaction from staff reflects how they believe this impacts on their teaching:

*Tutorial groups have also increased in size. (B52)*

*We used to have 12 students, then we went to 15 and...you would always end up with 16 or 18 and now it's 22 to 23 [and] it will go to 25. (B42)*

*...when you have three or four tute (tutorial) groups and 120 [in a lecture]...you can't individualise your teaching. (A73)*

Whilst an increase in the number of students per tutorial group might make sound economic sense, the manner in which this impacts on the quality of teaching, or the relationship between students and staff or departments, has yet to be determined. For participants in the Staff Development Program (SDP), concern was expressed in this way:

*It's no wonder that the students begin to feel that we are a non-caring school, that they're anonymous when they're here. (B12)*

The participants pointed out that not only was the staff-student relationship effected by the increase in class size, but these changes also impacted on their workload from additional marking and administration requirements.

*But how can you remember all their names? I tell them in the very beginning I cannot remember all your names. I've got six groups. (B62)*

*I know, I'm the same. I counted them up last semester, I was responsible for 189 students, their pieces of work and everything...I didn't think I'd be able to mark all this stuff, each had three pieces of work...this is an awful way to be....(B12)*

It could be argued that academic staff should just readjust to changing academic work patterns and workload. However, judging from the comments above some staff were clearly still coming to terms with the impact of the changes. It was evident that having to redefine their teaching methods and the manner in which they related to students was perceived by SDP participants as a more impersonal

and onerous way to teach.

Others in the sector have also grappled with these issues. For example, Coaldrake (1995), in responding to the Government's reform agenda, suggested that the traditional way of thinking about the management of teaching in universities may have to change. He notes:

Inevitably larger classes, for example, might not necessarily result in formula-driven increases of new staff positions, or new lecture theatres or additional laboratory space. On the other hand we are increasingly likely to be funding development projects which focus on how the quality of the learning environment can be maintained and enhanced given the entirely altered teaching modes, different staff needs and transformed space requirement continually emerging. (Coaldrake, 1995, p. 39)

The findings from the four evaluations undertaken in the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP) suggest that portfolio-based programs may provide a forum for academic staff to explore some of the issues surrounding the maintenance and enhancement of teaching quality in a collegial and constructive environment.

### **Role of Portfolio Programs**

The outcomes of the TPP show that the Staff Development Program (SDP) was seen to be one way in which academic staff could assist and support each other to adapt to a changeable teaching environment. As the comment below suggests, there was a perception that in sharing experiences and ideas in the context of the SDP, the participants could learn how to re-adjust and possibly make changes to

their teaching practice.

*I do think it is important to document though, how you deal with challenges and constraints because that's how a lot of things are improved. It might work and you can learn from each other. ...I would be interested to know how does xxxxx deal with teaching in six semesters, I don't think I could do that. (B32)*

Despite the problems and challenges highlighted in the project findings as detailed in previous chapters, there was still considerable enthusiasm amongst group members to teach well and to document and reflect on their teaching.

*I think that one of the benefits of this group is that we actually...have the time to sit down and...clarify to ourselves what things we should be doing or what things we are doing and what things we can do better...We've been allocated two hours of time to sit down and actually clarify our own efforts. Sometimes we are going so fast that we can never catch up with ourselves, and so we have this time to share our thoughts. (B71)*

This statement also alludes to others findings which showed that time (or a lack thereof) may be a key factor in determining the success or otherwise of portfolio programs. It was evident that the fact that staff had received time release to participate in the SDP was instrumental both in obtaining and maintaining their participation. It was also apparent that staff development and appraisal activities must be tailored to suit the needs of academic staff and be supported by mechanisms such as time release to have successful outcomes.

As the reforms in the higher education sector continue to take effect, academic staff in Australian universities will be required to adapt and adjust to the changed environment in which they teach. It would appear, however, that university

administrators and managers will also need to adapt. For example, the observations above suggest they should be mindful of how decisions taken, which impact on the teaching environment, may in turn effect the morale of staff and the quality of teaching in their institutions.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The situation in the school in which this project was undertaken, as described in this thesis, may not reflect the experiences or views of staff in other schools or other universities. As Becher (1989) has noted, it is a fact of academic life that universities tend to be departmental institutions. Moreover, Dopson and McNay (1996) point out that universities are not primarily corporate enterprises, but tend to be organisations with different departmental cultures, where the criteria for success are also likely to differ within the institution. Clearly, some aspects of the teaching environment, such as clinical teaching, will not be relevant to other departments or schools. However, issues related to workloads and recognition and reward for teaching do concur with findings from larger studies (eg. Ramsden et al., 1995), and in this respect the views expressed by SDP participants may well strike a chord with academic staff in other teaching contexts. As Ramsden and his colleagues have stated,

institutional policies, practices, leadership and management in the area of teaching should be organised to produce a climate in which academic staff feel that their contribution to teaching is valued. (Ramsden et al., 1995, p. 99)

The findings from the project described in this thesis highlight aspects of the teaching environment that may need to be reviewed. Ramsden et al. (1995) go on to say that emphasis needs to be placed on strategies that enhance staff morale and increase their feeling of control over their work. Findings from the present study demonstrate that, in this regard, staff development programs based on portfolio preparation is a useful strategy.

It is evident from the present research that creating an environment conducive to quality teaching can be particularly challenging in times of change. A number of factors, relating to work patterns, work load and elements of control and consultation, may need to be considered when decisions are made which will effect the processes of teaching and learning in universities. However, portfolio programs, if adequately resourced and well planned, may prove a powerful mechanism for creating a dialogue on teaching quality within universities. Such programs can also provide a focus for formative and summative teaching appraisal and development, and give staff a sense of empowerment as they consider their accomplishments in teaching.

In conclusion, then, an analysis of findings from the four evaluations that formed the basis of this study reveals that these should not be viewed as being mutually exclusive but as integral parts of an iterative and overlapping whole. When viewed from this perspective the 'bigger picture' starts to emerge. What emanates from this overview is an insight into the interactions between the participants, the staff development program and the teaching environment, and a better



understanding of some of the issues involved in the recognition, appraisal and improvement of university teaching.

Thus, the findings from this case study of the Teaching Portfolio Project demonstrate that:

- professional development programs based on portfolios are a powerful and useful strategy for reflective practice and teaching development;
- portfolio preparation may be integrated with existing institutional practices for the formative and summative evaluation of university teaching;
- academic staff can derive considerable satisfaction, support and benefit from participation in portfolio-based professional development;
- the portfolio concept is robust and adaptable to a variety of teaching and learning contexts;
- the elements of a teaching portfolio may be classified to promote a better and shared understanding of portfolio styles and contents in higher education;
- portfolio programs can promote collegial discussion on teaching within university departments and provide insight into organisational factors that impact on teaching quality;
- the use of portfolios as a strategy for the appraisal and improvement of university teaching shows considerable promise; and,
- portfolio preparation can provide inherent rewards for academic staff as they document and reflect on their teaching activities and achievements.

Throughout the context, input, process and product findings described in this and

previous chapters, some implications of these findings have been noted, as have some limitations of the methodologies used in this study. These will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter along with conclusions and suggestions for further research.

## Chapter Eight

### DISCUSSION

*Equipped with hindsight and the benefit of experience, we've learned a good deal about teaching portfolios. (Seldin, 1997, p. 25)*

#### INTRODUCTION

The present study of the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP) involved the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of a portfolio-based Staff Development Program (SDP) in the School of Nursing (SON) at Curtin University of Technology. Use of the CIPP evaluation model, entailing context, input, process, and product evaluations, enabled a systematic and comprehensive exploration of issues related to portfolio use and portfolio-based professional development programs. For the stakeholders, this case study has shed substantial light on the central questions of the investigation, namely, how useful portfolios are for the appraisal, improvement and recognition of university teaching and in the professional development of academic staff.

Few developments in higher education have spread as quickly as the use of portfolios for instructional improvement and appraisal of teaching. According to

Seldin (1997), the portfolio concept has surpassed the point of theoretical potential. He notes that portfolios are:

being adopted or pilot-tested in various forms by a rapidly increasing number of American institutions. Although reliable numbers are hard to come by, it is estimated that as many as 1,000 colleges and universities in the United States are now using or experimenting with portfolios. That is a stunning jump from the approximately ten institutions thought to be using portfolios in 1990. (Seldin, 1997, p. 2)

A number of universities in Australia have followed this North American trend and have introduced portfolio programs for various purposes over the past few years. Curtin University Council approved a university-wide professional portfolio policy for academic staff in November 1999. Moreover, as discussed below, the present study played a role in the development of this policy. However, although the implementation of portfolio programs has occurred at a rapid rate, research on the use of portfolios has not kept abreast of these developments. The present study, therefore, is both innovative and timely.

This final chapter is organised in five sections. First, findings arising from the evaluation of the Teaching Portfolio Product (TPP) and outcomes of the Staff Development Program (SDP) are reviewed. Secondly, the findings are contextualised in light of recent developments in portfolio use at Curtin University of Technology and across the higher education sector. Thirdly, a meta-evaluation of the study design is undertaken and limitations of the methodology are considered. Fourthly, the implications of the findings at individual, departmental and institutional levels for university teaching development

programs are discussed in light of the study's central research question. Finally, the chapter concludes with directions for further research on the portfolio concept.

## OVERVIEW OF STUDY FINDINGS

The present study comprised four discrete evaluations - context, input, process and product - each of which explored various aspects of portfolio use and informed the progressive development of the SDP. Taken together, the findings provide a comprehensive and unique perspective on the role of portfolios in the development of university teaching. Moreover, the findings give substance to a number of claims by advocates of portfolio use as a strategy for teaching appraisal and improvement (Boileau, 1993; Centra, 1993; Edgerton et al., 1991; Seldin & Annis, 1991). The results of each evaluation are summarised below, followed by the implications of these findings at the level of the individual, the department, the institution and the higher education sector.

### Context Evaluation Findings

The context evaluation identified needs, barriers, possibilities and resources, examined relevant literature and documentation, and involved interviews with key academic staff and a survey of staff in the SON. The context evaluation findings indicated that across the sector, and at Curtin, academic staff were dissatisfied with existing processes and procedures for teaching appraisal and improvement (Baker, 1993; Boileau, 1993; Boyle, 1994). Also, despite concerns about the low

status of teaching in universities and the lack of recognition or reward for good teaching, there were indications that attempts to redress the imbalance between rewards for teaching and research were gathering momentum (Boyer, 1990; Neumann, 1994; Ramsden, et al., 1995).

This finding accords with other studies on teaching appraisal and improvement practices in higher education and other sectors (Anwyl et al., 1991; Ashcroft, 1995; Cashin, 1990; Centra, 1982; Ingvarson & Chadbourne, 1994; Mullins & Cannon, 1992; Murray, 1997; Ramsden et al., 1995; Wright, 1995). A content analysis of relevant University and SON documentation revealed that Curtin was also moving towards improving rewards for teaching and that various initiatives to raise teaching performance within the University were planned. However the strategies were largely *ad hoc* in nature and poorly coordinated. This stood in contrast to a number of other institutions where the need for improved teaching development practices was being addressed through the implementation of portfolio-based programs (Anderson, 1993; Centra, 1993; Edgerton et al., 1991; Seldin & Annis, 1991).

A need for professional development activities to assist with portfolio preparation was also demonstrated, due predominantly to the novelty and an accompanying lack of understanding of the portfolio concept. This concurs with previous findings. For example, Braskamp and Ory (1994) noted that whilst the portfolio concept is still novel and somewhat fluid it will be important for portfolio contents and styles to be explored and explicated within the context of

departments or institutions seeking to introduce portfolio programs. The context evaluation also found that the main barriers to program participation were heavy workloads, a lack of understanding of portfolios, and little incentive. This concurs with Robinson (1993) who found that if the needs of academic staff with regard to workloads and academic rewards were not taken into account in implementing a portfolio program, it was unlikely to be successful.

The context evaluation thus demonstrated a case for the implementation of a portfolio-based professional development program and revealed the potential of the portfolio concept to resolve a number of problems associated with university teaching. It also pointed to potential obstacles to implementing the proposed program and identified necessary resources.

