

Portfolios

What are they?

Portfolios provide an opportunity for students to gather, organize and illustrate examples of their learning and accomplishments. It is the process of creating, collecting, reflecting on and selecting work samples that engages students in continuous reflection and self-assessment. They should reflect the growth and progress of a student's learning. Whatever form the portfolio takes, it works best when integrated into your classroom program as a whole and not used just in preparation for reporting or conferencing.

Portfolios can take many forms and can be as simple as a binder, storage box, file folder of work samples, post-it-notes on student work already in duo-tangs, or can be in electronic format.

Portfolios can be used at student inclusive conferences or can be sent home on a regular basis.

Purposes

Students develop a portfolio for many purposes, including:

- Documenting their activities and accomplishments over an extended period of time
- Communicating their learning with others
- Expressing and celebrating their accomplishments
- Providing a foundation by which to assess their personal growth and skill development, and to set future goals
- Increase their sense of responsibility and ownership of their learning.
- Allows students to be invested in their learning, reflections, and goal setting.
- Portfolios should be about process versus product. The process of creating the products that go into a portfolio is where the learning takes place.
- Ties to competencies and aligns to reporting

Portfolios develop students' organizational skills and increase their sense of responsibility and ownership of their work. Students are encouraged to produce their best work and value their progress.

Portfolios should be about process versus product. The process of creating the products that go into a portfolio is where the learning takes place.

Creating a Portfolio

The production of a portfolio has four steps: Collect, Select, Reflect and Share

1. Collect

Throughout the year students should maintain a collection of their class work that demonstrates relevant skills and achievements:

- choose a system to compile the portfolio. This could be as simple as a storage box, manila envelopes, binders, or some type of electronic compilation
- may include photographs of project and activities at various stages of their development. Photos can document skills in action

- may have student written or teacher written captions that can be attached to various work samples. The captions can include a reflection of why this is a good representation of the student's growth. What the student is proud of. It may also reflect what the student needs to continue to work on.

2. Select

A portfolio could include:

- items that represent understanding of concepts
- items that illustrate the process of learning
- performance items that demonstrate applications of concepts and skills
- self-assessment comments or rubrics
- labels and captions that can help identify items and explain the context in which they were produced or reasons for choosing the item

The items selected should demonstrate:

- Growth and development
- Knowledge of concepts
- Diversity of entries across different competencies, literacies and domains
- Evidence of some self-assessment and thoughtfulness towards their work

3. Reflect

Teachers can help students choose entries for their portfolios by posing questions such as:

- How does this demonstrate your growth or learning?
- How does this demonstrate a new skill you are developing?
- Why did you choose this work?

4. Share

The final stage in the portfolio is sharing it with others. They can be presented in many different formats:

- Print format (text, pictures, graphics)
- Folder
- Scrapbook
- Binder with dividers or page protectors
- Portfolio case – large enough to hold materials such as artwork
- Multi media format – CDs, flash drives, videos, or photographs
- Internet or web-based formats

Adapted from the following sources:

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/classroom-assessment/portfolio.pdf