### **Input Evaluation Findings**

The input evaluation focussed on obtaining the resources necessary to undertake the SDP and determining the most appropriate strategies for conducting the program. Sources of data included interviews with key personnel, a survey of directors of other portfolio programs, an application for funding, and a survey of prospective participants. This evaluation showed that in other institutions where similar programs were undertaken strategies for assisting staff with portfolio construction ranged from individual consultations to intensive five day institutes with large groups of academic staff (Anderson et al. (1993). Furthermore, it

found considerable variation in requirements with respect to portfolio style and format and for the assessment of portfolios.

The survey showed that most prospective SDP participants preferred two hourly sessions and working in medium sized groups. This finding was affirmed by interviews with key personnel in the SON (who emphasised a collegial approach) and an inventory of available resources. Thus, within the constraint of funding from the University and other sources, the SDP design involved two groups of seven academic staff meeting fortnightly for seven two hourly sessions. The survey of prospective participants also revealed that most wanted to learn more about teaching portfolios, to document their teaching strengths, and to explore issues related to the reward and recognition of teaching. These findings influenced the program content and design and are in accord with collegial group-based approaches advocated by Wright (1995) and Zuber-Skerritt (1992a).

Thus, in light of the diversity of portfolio formats across the sector, the range of competing approaches to portfolio-based staff development, and the innovation of the portfolio concept, it was determined that a non-prescriptive approach to portfolio preparation would be the most appropriate for the SDP. The program was therefore designed to introduce participants to a range of portfolio styles and formats and to encourage them to develop portfolios according to their own preference. The program design contained other features arising from the input and context evaluations. For example, it enabled portfolio preparation to build on, and integrate with, existing strategies for teaching appraisal and improvement. It



also used a collegial and collaborative approach to portfolio development and addressed the assessment of teaching portfolios.

### **Process Evaluation Findings**

The process evaluation monitored the implementation of the SDP by means of feedback questionnaires, recordings of the program sessions, and observations in a project journal. Various questionnaires completed by the participants during the program provided insight into some aspects of portfolio construction. Also, the transcripts of the group sessions, coupled with the journal notes, showed the nature of group interactions and processes involved in portfolio preparation. The findings of the process evaluation demonstrated that, on the whole, the SDP went according to plan and that the participants were very satisfied with the conduct of the program. Thus, it could be concluded the SDP had been effectively implemented.

A model of preferred portfolio contents emerged from the process evaluation, as did an insight into some of the factors that may influence the processes involved in portfolio preparation. The process evaluation findings also revealed the benefits of group-based portfolio preparation for teaching improvement and some of the rewards inherent in documenting teaching practices. Staff taking part in the program favoured a comprehensive portfolio document that included information from their students and peers as well as information about the learning outcomes of their students. The findings show how factors external to the SDP, such as the

retrenchment of four participants, influenced the sessions and how participants felt. Federal Government funding constraints were impacting on class sizes and teaching quality.

An analysis of the session transcripts and the project journal showed that the SDP provided a supportive climate in which participants felt safe to exchange ideas and express their concerns and frustration about the way teaching was managed in the SON. This analysis also demonstrated that the program participants could learn from, and assist each other, in a collaborative approach to teaching development. The process evaluation data also showed that the staff taking part in the SDP formed networks and collaborative connections that extended beyond the confines of the program proper. For example, a sub-group formed to develop a tool for the evaluation of clinical teaching and considerable exchange of ideas between and amongst group members over and above SDP sessions was evident. This sub-group also made connections and consulted with academic staff in the SON who were not involved in the TPP thus extending the impact of the SDP. Also, both the transcripts and observational data indicated considerable extra-curricular portfolio-related activities within and between the two program groups. This collegial networking was another important outcome of the program which was unanticipated. The implications of this are discussed further below.

### Product Evaluation Findings

The product evaluation sought to measure the attainment and outcomes of the program through these avenues: follow-up questionnaires and interviews with participants, an examination of participants' teaching portfolios and a review of data from previous evaluations in this study. The product evaluation demonstrated that staff taking part were satisfied with the overall program and that most had achieved the goals they set for themselves. All participants felt they had derived benefit from their participation in terms of instructional improvement and a sense of achievement. Thus, whilst there were no tangible rewards offered for participation in the program, the participants indicated they had achieved their goals and derived intrinsic rewards from taking part in the SDP.

The classification scheme developed in the product evaluation proved a useful tool for categorising the portfolios prepared by program participants. All participants had an identifiable portfolio between three to five months after the final SDP session although only some were satisfied with the state of preparedness of their portfolio at the time of viewing. This method of categorising portfolios has implications for portfolio use in higher education because, as noted in previous chapters, there is an ongoing debate over the definition of a portfolio, and varying styles and formats of portfolios are in use. If portfolios are to have currency and portability across the sector a clear taxonomy of portfolios will assist in this process. Other findings from the product evaluation demonstrate the utility of the CIPP model in terms of informing the program's

design and implementation. A further conclusion was that a professional development program based on portfolio preparation could provide an effective and useful framework for teaching development purposes. Finally, the product evaluation showed that the portfolio concept has considerable merit as a mechanism for documenting teaching and learning in the formative and summative evaluation of teaching.

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The CIPP model of program evaluation is designed as an iterative and ongoing approach that allows context, input, process or product evaluations to be deployed as deemed appropriate by the evaluator. Whilst it is beyond the scope of the present study to undertake a further CIPP evaluation cycle, it is pertinent to highlight some recent developments at Curtin and across the sector to contextualise the present discourse about the use of teaching portfolios. The above overview of findings from the evaluation of the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP) demonstrates that in addition to what has been learnt about portfolio-based professional development, "equipped with hindsight and the benefit of experience, we've learned a good deal about teaching portfolios" (Seldin, 1997, p. 25).

The outcomes and impact of the TPP at Curtin has been significant. In July 1997 after the completion of the Staff Development Program (SDP), I was seconded to the Teaching Learning Group (TLG) at Curtin. At that time the TLG had responsibility for academic staff development programs. My secondment was as

project officer in the 'Teaching Portfolios as an Integral Part of Quality Teaching' project. In this role I wrote discussion papers and reports for various committees including the University's Teaching Learning Committee and the Promotion Policy Review Group (Kulski, 1999; Kulski, Radloff & Glover, 1999). I was thus in a position to disseminate TPP findings to key stakeholders across the University and to build on the understanding and experience gained from undertaking this research (Kulski, 1997a; Kulski, 1997b; Kulski, 1998; Kulski & Radloff, 1999).

Consequently, if a context evaluation were to be undertaken at Curtin at the present time there would be several changes evident with regard to practices for the development of teaching. The most apparent change is one alluded to previously, that is, the approval by Curtin Council of a professional portfolio policy in November 1999 (Curtin University of Technology, 1999). This policy was implemented to encourage academic staff to document the scope and quality of teaching and research for various summative and formative evaluation purposes. Its stated aim is to facilitate continuous improvement and reflective practice in staff. The policy was developed on the basis of discussion papers and reports that arose from findings arising from both the TPP and the project 'Teaching Portfolios as an Integral Part of Quality Teaching' which explored portfolio use across the University (Kulski, 1998; Kulski, Radloff & Glover, 1999).

A further recent development at Curtin is the implementation of a portfolio-based program for the reward and recognition of good teaching, the 'Innovative Teaching Practice Award' program. Implemented for the first time in 1999, this is the first University wide program dedicated to teaching excellence at Curtin. Although the impact of these policies and programs on academic staff has not been ascertained, they represent an institutional response to some of the issues identified in the context evaluation of the present study. Moreover, these program and policy developments at Curtin may to some extent be viewed as project outcomes, albeit unplanned and unanticipated when the TPP was initiated.

In the meantime, as indicated above, there have also been developments in portfolio use across the higher education sector (Blackmore, Gibbs & Shrives, 1999; Seldin, 1997; Svinicki & Menges, 1996). Thus, many universities have responded to the need to provide enhanced practices for teaching development in their institutions. A majority of these programs are portfolio-based, as indicated by the figures quoted in Seldin (1997), above. The portfolio concept has indeed gone beyond the realms of 'theoretical possibility' and has become a burgeoning area of academic interest and investigation (Hogan, 1998; Menges & Weimer, 1996; Murray, 1997; Ramsden, 1998; Trower, 1997).

## COMMENTARY ON STUDY METHODOLOGY

Judging the quality of evaluation research, or evaluating an evaluation, is sometimes referred to as meta-evaluation (Worthen & Sanders, 1987; Lancy,

1993). The development of a set of standards for undertaking evaluation studies has contributed to a useful conceptual framework for evaluation and assists in judging the quality of evaluation research (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1981; Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1995). These standards were developed in response to concerns about the quality of evaluation studies, and a lack of agreed-on criteria by which to improve evaluations. They were also developed to provide a basis for the self-regulation and increased professionalism of educational evaluators (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993). The Joint Committee developed four criteria that a good evaluation study must satisfy, namely, utility, accuracy, feasibility, and propriety and each criterion has an associated set of specific standards (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1981). Each of these criteria can also be used to review the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP) documented in this thesis. Such a review need not be exhaustive but it can inform a critique of the most pertinent aspects of the context, input, process and product evaluations that formed the framework for the methodology of the present study.

The first criterion refers to utility standards that are intended to ensure an evaluation will serve the practical information needs of stakeholders. Utility standards include the scope and selection of information, the credibility of the evaluator, the timeliness of reporting, and the impact of the evaluation. As noted in the previous section the dissemination of study reports and papers played a role in policy development at Curtin and in this regard had significant impact. Also, the fact that I was subsequently seconded to a central position to further the

portfolio initiative at Curtin attests to my credibility and the acceptance of the study findings. The utility of the information obtained in the four CIPP evaluations can be judged against the successful implementation of the staff development program, the attainment of SDP objectives, and the achievement by participants of individual and program goals.

The Joint Committee's feasibility standards are designed to ensure an evaluation is realistic, diplomatic, circumspect, and economical by addressing the practical, political and resource aspects of evaluation research. In the present study, this means judging findings and program outcomes against the institutional investment of funding for the time release of program participants and administrative support. Relevant here, is the fact that Curtin gained a 'critical mass' of academic staff within the School of Nursing with expertise in portfolio preparation, a model of school-based portfolio development that was subsequently adapted for other areas, and an improved understanding of the portfolio concept amongst the various stakeholders. The outcomes of this study were cost-effective and of practical use, both of which attested to the program's feasibility.

The propriety standards of evaluation research refer to legal, ethical and welfare issues for those involved in, or affected by, the research. Of particular relevance to the present study, were matters pertaining to conflict of interest, disclosure, balanced reporting and human interactions. Chapter three of this thesis discussed a potential for conflicts of interest in my various roles and responsibilities of researcher, facilitator, evaluator, and as a colleague of program participants. These



conflicts were dealt with openly and honestly; all those taking part in the Teaching Portfolio Project were fully informed as to the purpose of the research and my various roles in it. Moreover, the study had received approval from Edith Cowan University's Committee for the Conduct of Ethical Research prior to its commencement. To ensure that the report was balanced I endeavoured to triangulate the collection of data where appropriate, as described in chapter three.

The fourth set of standards, those of accuracy, are intended to ensure that the evaluation reveals adequate information about a program to determine its worth or merit. These standards include the validity and reliability of instruments and data gathering procedures, the analysis of information obtained and the justification of any conclusions drawn. As described in chapter three, a range of questionnaires and interview protocols were developed over the course of the present study. The quality and scope of information obtained through these methods can be ascertained from the findings of each evaluation. Furthermore, detailed notes and transcripts of interviews and group sessions served to ensure the accuracy of the information gathered as did a systematic approach to the analysis of this data. Finally, the conclusions drawn in this report have been fully explicated, thus enabling the intended audience to assess their objectivity and justification.

Stufflebeam (1991) has emphasised that the purpose of evaluation is not only to prove but also to improve. As such, the CIPP approach to evaluation, as applied in this study, provided a useful framework for gathering information pertinent to the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of the Staff Development

Program (SDP). The CIPP model proved to be both flexible and adaptable in meeting the informational needs of stakeholders and was comprehensive and holistic in scope. The strength of the CIPP evaluation model is that it is able to exercise both a formative and summative role; it can be used to guide decision-making as well as the supply of information for accountability purposes (Nevo, 1986; Popham, 1993). However, this strength can also be construed as a potential weakness. For example, House (1980) argues that management-oriented evaluation approaches may give program administrators an unfair advantage and may make the evaluator the 'hired-gun' of management. He asks, "Does this not make the evaluation potentially unfair and even undemocratic?" (House, 1980, p. 231) These concerns have little relevance in the context of the present study as the evaluation was not commissioned by Curtin administration and I was not in a position to directly influence institutional decision-making. Furthermore, Stufflebeam (1983) has emphasised the utility of the CIPP model to inform decision-making at all levels of administration and across all types of settings, and from large multi-site programs to smaller projects such as the Teaching Portfolio Project.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

Chapter three noted a number of inherent limitations associated with the methodology of the present study. Although qualitative case study designs are particularly appropriate for the evaluation of new programs, caution must be exercised in extrapolating beyond the findings (Charles, 1995; Sturman, 1997;

Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and it is generally not possible to claim generalisability to other program contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). On the other hand, "case study methodology can achieve its own form of precision" (Sturman, 1997, p. 65), and a number of strategies have been suggested for achieving credibility in case study designs. Strategies employed in the present study (detailed in chapter three) include the use of a project journal to record and track study activities, the use of triangulation of data sources and a full explanation of procedures used for the collection of data (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Strauss, 1987; Wiersma, 1991).

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The preceding chapters of this thesis have shown that in situations where staff perceive teaching is not highly valued, and where there are increasing pressures of work, a portfolio-based staff development program can be implemented successfully if such a program is adequately resourced and carefully planned. The implications of the findings arising from the present study are considered below in relation to the use of portfolios for different purposes.

### **Professional Development of Academic Staff**

The Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP) provided scope for an examination of practices for teaching appraisal and improvement and portfolio-based professional development at Curtin and other universities. The approach adopted in the Staff Development Program (SDP) emerged from this analysis. The SDP promoted the

collegial sharing of ideas and strategies for effective teaching through group activities based on portfolio styles and content, and principles of good teaching practice. Others concerned with teaching development in higher education have proposed a similar approach (Donald, 1997; Dotolo, 1999; Feldman & Paulsen, 1999; Wright & O'Neil, 1994). Also, by involving two groups of academic staff working collectively on their portfolios, the program design provided an environment in which staff could feel 'ownership' of the process of portfolio preparation, advocated by Seldin, (1997) and others (see for example, Cerbin, 1994; Cox, 1995; Lucas, 1994).

Murray (1997) has noted that staff involvement is an important factor for the successful implementation of innovation or change within a department. The findings of the present study show that the sharing of expertise within the SDP groups fostered a collegial environment that the participants perceived as supportive and empowering. As shown in the process evaluation findings, group members set individual as well as group goals for their participation in the program. This encouraged them to focus on both their own and the groups' needs and to foster a consultative and collaborative approach (Katz & Henry, 1993; Zubizarreta, 1997).

The fact that I approached the facilitation of the study groups as an informed 'resource' rather than an 'expert' reduced potential pressures associated with the facilitation of program activities and may serve as a model for other 'non-expert' staff (Millis, 1995; Moses, 1988). Moreover, as a colleague of the participants and

an 'insider', I had a good understanding of the School's culture and the issues surrounding portfolio use in the School. This meant that issues and concerns could be openly discussed and debated, without the need for background information and explanation that would be required by someone without this inside knowledge. There are implications here for other institutions and departments interested in implementing a portfolio program (Blackmore, Gibbs & Shrives, 1999; Brew, 1995). As many universities have insufficient personnel in staff development units, this study shows that successful programs may be devolved within institutions using departmental staff as a primary resource. The findings further show that professional development programs based on the preparation of a teaching portfolio provide an effective framework for teaching development (Dotolo, 1999; Gibbs, 1995a; Halpern and Associates, 1994).

### **Teaching Improvement**

Seldin and Annis (1991) have emphasised that the use of portfolios for personnel decisions occurs only occasionally and their primary purpose is to improve teaching performance. They argue that,

...it is the very process of creating the collection of documents and materials that comprise the portfolio that the professor is nudged to: 1) mull over personal teaching strategies; 2) rearrange priorities; 3) rethink teaching strategies; 4) plan for the future. Properly developed, the portfolio can be a valuable aid in professional development activities. (Seldin & Annis, 1991, p. 4)

This study was not designed to determine the impact of portfolio preparation on the quality of teaching *per se*, nor was there a proposal to use portfolios for teaching improvement at Curtin when the present study began. Nevertheless, evidence collected during the course of this study shows that group based portfolio programs foster instructional improvement in two ways. Firstly, through facilitating a collegial discussion on teaching the findings of the SDP show the benefits of peer collaboration in portfolio preparation, confirming reports from other institutions (Centra, 1993; Paulsen & Feldman, 1995; Svinicki & Menges; 1996; Wright, 1995). During the group sessions, SDP participants made frequent comments suggesting that the discussion promoted the exchange of teaching strategies and ideas between group members. This finding was subsequently reinforced by the responses to the follow-up questionnaires and interviews where most participants could point to examples of how they felt their teaching had improved.

The second way in which teaching practice is enhanced is through portfolio preparation. The process clearly promotes reflection on teaching practice and student learning outcomes, and the product (the portfolio itself) can point to areas of teaching strengths and weakness (Millis, 1995; Neumann, 1994; Petersen-Periman et al., 1999; Seng & Seng, 1996). Although many of the staff entering the SDP may have considered themselves as reflective practitioners in terms of their nursing practice, they appeared not to have systematically applied this to their teaching practice. In light of the findings of the present study, university administrators seeking to encourage reflective teaching practice in their

institutions will find portfolio programs useful. Furthermore, it may well be that portfolio construction encourages staff to think about teaching in ways not afforded by other teaching improvement practices (Ramsden & Martin, 1996; Seldin, 1997; Wright, 1995). For example, the process facilitates a systematic and comprehensive examination and analysis of all aspects of the teaching-learning nexus. Moreover, where portfolio preparation is embedded in a discipline-based dialogue on effective teaching, the process appears to be particularly powerful. Although support from teaching 'experts' is considered important:

Epistemologies differ across disciplines, and so do fundamental ideas about teaching. It is important for colleagues within the same discipline to grapple with issues of what constitutes effective teaching in their field. (Cerbin, 1994, p. 102)

### **Appraisal of Teaching**

It will be recalled from previous chapters that the appraisal of university teaching involves a number of vexatious issues such as the development of standards and criteria by which teaching is to be judged (Ashcroft, 1995; Boileau, 1993; Cashin, 1990). According to Ramsden (1992) many academic staff continue to believe that teaching quality cannot be accurately gauged. He argues that the prevailing dogma in the sector include notions that there is too much variance in teaching across different subject areas and that teaching quality is subject to the vagaries of fallible and subjective judgements by unqualified colleagues and to differences in student ability amongst other things.

Portfolios are thought to offer a more comprehensive and equitable approach to teaching appraisal and therefore have the potential to overcome some of the problems associated with the evaluation of teaching (Edgerton et al., 1991; Boyer, 1990; Gibbs, 1995b). However, the use of portfolios for teaching appraisal has its own problems (Anderson, 1993; Murray, 1997). The findings of the present study (see context and input evaluations findings) show that most institutions that had implemented portfolio based assessment of teaching practices had not developed appropriate procedures for judging the portfolio. Richlin (1995) points out that,

When we read reports from portfolio users and experts in Canada and the United States, we find that they stop short of making explicit any criteria for evaluating portfolios for teaching excellence. In most cases, it is not that there is NO evaluation system, but that the existing system is without agreed-upon and stated criteria for judgement. *Without such agreed-upon and explicit criteria, we believe that faculty members are at risk should they submit their portfolios for evaluation for any reason.* (Richlin, 1995; p. 162)

The present study provides further insight into the complexities involved in using portfolios for teaching appraisal and how portfolio content and style may be adapted to document context-specific (for example, lectures, tutorials, laboratory classes or clinical practice) and discipline-based teaching practices (Neumann, 1994; Cox, 1995). For example, although all participants in the SDP were involved in teaching nursing students each had different areas of expertise and different roles and responsibilities in teaching. It was apparent from the product evaluation that each participant had developed a portfolio that reflected their own particular teaching context and discipline content area (e.g. midwifery, child health, etc.). Moreover, these findings suggest that for teaching appraisal purposes



the portfolio provides a more comprehensive insight into teaching practice than afforded by more traditional approaches.

Due to circumstances described in chapter six, the SDP groups did not complete an activity designed to elicit their views on how portfolios should be assessed. However, their responses to related tasks such as identifying attributes of good teaching in different contexts, and determining how best to document teaching practices on the basis of self-generated exemplars of best practice, suggest that staff involved in portfolio preparation may well be the best judge of another's portfolio. This concurs with views expressed by others. For example, Smith (1995) states, "No matter what form of teaching portfolio is used, the issue of evaluating the portfolio is central. In addition to preparing teaching portfolios, faculty must assume responsibility for assessing them" (Smith, 1995, p. 92).

The findings reported in this thesis further demonstrate that academic staff can differentiate and articulate characteristics of good teaching across different teaching contexts. Moreover, the participants, being predominantly nurses, were particularly keen to discuss and devise new strategies to appraise their clinical teaching. Many felt important attributes of good clinical teaching were not well captured in the standardised teaching evaluations used in the University. In this regard, those with responsibility for the appraisal of teaching within universities may consider a 'bottom-up' approach, where discipline-based groups of academic staff take responsibility for developing their own criteria for the appraisal of their teaching (Bess, 1997; Ramsden, 1998; Weimer, 1990).

Another issue related to the evaluation of portfolios, is that of peer appraisal of university teaching (Hutchings, 1996; Keig & Waggoner, 1994; Shulman, 1995). It has previously been discussed in this thesis, that academic staff by and large do not feel confident to appraise another's teaching, often because they have no formal teaching qualification (Hutchings, 1996; Weimer, 1993). However, if portfolio use is to become accepted practice in higher education, then problems associated with the peer appraisal of teaching must be addressed, both in terms of portfolio contents and the assessment of the portfolio (Anderson, 1993; Murray, 1997).

With regard to portfolio contents, a number of institutions surveyed in the course of this study require the inclusion of peer appraisals in a portfolio, either by way of classroom visits or from assessment of instructional materials. During the course of the Staff Development Program (SDP) in the School of Nursing (SON) it became apparent that very few staff had any materials in this category, although almost all thought it was essential to include. Amongst the resources provided in the SDP were examples of peer appraisal formats, and it was evident from an examination of participants' portfolios in the follow-up interviews that some had obtained feedback from peers to include in their portfolios. An implication here for administrators is that staff are likely to avail themselves of opportunities to appraise a colleague's teaching if this practice is encouraged and facilitated. However, peer appraisal should be implemented with caution and accompanied by appropriate professional development activities to ensure that the appraisals are

meaningful (Cerbin, 1994; Dockery, Lamb, & Rhinehart, 1994; Murray, 1997). Moreover, as noted earlier, a great deal of research and numerous articles have reported on student evaluation of teaching (Lally & Myhill, 1994; Wright, 1995). If peer appraisal of teaching is to become an integral part of an academic teaching portfolio, commensurate research in this area will also need to take place.

### **Teaching Recognition and Reward**

The findings from this study provide further insight into the nature of the interaction between teaching portfolios and the recognition and reward of university teaching. For SDP participants, portfolio construction was not contingent on any reward or recognition. However, it became apparent that most participants derived some form of intangible or intrinsic reward in the process of preparing their portfolio. This was evident through comments they made both in the course of the staff development program and in the follow-up interviews.

Other findings from the Teaching Portfolio Project (TPP) also point to the role of portfolios as a strategy for teaching reward and recognition. For example, whilst teaching is clearly undervalued in some universities and staff perceive institutional rewards going towards research efforts, some of the institutions surveyed in this study have tied portfolios to teaching excellence awards. At an institutional level, then, portfolios may well serve a dual purpose (Edgerton et al., 1991). They may promote instructional improvement as well as providing exemplars of teaching excellence. Outcomes from the TPP support this view.

### Other Implications

Teaching remains a somewhat individual and private activity for many university staff, unlike research which often requires a collaborative effort (Boyer, 1990; Ramsden, 1998). Even in team teaching situations there is often limited discussion of teaching strategies or collaborative approaches to the design of curricula (Cerbin, 1994; Dockery et al., 1994; Murray, 1997). The present study demonstrates that when provided with an occasion to discuss their teaching, staff relish the opportunity to share their ideas. The findings also demonstrate a number of ways in which this approach may be productive for teaching development purposes. For example, in discussing methods for teaching appraisal, staff were exposed to a range of methods and were able to consider the pros and cons of different evaluation strategies. Similarly, in considering exemplars of best practice, participants could apply these to their own teaching context. Furthermore, the findings from this study suggest how "portfolios facilitate the development of a broader view of scholarship, such as that envisioned by Boyer" (Ramsden et al., 1995).

Ramsden (1998) suggests that in order to develop a more professional and scholarly approach to teaching in departments, departmental heads should start by determining what good teaching means to their staff. The present study found that staff could readily identify attributes of effective teaching in different contexts, as well as develop exemplars of good teaching practice. The SDP was shown to encourage a non-threatening and productive approach for staff to determine their

own benchmarks for effective teaching. It was also shown to establish and facilitate a discourse on teaching that extended beyond the staff development group discussions.

## DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The findings of the present study point to the role portfolios may play in teaching improvement and appraisal and in providing increased recognition and reward for university teaching. However, it is apparent that much remains to be done. For example, Coaldrake & Stedman (1999) recently suggested that:

Most academics remain convinced that research record is what really counts in promotion decisions, and despite some changes that have been made in recent years in the assessment and documentation of teaching performance, and the promotion of some staff for their teaching excellence, this perception is likely to be largely valid. (p. 24)

It is rather sobering to consider that the above statement made in September 1999, as this study was drawing to a close, could have just as easily been made, and in fact echo, similar observations made during the 1970s (Centra, 1979; Knapper, 1978; Knapper, McFarlane, & Scanlon, 1972; Shore, 1975), the 1980s (Gibbs, 1988; Knapper, 1981; Loder, Clayton, Murray, Cox, & Schofield, 1989; Moses, 1988; Seldin, 1980), and the early 1990s (as detailed in previous chapters). Whilst it is likely that academic staff perceptions may lag behind shifts in institutional culture, it would appear that any benefits of portfolio-based

approaches have, as yet, not impacted on those at the chalk-face. Moreover, the reasons given for this state of affairs also have a familiar ring:

Part of the problem is that it is difficult to arrive at objective measures of good teaching. Research quality can be assessed through peer review, or by using competitive grant success as a proxy, since most such grants are allocated on the basis of peer review of research. However despite some admirable local efforts, peer review of teaching remains patchy and left largely to the motivation of the individual. Student ratings of teaching are useful, however they are often self-selected by the teacher, and in any case represent only a partial contribution to the assessment of teaching quality. (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1999, p. 24)

It could perhaps be argued that in bringing up the old chestnut of peer review of teaching, Coaldrake and Stedman (1999) have not kept abreast of developments in the sector as described in the present study. Nevertheless, whilst some progress has been made, it has been 'patchy' and tends to consist of 'local efforts'. Thus, as we enter the new millennium a context evaluation addressing the same questions investigated in this thesis may find that in many institutions and university departments, administrators and academic staff are still grappling with many of the issues identified above.

The use of portfolios and portfolio-based teaching development should not be regarded as the only route to resolving these issues. Indeed, it would be undesirable to approach the problem from such a narrow perspective. For wholesale changes to occur within institutions and across the sector, a range of different strategies involving both top-down and bottom-up initiatives should be progressed. However, the present study demonstrates that portfolio approaches may provide a useful framework for these initiatives and can underpin a range of

teaching development strategies at the individual, departmental and institutional level. On the other hand, this study also identified some of the obstacles or barriers that may impede these initiatives. For example, increasing student numbers and ever increasing workloads require institutions to determine their own priorities in the allocation of funding for teaching development initiatives, and institutional agendas should be set accordingly.

In this regard the Federal Government could be expected to play a role. The Minister's Report for the 1999 to 2000 Triennium (Kemp, 1999, p. 2) places 'promoting the status of university teaching' high on the Commonwealth Government's agenda. As noted in this report, the Government established a \$20 million program of teaching and staff development grants over a three-year period between 1997 to 1999 to promote quality and excellence in university teaching. The report states that:

The Committee for University Teaching and Staff Development was established in July 1996 to oversee this programme. It aims to promote good teaching, learning and assessment practices in universities, to encourage and foster innovation in higher education teaching and to provide professional development opportunities for academic and administrative staff. The purpose of the programme is to increase the capacity of higher education institutions and the sector as a whole to develop innovative approaches to teaching and learning. (Kemp, 1999, p. 51)

Whilst these assertions may have provided some hope for those committed to promoting the status and quality of university teaching, the fact is that the Committee for University Teaching and Staff Development (CUTSD) was axed at the end of 1999. This suggests that the Government's commitment to teaching

development does not match its own rhetoric. With CUTSD reinvented as the Australian University Teaching Committee with a much smaller budget, it would appear that any momentum gained in the sector is in danger of being lost.

It would also be remiss to overlook the capacity of information technology (IT) to transform the traditional approaches to teaching and learning in universities. Coaldrake & Stedman (1999, p. 7) observe that, "Increasingly ... technology is underpinning and supporting innovation in teaching and learning." They go on to say that there is considerable variation amongst university staff in skills and attitudes towards technology and that the use of technology to enhance teaching will dramatically change the nature of academic work and teaching practices in universities. They further state that,

Resource-based teaching involves significant preparation and shifts the focus of academic time from designated face-to-face contact hours to more distributed patterns of activities. These can include responding to emails or hosting on-line discussions outside usual work hours. Many academics will have to confront the reality that the task of the academic teacher, traditionally encapsulated in the designation of 'lecturer', is shifting from the transmission of information towards the management and facilitation of student learning. (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1999, p. 7)

It seems evident that in the 'brave new world' of the twenty-first century, teaching in universities will undergo revolutionary changes (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1999; Herrmann & Kulski, in press). These changes will require an accompanying transformation in practices and strategies for appraisal, improvement and recognition of university teaching, and the professional development of academic staff. Whether a portfolio-based approach to instructional development will be



sufficiently robust to accommodate these changes remains to be seen. However, in some respects at least, the portfolio movement is keeping abreast with the technological wave sweeping the sector. Thus, accounts of electronic portfolios and an electronically augmented teaching portfolio (EATP) are beginning to emerge in the literature (Lieberman & Rueter, 1997).

The findings described in this thesis suggest that the portfolio concept is sufficiently flexible, encompassing and adaptable to keep pace with the forecast changes in university teaching practices predicted by Coaldrake and Stedman (1999). For example, a number of participants in this study had components of their portfolio stored electronically. Furthermore, although the TPP was concerned primarily with more traditional approaches to teaching, if a need had emerged to document, for example, teaching on the World Wide Web, the program would have reflected and accommodated this.

In conclusion, in considering directions for further research on portfolio use in higher education, it is pertinent to return to McKeachie's questions (cited in Seldin & Annis, 1991, p. ix) discussed in chapter two of this thesis. It remains to be seen if greater weight is given to teaching in institutions where portfolios are used and whether decisions based on a portfolio are more reliable and valid than those made using other methods of assessment. These are clearly important aspects of portfolio use that require further investigation. McKeachie also asks which elements of the portfolio contribute most to their value? The findings of the present study suggest that for teaching improvement purposes the process of

preparing the portfolio is an important factor. However, further research into different approaches to portfolio development and portfolio styles and their impact on teaching improvement may help to elucidate the key elements involved. Finally, as there are a number of institutions that have been using portfolios for some years we are now in a position to explore further the costs and gains of portfolio use in higher education.

### CLOSING COMMENTS

When I embarked on this investigation, the use of teaching portfolios in higher education was not widespread and the sector was undergoing a period of considerable upheaval. At the present time, portfolio use is becoming 'standard practice' in many universities. Trends identified at the outset of the study, such as calls for quality, accountability and professionalism of university teaching continue to gather momentum. Other factors influencing university teaching, for example, reduced budgets, increasing student numbers, increasing workloads and the use of information and communication technologies in teaching, also continue to impact on the sector. In turn, these issues impact on the preparation and use of teaching portfolios.

What becomes evident from the evaluation of the Teaching Portfolio Project is that the portfolio concept needs to be 'unpacked' into the processes involved in portfolio preparation, and the outcomes or products of this preparation. The present study demonstrates that as a process, portfolio preparation provides a

useful framework for teaching development and can be a powerful and engaging tool for academic staff to document their teaching and concomitant student learning. The findings further demonstrate that the process of portfolio preparation can lead to instructional improvement and facilitate reflective practice in teaching. They also show that group-based portfolio preparation can provide insight and solutions to some of the issues confronting academic staff that may impact on the quality of their teaching.

With regard to the outcomes of portfolio-based professional development, the findings of the present study show that program participants could set their own agenda for teaching development and the evaluation of their teaching practice. Thus, staff in the program could describe effective teaching across a number of different teaching contexts and identify strategies to document their teaching to exemplify best practice. However, further research will be required to ascertain whether portfolio-based appraisal of teaching leads to better decision-making, and whether the use of portfolios leads to rewards for university teaching that are commensurate with those for research. As more institutions move towards the use of portfolios for formative and summative evaluation purposes, further research will provide a clearer picture of how this will change institutional cultures and existing practices for the appraisal and improvement of university teaching.

As noted above, Curtin University has also recently moved towards the use of professional portfolios for documenting the work of academic staff. With

hindsight we can say this promises to be an improvement over existing practice, although, this same hindsight tells us there is more we need to know.

Understanding the culture of the organization and how change can be effectively introduced is necessary if the concept of teaching portfolios is to be successfully introduced. (Murray, 1997, p. 78)

The present study has demonstrated how portfolios may be introduced successfully in the context of one school at Curtin University of Technology, and has pointed the way to the effective implementation of portfolios across the University. This study has also demonstrates that the portfolio concept may be adapted to suit other institutional cultures and contexts if carefully planned and implemented.

Finally, judging by the increasing number of universities implementing portfolio programs it would appear there has been considerable progress. However, the findings of the present study also show there is still a long way to go. Further research on portfolio based approaches is required in order to address the complexities involved in improving the practices for the appraisal, improvement and reward of university teaching and to determine if the portfolio concept lives up to its considerable promise.

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**APPENDICES**



## CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SCHOOL OF NURSING TEACHING PORTFOLIO PROJECT

The School of Nursing has received funding from the TLG/Quality Office for academic staff to participate in a project on the development of teaching portfolios.

Teaching Portfolios may be formulated in different ways, but are essentially a documentary record of an individual's teaching activities. Teaching portfolios provide academic staff with the opportunity to demonstrate and document their teaching skills.

Overseas, and to some extent in Australia, teaching portfolios are increasingly being used for the appraisal or improvement of teaching, and in some cases for both these purposes.

The funding allows for group(s) of academic staff in the SON to "to explore the role of teaching portfolios in the evaluation and improvement of teaching quality, and the professional development of academic staff."

This project will provide a unique opportunity for the SON to recognise and document the complexity of our teaching, in a way which is discipline-based and context-specific (i.e. teaching in tutorials, lectures, clinical etc).

The project will commence in Semester Two 1996 and, as funds are available for the release of staff from teaching, group(s) will need to be organized before the next round of teaching allocations.

In order to accommodate as many staff as possible, we will be surveying academic staff to ascertain the level of interest, and to determine the preferred format of the workshops.

Expressions of interest and enquiries should be directed to Laura Davidson, Chair, SON Staff Development Committee ext. 2066 or to Tina Kulski ext. 2097 email [kulskit@nursing](mailto:kulskit@nursing).

## Appendix 3.2

**CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**  
**School of Nursing**  
**TEACHING PORTFOLIO PROJECT**  
*Questionnaire and Application Form*

Applications are sought from SoN academic staff for participation in a Teaching Portfolio Project to commence in second semester 1996. Depending on the number of applicants, and the format of the project group(s), participants will receive up to two hours teaching credit per week. Representatives from all areas of the school's teaching activities, and at all experience/levels, are encouraged to apply.

Teaching portfolios may be formulated in different ways, but are essentially a documentary record of an individual's teaching activities. Teaching portfolios provide academic staff with the opportunity to demonstrate and document their teaching skills. Overseas, and to some extent in Australia, teaching portfolios are increasingly being used for the appraisal or improvement of teaching, and in some cases for both these purposes.

The project's objectives are to explore the role of teaching portfolios in the professional development of academic staff and the evaluation and improvement of teaching quality in the SoN. The project will provide a unique opportunity for the SoN to develop the means to recognise and document the complexity of our teaching, in a way which is discipline-based and context-specific.

Working collaboratively, participants will be assisted in the construction of their own teaching portfolios, and as a group, will explore how teaching in the school may best be portrayed, and the criteria by which portfolios may be judged. It should be noted that your views would be appreciated whether or not you intend participating in the project groups, and the project coordinator (Tina Kulski) will consult widely with staff throughout the project. The outcomes of this project will include a 'model' of best practice for portfolio use at Curtin.

The group(s) will be facilitated and the project will be evaluated by Tina Kulski as part of her doctoral research in the Department of Educational Policy and Administrative Studies at Edith Cowan University. Accordingly, participation in the Project will be on a voluntary basis, no individual will be identified in any reports on the project, and any data collected in the course of the project will remain confidential.

The information provided on the form will assist us to form group(s) based on availability and interests. The application forms and questionnaires should be returned to Tina Kulski, by 3rd May, 1996, who will advise the Chair, Staff Development Committee of applicants' names and availability. In the event that we have more applicants than we can accommodate, the Staff Development Committee will develop criteria for participation.

## Appendix 3.2 (Cont.)

**TEACHING PORTFOLIO PROJECT**  
**Questionnaire/Application Form**

1. Name.....
2. Contact Telephone No.....email.....
3. Position..... Teaching Experience.....years
4. Teaching Responsibilities (Circle those which apply to you)
- Undergraduate Postgraduate Unit Controller Lectures Tutorials Clinical  
 External Studies Continuing Education Postgraduate Supervision
- Other..... (If you are not intending to enrol for the Project  
 please go directly to Questions 9 - 12)
5. Availability for Project Participation (Circle all available days and times)
- Monday AM Monday PM Tuesday AM Tuesday PM Wednesday AM  
 Wednesday PM Thursday AM Thursday PM Friday AM Friday PM
6. Preferences for Participation
- Individual Small Group(3-5) Larger Group(6-8) No Preference
7. Preferences for Frequency and Session Length
- 1 Hour Weekly 2 Hours Weekly 2 Hours Bi-weekly 3 Hours Bi-weekly  
 No Preference
8. Personal Reasons for Project Participation (Circle all reasons that apply to you)
- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| Learning more about<br>teaching portfolios | Developing my<br>teaching skills                | Documenting my<br>teaching strengths                                |
| Sharing my ideas<br>about teaching         | Learning new ways<br>to evaluate my<br>teaching | Exploring how the SoN<br>may recognise & reward<br>quality teaching |
- Other.....

**Appendix 3.2 (Cont.)**

Please comment on the following: (use additional space on back of form if required)

**9. Your thoughts about the value placed on teaching in the SoN**

**10. The methods you currently use to evaluate/document your teaching skills**

**11. The opportunities/methods currently available for enhancing your teaching skills**

**12. Barriers or disincentives to appraisal and improvement of teaching in the SoN**

**Thank you for your co-operation and participation. If you are an applicant for the project further details will be supplied shortly.**

## Appendix 3.3

Thursday, 4 April 1996

We are presently planning a project for academic staff in our school to assist them with the development of teaching portfolios. Teaching portfolios have not previously been used in this university, and are not widely used in Australian higher education. I am therefore seeking information from staff in other universities, to determine how best to implement our project.

It is in this regard that I seek your assistance, as you were identified in Edgerton, R. et al, The Teaching Portfolio, as a resource on portfolios for your college/university. I would be very grateful if you would comment on the following aspects of portfolio use in your institution:

- 1 For what purpose are teaching portfolios used in your department/institution (e.g. promotion/tenure, appointment, awards, etc)?
  - 1a Is portfolio use voluntary or mandatory?
- 2 What forms of assistance and/or resources are provided for your staff to construct their portfolios (e.g. formal/informal courses, programs etc)?
  - 2a Details of assistance - length of programs; are programs individually or group based - interdisciplinary or not? etc
- 3 What criteria/standards have been developed in your institution for the appraisal/evaluation of teaching portfolios?
  - 3a Are these criteria/standards departmental, discipline, or institutionally based?
- 4 What is your personal view of the success/benefits, advantages/disadvantages of the portfolio program in your institution?
  - 4a Reference to relevant publications, conference proceedings, etc

Any other information or materials regarding teaching portfolio use in your institution would be appreciated.

## Appendix 3.4

CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY  
SCHOOL OF NURSING



### TEACHING PORTFOLIO PROJECT

PROGRAMME	
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<b>WEEK ONE</b>	Introduction and overview of teaching portfolios Contents of teaching portfolios Uses of teaching portfolios Teaching contexts in the School of Nursing Issues related to portfolio construction
<b>WEEK TWO</b>	Portfolio construction-teaching portfolio contents: Information from oneself
<b>WEEK THREE</b>	Portfolio construction-teaching portfolio contents: Products of teaching
<b>WEEK FOUR</b>	Portfolio construction- teaching portfolio contents: Information from others - colleague feedback
<b>WEEK FIVE</b>	Portfolio construction- teaching portfolio contents: Information from others - student feedback
<b>WEEK SIX</b>	Portfolio construction-teaching portfolio contents: Miscellaneous Criteria and standards for evaluation of portfolios
<b>WEEK SEVEN</b>	Criteria and standards for evaluation of portfolios Directions for further portfolio development Recommendations for use of teaching portfolio Conclusions

## Appendix 3.5

CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY  
SCHOOL OF NURSING



## TEACHING PORTFOLIO PROJECT

### INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

Welcome to the Teaching Portfolio Project.

The objectives of this project are to explore the role of teaching portfolios in:

- the evaluation and improvement of teaching quality
- the professional development of academic staff

Within these objectives there is considerable scope for us to investigate how teaching portfolios may be used in the School of Nursing, and how the process of constructing a portfolio impacts on academic staff. The Project may also expand the dialogue on teaching in the School in allowing us to debate issues which we believe are important in determining the quality of teaching and learning.

The workshops have been designed to allow for individuals and subgroups to focus on specific aspects of teaching which they wish to enhance, appraise or document. In this respect the programme included in this file is preliminary and may be subject to change if participants want to spend more time on particular topics.

The activities of the workshop will include a range of individual and group tasks and discussion topics. I have gathered an extensive range of resources and materials from other universities and colleges which have portfolio programmes, as well as a comprehensive reading list of relevant texts, and these materials will be made available to participants as they are required.

In the meantime I have included a copy of the FAUSA publication *'How to compile a Teaching Portfolio'* and refer you to a chapter by Peter Seldin et. al. *'Using the Teaching Portfolio to Improve Instruction'*, from *'Teaching Improvement Practices: Successful strategies for higher education'*, Wright, W.A. and Associates, 1995, Anker, Boston, MA as pre-reading.

I look forward to working with you on the project.

Tina Kulski

## Appendix 3.6

CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY  
SCHOOL OF NURSING



## TEACHING PORTFOLIO PROJECT

## INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This project forms part of my doctoral research in the Education Faculty at Edith Cowan University, majoring in Educational Policy and Administrative Studies.

The aim of the study is to explore the role of teaching portfolios in the appraisal and improvement of university teaching, and the professional development of academic staff.

Data for the research will be collected as follows

1. Tape-recorded group sessions
2. Tape-recorded interviews
3. Written responses generated in group and individual activities.

This consent form relates to your participation in the group sessions. During the group sessions we will discuss the use of teaching portfolios and how they may relate to practices in the School for the recognition, rewarding, enhancement and appraisal of our teaching.

Transcriptions of the recordings and any written materials collected during the course of the group sessions, will use codes to maintain the anonymity of the participants, and all data will be kept in locked filing cabinets to which only I will have access. No individuals will be identified in any subsequent articles or reports arising from this study.

The study has the potential to provide us with a better understanding of practices in universities, which aim to enhance or appraise our teaching.

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**I have read the information above and have received satisfactory answers to all questions I have asked. I agree to participate, realising that I may withdraw at any time. I agree that the research data gathered for the study may be published, provided that I am not identified.**

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Signature (Participant)

Date.

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Signature (M.M.Kulski).....Date.



## Appendix 3.7

CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY  
SCHOOL OF NURSING**TEACHING PORTFOLIO PROJECT****WORKSHOP DATES**

The groups sessions are from 1:00-3:00pm in 405:214 as outlined below:

**GROUP A**

August 7

August 21

September 4

September 18

October 2

October 16

October 30

**GROUP B**

August 8

August 22

September 5

September 19

October 3

October 17

October 31



## Appendix 3.9


**1.4 Possible Items for Inclusion in Teaching Portfolios** (Adapted from Edgerton, R., Hutchings, P and Quinlan K. *The Teaching Portfolio: Capturing the Scholarship in Teaching*, 1991)

Please indicate below, of the following items listed, the items you feel are essential to include in a portfolio, and those you already have at hand or will need to obtain. (Place x in relevant square)

Material from Oneself	Essential	Not Essential	Already Have	Will need
List of course titles and numbers, unit values or credits, enrolments				
List of course materials prepared for students				
Information on availability to students				
Report on identification of student difficulties and encouragement of student participation in courses				
Description of how films, computers or other nonprint materials were used in teaching				
Steps taken to emphasize the interrelatedness and relevance of different kinds of learning				
Maintaining a record of the changes resulting from self-evaluation				
Reading journals on improving teaching and attempting to implement acquired ideas.				
Reviewing new teaching materials for possible application				
Exchanging course materials with a colleague from another institution				
Conducting research on one's own teaching or course				
Becoming involved in an association or society concerned with the improvement of teaching and learning				
Attempting instructional innovations and evaluating their effectiveness				
Using general support services such as the TLG (Teaching Learning Group) in improving one's teaching				
Participating in seminars, workshops and professional meetings intended to improve teaching				
Participating in course or curriculum development				
Pursuing a line of research that contributes directly to teaching				
Preparing a textbook, workbook or other instructional material				
Editing or contributing to a professional journal on teaching one's subject				
Other (Please specify)				

## Appendix 3.10


**2.4 Possible Items for Inclusion in Teaching Portfolios** (Adapted from Edgerton, R., Hutchings, P and Quinlan K. *The Teaching Portfolio: Capturing the Scholarship in Teaching*. 1991)

Please indicate below, of the following items listed, the items you feel are essential to include in a portfolio, and those you already have at hand or will need to obtain. (Place x in relevant square)

THE PRODUCTS OF GOOD TEACHING	Essential	Not Essential	Already Have	Need to obtain
Students' scores on teacher-made or standardised tests, possibly before and after a course has been taken as evidence of learning				
Student laboratory workbooks and other kinds of workbooks or logs (journals)				
Student essays, creative work, and project or field-work reports.				
Publications by students on course-related work.				
A record of students who select and succeed in advanced courses of study in the field.				
A record of students who elect another course with the same lecturer				
Evidence of effective supervision of Honors, Master's or Ph.D. theses.				
Setting up or running a successful internship program.				
Documentary evidence of the effect of courses on student career choice.				
Documentary evidence of help given by the lecturer to students in securing employment				
Evidence of help given to colleagues on teaching improvement				
Other (Specify)				
Other				
Other				

## Appendix 3.11




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**6.4 Possible Items for Inclusion in Teaching Portfolios** (Adapted from Edgerton, R., Hutchings, P and Quinlan K. *The Teaching Portfolio: Capturing the Scholarship in Teaching*. 1991)
 

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Please indicate below, of the following items listed, the items you feel are essential to include in a portfolio, and those you already have at hand or will need to obtain. (Place x in relevant square)

<b>INFORMATION FROM OTHERS: - COLLEAGUE FEEDBACK</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Not Essential</b>	<b>Already Have</b>	<b>Need to obtain</b>
Statements from colleagues who have observed teaching either as members of a teaching team or as independent observers of a particular course, or who teach other sections of the same course				
Written comments from those who teach courses for which a particular course is a pre-requisite				
Evaluation of contributions to course development and improvement				
Statements from colleagues from other institutions on such matters as how well students have been prepared for graduate studies				
Honors or recognition such as a distinguished teacher award or election to a committee on teaching				
Requests for advice or acknowledgment of advice received by a committee on teaching or similar body.				
Other				
Other				
Other				

## Appendix 3.12




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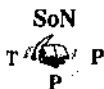
**6.4 Possible Items for Inclusion in Teaching Portfolios (Adapted from Edgerton, R., Hutchings, P and Quitalan K. The Teaching Portfolio: Capturing the Scholarship in Teaching, 1991)**


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Please indicate below, of the following items listed, the items you feel are essential to include in a portfolio, and those you already have at hand or will need to obtain. (Place x in relevant square)

<b>INFORMATION FROM OTHERS: - STUDENT FEEDBACK</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Not Essential</b>	<b>Already Have</b>	<b>Need to obtain</b>
Student course and teaching evaluation data which suggest improvements or produce an overall rating of effectiveness or satisfaction				
Written comments from a student committee to evaluate courses and provide feedback				
Unstructured (and possibly unsolicited) written evaluations including written comments on exams and letters received after a course has been completed				
Documented reports of satisfaction with out-of-class contacts				
Interview data collected from students after completion of a course.				
Honours received from students, such as being elected "teacher of the year"				
Other				
Other				
Other				

## Appendix 3.13




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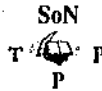
**6.4 Possible Items for Inclusion in Teaching Portfolios** (Adapted from Edgerton, R., Hutchings, P and Quinlan K. *The Teaching Portfolio: Capturing the Scholarship in Teaching*. 1991)
 

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Please indicate below, of the following items listed, the items you feel are essential to include in a portfolio, and those you already have at hand or will need to obtain. (Place x in relevant square)

<b>INFORMATION FROM OTHERS: - MISCELLANEOUS</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Not Essential</b>	<b>Already Have</b>	<b>Need to obtain</b>
Statements about teaching achievements from administrators at one's own institution or from other institutions				
Alumni ratings or other graduate feedback				
Comments from parents of students				
Reports from employers of students (eg. in a work-study or "cooperative" program)				
Invitations to teach from outside agencies				
Invitation to contribute to the teaching literature				
Other				
Other				

## Appendix 3.14



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**CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD TEACHERS AND TEACHING**

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Please list below the characteristics/attributes of good teachers and teaching in relation to the instructional setting.

LECTURER:

LECTURE:

CLINICAL INSTRUCTOR:

CLINICAL INSTRUCTION:

TUTOR:

TUTORIAL:

LABORATORY INSTRUCTOR:



**Appendix 3.14 (Cont.)****LABORATORY INSTRUCTION:****SUPERVISOR:****SUPERVISION:****UNITS OF STUDY:****UNIT CONTROLLER:****OTHER:**

Please describe below exemplars of good teaching practice from one or more of the teaching contexts above. The vignettes may describe your own or another's teaching that you have observed or experienced. Use the back of this form or further pages, as required.

Appendix 3.15



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**SESSION FEEDBACK**

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I would appreciate your feedback on this session and will use the suggestions to improve the next session.

From this session I gained:

Questions that remain unanswered include:

The session could be improved by:

In the next session I would like:

Thank you for your feedback.

## Appendix 3.16

**teaching portfolio project**

5th November, 1996.

Dear ,

Now that the sessions for the staff development program have come to an end, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your written responses, and your contribution to the group discussions, during the past fourteen weeks. The information gathered over the course of the project will help to elucidate the role of teaching portfolios in the improvement and appraisal of university teaching and in staff development of teaching.

I will be reporting the findings of the project in various ways over the next few months, including in a report to the School of Nursing Staff Development Committee. In this regard a Project Evaluation Form will be sent to you shortly, so that this feedback can be used by the Committee in the planning of any future staff development initiatives in this area. In the meantime if you require more information or wish to discuss any aspect of the project further, I would be pleased to arrange a time for this.

Once again thank you for your participation, it has been a pleasure to work with you on this project.

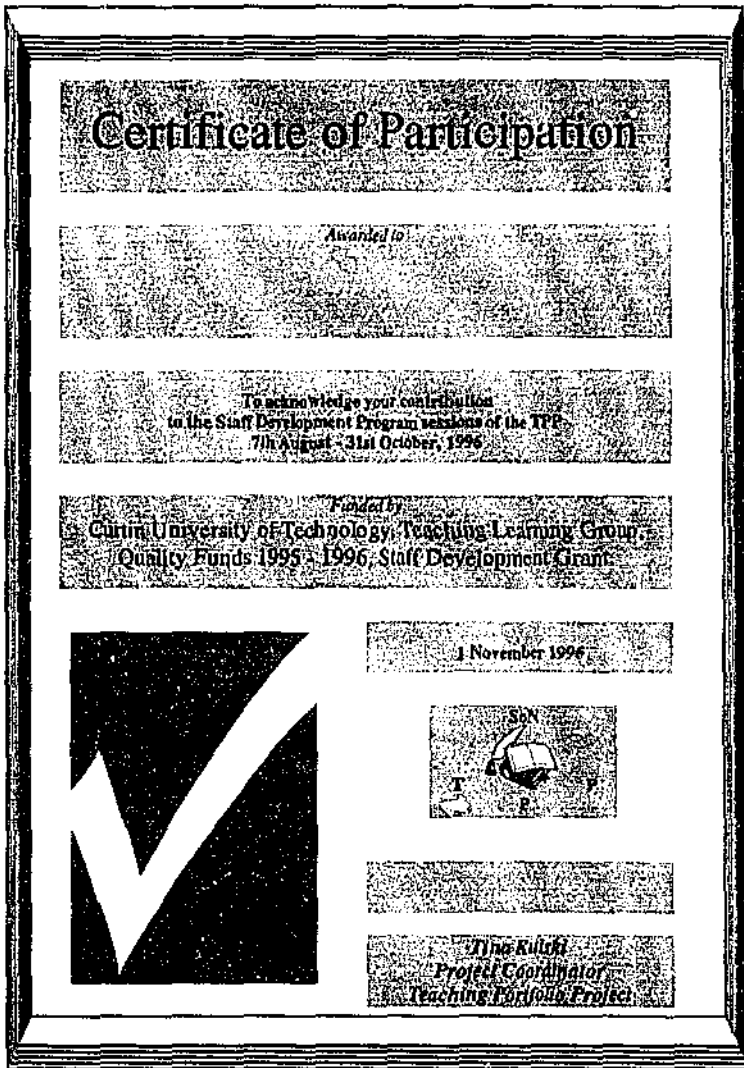
Kind regards,

Tina Kulski  
Project Coordinator



THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED BY CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY,  
TEACHING LEARNING GROUP, QUALITY FUNDS 1995-1996,  
STAFF DEVELOPMENT GRANT

Appendix 3.17



## Appendix 3.18

**TEACHING PORTFOLIO  
PROGRAM EVALUATION FORM (B)**

Name.....(Optional)

1. Please comment on the program in terms of:

1(i) The structure (i.e. number and length of sessions, time frame, group size etc)

1(ii) The discussion topics (content areas) covered

1(iii) The resources provided (i.e. materials; time release)

1(iv) The group facilitator's performance (i.e. running of sessions; project management etc)

**Appendix 3.18 (Cont.)**

2a Please list below the objectives you set for yourself at the beginning of the program and the extent to which these were achieved or were not achieved?

2b Did the SDP sessions provide adequate support/resources for you to achieve your objectives? Please comment briefly on further support/resources you require/d.

3a What are the barriers/problems you have or think you may encounter in developing a teaching portfolio?

3b Were these issues adequately addressed in the SDP sessions? Please comment on further issues that need to be addressed.

**Appendix 3.18 (Cont.)**

- 4a What do you think are the potential advantages/disadvantages for academic staff in developing teaching portfolios
- 4b For what purposes would you like to see teaching portfolios used in the School?
- 5 Would you recommend this program to the School's Staff Development Committee or to other academic staff?
- 5(i) As is (i.e. using a similar format to this project?)
- 5(ii) In some other format? (Specify changes you would like to see)
- 6 Any other comments?

Thank you for your assistance.

## Appendix 5.1

## AVAILABILITY FOR PROJECT PARTICIPATION

PART. NO.	MON AM	MON PM	TUE AM	TUE PM	WED AM	WED PM	THU AM	THU PM	FRI AM	FRI PM
A1			X	X	X	X				
A2					X	X			X	
A3			X	X		X				
A4					X	X	X		X	X
A5				X		X		X		
A6				X		X	X		X	
A7	X		X			X			X	
B1					X	X	X	X		
B2			X				X	X		
B3					X			X	X	
B4							X	X		
B5	X					X		X	X	X
B6			X	X			X	X		
B7	X						X	X		
No. Part. Avail.	3	0	5	5	5	9	7	8	6	2



## Appendix 5.2

## PREFERENCES FOR SIZE OF GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Participant	Individual	Small Group (3-5)	Larger Group (6-8)	No Preference
A1		X		
A2				X
A3				X
A4				X
A5		X	X	
A6			X	X
A7				X
B1	X	X		
B2		X	X	
B3			X	
B4	X		X	
B5				X
B6			X	X
B7				X
Preference	2	4	6	8

## Appendix 5.3

## PREFERENCES FOR TIME COMMITMENT TO SDP

Participant No.	1 Hour Weekly	2 Hours Weekly	2 Hours Fortnightly	3 Hours Fortnightly	No Preference
A1		X	X		
A2			X		
A3			X		
A4	X	X			
A5	X				
A6					X
A7		X			
B1	X				
B2	X				
B3			X		
B4			X		
B5			X		
B6			X		
B7					X
Preference	4	3	7	0	2

## Appendix 6.1

## Items for inclusion in portfolios – Materials from oneself

Portfolio Items	Number and % participants			
	Essential	%	Already Have	%
Material from Oneself				
Reflective statement on teaching philosophy, practices, and goals	13	93	1	7
List of course titles and numbers, unit values or credits, enrolments	10	71	14	100
List of course materials prepared for students	6	43	3	21
Information on availability to students	7	50	12	86
Report on identification of student difficulties and encouragement of student participation in courses	7	50	1	7
Description of how films, computers or other non print materials were used in teaching	3	21	2	14
Steps taken to emphasize the interrelatedness and relevance of different kinds of learning	6	43	4	28
Maintaining a record of the changes resulting from self-evaluation	11	78	8	57
Reading journals/books on improving teaching and attempting to implement acquired ideas	9	64	7	50
Reviewing new teaching materials for possible application	10	71	5	36
Exchanging course materials with a colleague from another institution	2	14	0	0
Conducting research on one's own teaching or course	8	57	2	14
Becoming involved in an association or society concerned with the improvement of teaching and learning	4	28	3	21
Attempting instructional innovations and evaluating their effectiveness	6	43	5	36
Using general support services such as the TLG (Teaching Learning Group) for improving one's teaching	5	36	3	21
Participating in seminars, workshops and professional meetings intended to improve teaching	12	86	10	71
Participating in course or curriculum development	11	78	11	78
Pursuing a line of research that contributes directly to teaching	6	43	2	14
Preparing a textbook, workbook or other instructional material	6	43	6	43
Editing or contributing to a professional journal on teaching one's subject	1	7	0	0

## Appendix 6.1 (Cont.)

## Items for inclusion in portfolios – The products of good teaching

Portfolio Items	Number and % Participants			
	Essential	%	Have	%
<b>PRODUCTS OF GOOD TEACHING</b>				
Students' scores on teacher-made or standardised tests, possibly before and after a course has been taken as evidence of learning	9	64	0	0
Student laboratory workbooks and other kinds of workbooks or logs (journals)	3	21	2	14
Student essays, creative work, and project or field-work reports.	14	100	5	36
Publications by students on course-related work.	4	28	1	7
A record of students who select and succeed in advanced courses of study in the field.	3	21	0	0
A record of students who elect another course with the same lecturer	2	14	0	0
Evidence of effective supervision of Honors, Master's or Ph.D. theses.	5	36	0	0
Setting up or running a successful internship program.	7	50	5	36
Documentary evidence of the effect of courses on student career choice.	1	7	0	0
Documentary evidence of help given by the lecturer to students in securing employment	7	50	4	28
Evidence of help given to colleagues on teaching improvement	8	57	0	0

## Appendix 6.1 (Cont.)

## Items for inclusion in portfolios – Colleague feedback

Information From Others - Colleague Feedback	Essential	%	Already Have	%
Statements from colleagues who have observed teaching either as members of a teaching team or as independent observers of a particular course, or who teach other sections of the same course	14	100	6	43
Written comments from those who teach courses for which a particular course is a pre-requisite	2	14	1	7
Evaluation of contributions to course development and improvement	8	57	2	14
Statements from colleagues from other institutions on such matters as how well students have been prepared for graduate studies	1	7	0	0
Honors or recognition such as a distinguished teacher award or election to a committee on teaching	12	86	3	21
Requests for advice or acknowledgement of advice received by a committee on teaching or similar body.	6	43	1	7

## Possible Items for Inclusion in Teaching Portfolios – Student Evaluations

Information From Others: - Student Feedback	Essential	%	Already Have	%
Student course and teaching evaluation data which suggest improvements or produce an overall rating of effectiveness or satisfaction	14	100	12	86
Written comments from a student committee to evaluate courses and provide feedback	6	43	0	0
Unstructured (and possibly unsolicited) written evaluations by students, including written comments on exams and letters received after a course has been completed	9	64	10	71
Documented reports of satisfaction with out-of-class contacts	3	21	0	0
Interview data collected from students after completion of a course.	5	36	3	21
Honours received from students, such as being elected "teacher of the year"	0	0	1	7

## Appendix 6.1 (Cont.)

## Possible Items for Inclusion in Teaching Portfolios – Other sources.

Information From Others: - Other sources	Essential	%	Already Have	%
Statements about teaching achievements from administrators at one's own institution or from other institutions.	3	21	0	0
Alumni ratings or other graduate feedback	4	28	0	0
Comments from parents of students	0	0	1	7
Reports from employers of students (eg. in a work-study or "cooperative" program	3	21	0	0
Invitations to teach from outside agencies	1	7	2	14
Invitation to contribute to the teaching literature	0	0	1	7

## Appendix 6.2

## Characteristics of good lecturers and lecturing

No.	Characteristics of a good lecturer:	What makes a good lecture:
A1	Loud voice. Ability to explain clearly. Relate information to practical situations and real life situations.	Good audio-visual aids. Appropriate questioning. Summary of lecture at the end. Catchy introduction.
A3	Knowledgeable. Relating theory to practice.	Creative presentation. Topic made relevant to students. Making it interesting, relevant enough so that students will want to attend.
A4	Knowledge of subject. Clear presentation. Good enunciation. Good use of any teaching aids etc. Examples of appropriate material for level of learner. Able to answer questions clearly/simplely. Awareness of areas that may be difficult to grasp.	On time. Adequate amount of material for time allowed. Objectives presented. Relevant material. Using a variety of resources to keep students interested.
A6	Same as for tutor, except discussion may not be appropriate.	Should only present 3 or four major points. Ensure students are aware of what the important aspects are.
A7	Knowledgeable. Excellent command of subject. Research skills.	Updated knowledge. Ability to project information at level of learning.
B2	Dynamic. Shares personal experiences and examples to illustrate. Uses language appropriately. Organised. Uses AV equipment effectively Knowledgeable about topic. Creative in presentation style. Talks to entire group.	Organised. Clear and concise. Uses AV aids. Stimulates thought and further discussion. Clear objectives. Conscious of learner needs i.e. attention span, keeping to time frame.

## Appendix 6.2 (Cont.)

## Characteristics of good lecturers and lecturing (Cont.)

B4	<p>Knowledge of topic.            Authoritative.            Clear speaker.            Well prepared with teaching aids (OHP, video, whiteboard).            Keep students attention            Important to remain in tune with level of student.</p>	<p>Interesting.            Beginning, middle, end.            Variety of teaching aids.            Variety of pace.            Occasional break with class participation, activity (buzz session).            Written objectives for lecture.</p>
B5	<p>A person who has a degree of expertise in the subject being presented.            A knowledge of how to teach.</p>	<p>Set within limited parameters.            Addresses 4-5 objectives.            Well structured, clear, concise.            Few overheads.            Some time for class interaction/ questions.            Accompanying reference list</p>
B6	<p>Structured, organised, logical relevant.            Begins where students are at.            Presents new material, latest research, new ideas.            Delivers in a way that students can readily follow.            Up to date knowledge.</p>	<p>Clear transmission of content material.            Provides content in structured way for follow-up in tutorials.            Give extra reading.            Sequential.</p>



## Appendix 6.2 (Cont.)

## Characteristics of good clinical instructors and instruction

No.	Characteristics of a good clinical instructor	What makes good clinical instruction:
A1	Sharing clinical experience and clinical skills Good communication skills Role model	Utilise all teaching opportunities Teach problem solving Awareness of students' needs
A3	Clinical skills Ability to show, explain give rationale for practice Ability to build on strengths and overcome weaknesses Putting theory into practice	Skills developing Building on competence
A4	Competent in theory and psychomotor skills Demonstrates procedures clearly in a way students can follow Gives feedback on student performance in clinical area Is a role model	Seek out appropriate experience for level of student Encourage students to take full advantage of the experience Prebrief and debrief as required
A6	N/A	N/A
A7	Good communicator Supportive role Resourceful Positive interaction Excellent and up to date clinical practice skills Approachable	Awareness of learning opportunities for students Supportive environment Stimulating environment
B2	Sensitive to student needs Provides constructive feedback (i.e. positive aspects - needs improvement) Assists student to feel comfortable Shares personal experience (e.g. not afraid to let on not perfect)	Participation of all members of group Aims, objectives clear

## Appendix 6.2 (Cont.)

## Characteristics of good clinical instructors and instruction (Cont.)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>B4</b></p> <p>Problem solver<br/>         Public relations expert<br/>         Be familiar with area<br/>         Plan activities with students<br/>         Set 'rules' (i.e. call me when you give injection)<br/>         Role model</p> <p>Be readily available in ward<br/>         Ready to give opportunities to learn</p> | <p>Organizes clinical experiences to facilitate student learning needs<br/>         Organizes experience to make best use of time<br/>         Allows for discussion time</p>   |
| <p><b>B5</b></p> <p>A current practitioner in the related field<br/>         A person who has a wealth of experience in the area being taught.<br/>         Feedback<br/>         Student advocate.</p>   | <p>Students should be well prepared and have a working knowledge of skills<br/>         Applying the skills in a reality situation should be a compatible experience<br/>         Interaction with client should be priority not psychomotor skills</p> |
| <p><b>B6</b></p> <p>Encourager, supporter<br/>         Ability to defuse tension<br/>         Liaison person between staff and student.<br/>         Keen eye for opportunities for students and teaching opportunities<br/>         Ability to draw creative ideas from students.</p>  | <p>Challenging<br/>         Consolidating theory</p>  |

## Appendix 6.2 (Cont.)

## Characteristics of good tutors and tutoring

No.	Characteristics of a good Tutor:	What makes a good Tutorial/Seminar:
A1	Amiable. Knowledge of subject. Direct students to problem solve.	Equal attention to all students. Introduction, body & conclusion. Trigger questions.
A3	Knowledge of group skills. Willingness to listen. Ability to create interest.	Topic relevant and interesting. Variety of teaching methodologies. Using student experiences.
A4	Knowledgeable. Provides adequate opportunity for student involvement. Clear thinking. Stimulates discussion. Challenges material presented. Encourages students to participate, think and analyze.	Usually student directed. Give plenty of scope for students to discuss topics. Everybody to participate. All views expressed without students feeling threatened. Create environment for this to occur.
A6	Knowledgeable. Responsive. Able to generate discussion. Enthusiastic and interested in material being taught.	Administer tutorial and provide material to allow for greater depth of understanding of material covered in lectures.
A7	Effective communicator. Well prepared. Good debating skills. Able to promote discussion.	Well prepared. Well researched topics. Knowledge of subject. Using a variety of teaching strategies.
B2	Controls participants who tend to take over. Does not speak too much. Sets rules, guidelines, objectives. Keeps to time frame. Assists to keep group on track.	Participation of all members of group. Aims, objectives clear.
B4	Knowledge of topic. Enthusiastic. Interpersonal skills to encourage student participation (100% of students) Cultural sensitivity.	Student preparation – seating so all can see each other and be comfortable (in circle).

## Appendix 6.2 (Cont.)

## Characteristics of good tutors and tutoring (Cont.)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>B5</b> Person who has taken time to be briefed by unit controller as to expectations of tutorial.<br/>         Knowledgeable in field of study.<br/>         Well prepared.<br/>         Aware of different teaching strategies.</p>   | <p>Environment where learning is fostered.<br/>         Opinions to be put forward without fear of losing face.<br/>         Safe area to challenge and be challenged.</p> |
| <p><b>B6</b> Knowledgeable.<br/>         Ability to develop rapport with students so they feel comfortable in sharing ideas and approaching you.<br/>         An encourager of students.<br/>         Provides a challenge for students.<br/>         Ability to get the group working cohesively and supporting one another.<br/>         Warmth.</p> | <p>Open session for discussion of ideas.<br/>         Arguing.<br/>         Debating.<br/>         Exploring.</p>  |

## Appendix 6.2 (Cont.)

## Characteristics of good laboratory instructors and instruction

No.	Laboratory instructor	Laboratory instruction:
A1	Same as tutor and able to demonstrate skills.	Same as tutorials and designed to teach 'by doing' i.e. practical.
A3	Good time management skills. Good communicator. Utilizes variety of teaching activities.	Provides opportunity to practice – preferably self-paced – skills 'State of the art' equipment..
A4	Thorough preparation. Makes lab activities interesting and informative.	Well equipped with adequate resources (e.g. wash basins, toilets, beds, H/chairs).
A6	Understand lab objectives. Makes objectives clear for students	Ensure equipment for lab is present and in good working order
A7	Preparedness. Knowledge about principles and skills. Approachable	As real to life as possible. Well resourced. Room for required practise.
B2	Relaxed Makes students feel at ease Competent at demonstrating skills	Have assessment criteria available. Set up so all students can be involved rather than standing and watching.
B4	High knowledge of topic. Well prepared with structure (but flexible) format.	Purpose of session clear. Environment comfortable. Have aids e.g. videos available to allow students to review areas that are unclear.
B5	Able to facilitate consolidation of theory and practical. Demonstrates skills at high level.	Appropriate and up to date resources. Need computerized instructions or manuals available for use at all times. Have labs open so students can practise
B6	Experienced clinician who has stayed in touch with their field. Someone who keeps up to date on latest research..	Test both skills and theory. Non threatening so students feel they can have a go.

## Appendix 6.2 (Cont.)

**Characteristics of good supervisors and supervision**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Supervisors</b>	<b>Supervision</b>
A1	N/A	N/A
A3	Creative, logical thinker, knowledge of specific areas of research/topic of thesis, setting boundaries, time management.	Provision of clear and sufficient feedback - Ensure student understands comments
A4	N/A	N/A.
A6	Knowledgeable on research methods Able to establish rapport with student Able to be critical in an objective yet diplomatic way.	Procedures well organized. Provides good opportunities for supervisors and students to interact.
A7	Knowledge of research methods Available, committed resourceful, supportive.	Supportive environment. Facilitates interaction with other postgraduate students.
B2	Sees thesis work as important and valuable - keeps appointments - provides constructive feedback and suggestions.	Procedures clear and well organized.
B4	Supportive, constructive, role model.	Consistent comments/feedback from supervisors.
B5	Provides information in relation to administrative requirements. Knowledgeable about topic.	Good time management - Supervisors available when required - Feedback mechanisms in place.
B6	Experienced researcher. Provides moral support and constructive feedback..	Clear and supportive procedures in place.

## Appendix 6.2 (Cont.)

## Characteristics of good units of study and unit controllers

No.	Units	Unit Controllers
A1	Comprehensive unit outline available. Coherent objectives. Integrated vertically and horizontally with other units in curriculum.	Leadership and management skills. Overall knowledge of semester objectives. Facilitation and mediation skills. Communication skills. Assertiveness.
A3	Outline should be clear - no loopholes - provide dates, assessment criteria etc. and all other material as per unit outline policy.	Attend to all administrative matters pertinent to course - liaison with students/staff/ outside agencies. Consider student requirements.
A4	Guidelines clear - well written unit outlines - content of unit related in some way.	Trouble shooter. Adviser to preceptors. Sounding board for students who have a need to talk about what happens on clinical.
A6	Good integration with other units in the syllabus.	Good organiser.
A7	Clear learning objectives which relate well with other units.	Leadership skills. Time availability for students. Well prepared. Supportive role to other staff.
B2	Requirements for meeting objectives and assessment criteria detailed. Student centred learning approaches.	Demonstrates leadership skills. Able to achieve consistency in teaching. Teamwork skills.
B4	Objectives clearly stated and cover the competencies required of nurses.	Co-ordinates staff in unit i.e. tutors doing what was intended. Available for students and staff. Facilitates meetings as necessary. Prepared, organised, responsible.
B5	Clear learning objectives. Conforms to university policies. Consistent with curriculum documents.	Teamwork. Leadership. Good organiser.
B6	Must provide sufficient details in objectives for students.	Organisation and leadership skills.

**Appendix 6.2 (Cont.)****Characteristics of good teaching 'other'****Characteristics of good teaching 'other'**

- A1 For all of the above - strong knowledge base - group and individual skills - effective communication - methodology relevant to the topic, student(s) and situation
- A6 Self-directed learning packages - clearly set out - user friendly - assists students to meet objectives - assignments and assessments reasonable and assists in meeting objectives  
Coordinator of self directed programs - available for consultation with students - acts on student feedback - supports students - counsels students having problems - motivates students - keeps students up to date



## Appendix 6.3

**Vignettes - Good Teaching In Different Contexts**

**Example 1: Group A:** While on clinical practice I have a group of six students. It is their first day in the operating room. In the past two weeks they have had workshops and laboratories relating to operating room skills - all not in the natural setting. In utilizing a teaching strategy known as the scaffolding technique I plan the day to incorporate a "mock surgical procedure". The use of the technique is important because the students' knowledge and skills are all drawn together and practised in a comfortable, controlled environment before they embrace real practice. The "mock procedure" is a patient undergoing an appendectomy. The students practice anaesthetics assistance, positioning of the patient (a student), setting up for the surgery, draping the patient, and conducting the surgery in a descriptive manner. Following this they complete the process to the point of sending the patient to Recovery Room. The students then reflect on the skills practised, interactions and behaviour within their roles. The scaffolding is then removed and students are ready to undertake practice in the real world. Students have commented in many evaluations that this teaching strategy has been impressionable to them in terms of learning. The transition to real practice has been made very easy as they move through new skills.

**Example 2: Group A:** A lecturer in my undergraduate years comes to mind as an example of a good teacher. He was actively involved in research in the area in which he taught. As a result he had intimate knowledge and understanding of the material presented, and because of this and his enthusiasm for the topic, made it interesting and informative for students. The anecdotes and jokes presented during the lecture maintained interest and involvement.

**Example 3: Group A:** Mr G. was asked to provide a teaching session to a group of Semester 1 students. As he was a mental health nurse, and had been requested to present in about 20 minutes, a session based on a "model" - he began almost immediately by introducing a light, enjoyable atmosphere to the session. He actually presented the model by way of a role-play - in which various students were asked to participate as mother, father and their children. Furniture was rearranged to simulate a clinic setting and the actors briefed on their roles. After a short prebriefing about the particular model the role-play commenced and after 10 minutes it was stopped. Further explanation debriefing followed and Mr. G placed on the board cardboard strips in various colours on which were highlighted important concepts depicted in the role-play and which were implicit in the model. The students seemed to enjoy this - they learnt, they laughed, they participated. Various strategies were used - eg. role-play, explanation, teacher made aids, a diagram of the model - etc. - very appropriate to level of student. It seemed a peerless way of getting information across.

**Example 4: Group A:** During a course on rapid appraisal techniques - teacher gave the theory and some examples to illustrate each point of the topic - methodology, uses, rationales, benefits, limitations. To put theory into practice the group chose a topic (French atomic testing was happening at that time). Applying the principles, the group decided what the topic meant/ what they needed/ wanted to know/ how they would collect information and what they might be able to do with it - all to meet the predetermined goals they had agreed upon. Many in the group had different ideas and the teacher became facilitator to consider the pros and cons of each. She had great knowledge of the methodology and guided us towards discovering new ideas and methods. She also showed her practical experience as we planned how to operationalise our ideas. We went and did it and on return collated/sorted our findings into some type of thematic order - again she moved among us guiding not telling, and supporting.

### Appendix 6.3 (Cont.)

We presented our findings and then she led us to the next step of what to do with the appraisal - how to evaluate it (in terms of outcome and process) what to do with the results and then she brought us all back to our original aim and the theory and we discussed how well we had achieved our aim and how we had demonstrated differences from the theory. She also had good notes, references, way of building the topic (on a white board)

**Example 5: Group B:** The incident occurred two semesters ago, when the first batch of the new curriculum students were in semester six. I was asked to teach in the new Nursing Research 326 unit and to conduct the tutorials for a group of sixteen students. These students were terrified of nursing research. They were required, as part of their assignment to conduct a small project, and present the results of the project at the end of semester to the full class. All the lecturers who taught in the unit were going to mark this final presentation. Unfortunately I was not able to attend this presentation because of my clinical teaching commitments. I was amazed, overjoyed and very touched when the students dedicated their presentation to me. They had a special overhead prepared with my name on it. Not only did the students get the highest marks for the presentation, and the content of it, but a few of the lecturers told me later how well they had done.

**Example 6: Group B:** Laboratory teaching of fundamental skills. Students are taught using guided discovery method of teaching and using principle based application of theory. Encouraged to practise skills in groups to reach a level where a skill is performed almost naturally. At end of unit selected skills are examined using various principles which have been collated in assessment criteria. eg. principles of comfort, asepsis, biomechanics, communication and safety. When students come into a clinical situation where the skill was applied, the feedback from the ward staff frequently involved surprise at how well the students demonstrated competency in their work, particularly in relation to their novice status.

**Example 7: Group B:** Evaluation of learning and meeting set objectives. This experience relates to the time when the writer was an undergraduate nurse. The tutor in this learning experience was a good listener and acted not only on spoken messages but unspoken as well. During the final evaluation of the clinical experience the tutor sat down with the writer and student peer to evaluate the writer's performance. Feedback was provided by this instructor, student peer, and the writer. After discussion and negotiation, agreement was reached in relation to the final mark. The tutor demonstrated excellence in teaching in the evaluation of the student (writer) because of her open mindedness and I guess you could say 'triangulation' of the evaluation.

**Example 8: Group B:** Lecture in foundation unit in skills. Lecturer provided students with background information re food. Lecture was on Nutritional Status. Food as energy, food as fuel, food as social activity (eating) as well as financial (paying for it) and transportation (to buy). But before this, what was grown and naturally grown and imported. Gave great background (in 10 minutes) re the topic. Included research into food values and it was very relevant to these particular students. Therefore very broad intro to give basic building bricks on which to teach (and learn) re nutrition. Variety was used OHP, video and handouts. Some questions were asked of audience and the lecture was very interactive, keeping students alert and interested.

## Appendix 6.4

**Session One Feedback:****From this session I gained:**

- insight into/information about/understanding of teaching portfolios. (x 12)
- the realisation that preparing a teaching portfolio provides the potential for reflective practice and consequently the potential for improving teaching.
- valuable information from the members of the group.
- an overview of what is involved in teaching portfolios
- a better understanding of problems other people in the SON face
- insight into complexity of documenting teaching.

**Questions that remain unanswered include:**

- how to construct a teaching portfolio. (x2)
- how to substantiate achievements in postgraduate teaching.
- what aspects of clinical teaching one can include in a teaching portfolio

**The session could be improved by:**

- making it longer/increasing time/having more time to discuss some of the issues that were raised (Gp. A x 3)

**In the next session I would like:**

- to compare notes with the group and discuss the development of the portfolio further. (Gp. A)
- to discuss documentation of post graduate teaching quality. (Gp. A)
- exchange ideas on clinical teaching portfolios (Gp. B)
- elaboration on the construction of teaching portfolios. (Gp. B)

**Appendix 6.4 (Cont.)****Session Two Feedback:****From this session I gained:**

- an idea where other group members are
- information and discussion about difficult issues
- how to apply for promotion
- interaction with the group/exchange of ideas
- new strategies to try out
- input from the group regarding their experiences
- better insight into what others consider important to be included in a portfolio
- valuable discussion on philosophy and exchange of ideas on what would be included in philosophy
- plenty of ideas on various aspects of teachings
- discussion of various issues which provided examples and suggestions of what information could go into a teaching portfolio and how to obtain this information

**Questions that remain unanswered include:**

- how to determine what my own goals for teaching are
- what level of detail is required for own objectives/philosophical approach
- no questions/blank x 9

**The session could be improved by:**

- no suggestions/blank x 14

**In the next session I would like:**

- writing philosophy, goals and teaching strategies x 2
- continue to work on developing the portfolio x 5
- continue with sharing of ideas/information x 4
- to continue to discover more about teaching/learning

**Appendix 6.4 (Cont.)****Session Three Feedback:****From this session I gained:**

- similarities in "where I was at" with other group members
- clearer understanding of portfolio concept
- an idea of the difficulties that many people here work under
- some innovative ideas from students on teaching practice

**Questions that remain unanswered include:**

- how to organise my portfolio
- the purpose of portfolios in the context of the current situation in this School
- what is essential/not essential to be included in a portfolio
- while the material is extremely useful (portfolios) I wonder whether it would really be read by a panel of interviewers prior to interview for a new position – it would take time to circulate – I couldn't see it being photocopied

**The session could be improved by:**

- having more time

**In the next session I would like:**

- ideas/brainstorming re organising portfolio
- discussion of portfolio size
- more of the same!

**Appendix 6.4 (Cont.)****Session Four Feedback:****From this session I gained:**

- More information on portfolios
- Information on things I need to obtain for my portfolio
- Some ideas on how to get feedback from my colleagues on my teaching

**Questions that remain unanswered include:**

- None that I can think of
- How I can find the time to complete my portfolio!

**The session could be improved by:**

- More time for discussion

**In the next session I would like:**

- More of the same
- Continue our discussions
- Further sharing of ideas

**Appendix 6.4 (Cont.)****Session Five Feedback:****From this session I gained:**

- Ideas about getting useful feedback from students
- Some innovative ideas re evaluation from students on teaching practice
- Suggestions for clinical teaching and student involvement in the feedback process
- Inspiration to keep on with my portfolio

**Questions that remain unanswered include:**

- While the material is extremely useful (portfolio) I wonder whether it would really be read by a panel of interviewers prior to interview for a new position. It would take time to circulate. I couldn't see it being photocopied.
- How do you evaluate subject information – input into student tutorials i.e. Evidence of promoting positive outcomes.

**The session could be improved by:**

- N/A – No suggestions for improvement were made.

**In the next session I would like:**

- Continue with similar discussion
- To look at student evaluation of clinical teaching forms.

## Appendix 6.4 (Cont.)

**Session Six Feedback:****From this session I gained:**

- An appreciation of the complexity involved in portfolios
- Ways/methods of evaluating clinical teaching (Gp. Bx3)
- This session was great because it made me feel that there are others in the SON who feel the same way I do about what is going on.
- An opportunity to get some things off my chest!

**Questions that remain unanswered include:**

- How I find time to fit everything in!
- How I can use my portfolio – especially as there isn't any requirement to do one.

**The session could be improved by:**

- N/A – No suggestions for improvement were made.

**In the next session I would like:**

- To continue discussion
- To get some feedback from others on my portfolio.

**Session Seven Feedback:****From this session I gained:**

- Tea and sympathy – thanks!
- Enjoyed the vignettes
- Better understanding of good teaching practices.
- Support
- Appreciation of complexities involved in evaluation of portfolios.
- Some further ideas for my portfolio.

**Questions that remain unanswered include:**

- How I will use my portfolio.
- Whether completing my portfolio will be worthwhile.

**The session could be improved by:**

- N/A