

The Benefits of Portfolios for ALL Students

Why would we want to use self-evaluation and growth portfolios in diverse classrooms, especially classrooms which include students with learning disabilities and other students whose accomplishments are often marginalized by comparison to “typical” student performance? What benefits would there be? Such portfolios help re-establish a focus on the abilities and accomplishments of ALL students for their teachers, parents and for the students themselves.

Portfolios Provide a Place for Evidence of Student Accomplishment

- *A portfolio can be placed where student selected work samples and other evidence of a student’s developing abilities are displayed.*
- *The portfolio represents specific examples that reveal changes in particular areas.*
- *A portfolio highlights accomplishment*
- *In self-evaluation and growth portfolios the students are given the autonomy to chose the objects that will be included.*

Portfolios Help Students and Teachers Re-Value Current Abilities and Accomplishments

- *The search for evidence of change can alter the value system of the classroom.*
- *Teaching with self-evaluation and growth portfolios can shift the focus to what students are **able** to do and what they have accomplished.*

Portfolios Foster Self-Reflection and Self-Evaluation

- *These students understand that they are changing and know what they are learning.*
- *Students can see what they were able to do at one time and they can compare it with recent accomplishments.*

Portfolios Foster a Forward Look at Learning

- *Positive goal setting is often a direct result of the student’s reflection and evaluation of the specific abilities and accomplishments documented in their portfolios.*

Portfolios Bring the Student’s Lives Outside of School into the Classroom

- *Autobiographical forms of literacy include a wide range of content from conventional literacy forms to highly personal interests and experiences.*
- *Celebrating students’ special knowledge outside of school opens the door for them to be able to appreciate themselves as learners in school.*
- *“If you don’t know yourself, you can’t know yourself as a reader and a writer.”*
- *Autobiographical content increases student ownership and interest.*

Portfolios Connect Teachers with Students’ Interests and Knowledge

- *“It has also given me more direction and purpose. I’ve gained greater insights about my students.”*
- *“I had been waiting to get my foot in the door with this child for far too long and this may end up to be a vehicle for Savannah to share and to offer a possibility for others.”*

- *“Believing that I need to take their self-evaluations seriously led me to make a change in our usual schedule. If I was to expect them to set goals, I had to allow time to accomplish them”*

Portfolios Enhance a Sense of Community in the Classroom

- *Portfolios contain artifacts, both personal and academic, that reveal aspects of student’s lives and learning that may not be known by the other students or the teacher.*
- *“I think it is good to have [a portfolio] because you can put your home stuff in here and not just keep it at home, and share it...so other people know more about you and your family.”*
- *The celebration of such personal diversity and unique individual abilities and accomplishments bring all students into the classroom community as equal contributors.*

Portfolios Connect Parents with Classroom Learning

- *In order to support students and their continued growth as learners, teachers and parents need to understand students’ perspectives on how they define their lives and their learning.*
- *When student self-evaluation and growth portfolios are shared with parents at home, parents are more directly connected to their children’s learning within the classroom.*
- *“It [the portfolio] reminded me of the progress that she has made and let me know how she feels about her own progress.”*

Student Growth Portfolios

What story will the portfolio tell? The portfolio will tell the story of the child's growth during the school year, Of goals set and met, of learning Valued....a celebration of what the Child can do.

What kind of evidence must it contain? Student selections and reflections, Teacher response sheets to assist in Chronicling goals, growth, portfolio Shares, student reflections, teacher And parent responses/verifications.

How will we evaluate information? Dialogue, self-reflection, sharing, Essay, self-evaluation (prior).... If It's valuable to the child...objective is to communicate.

How does the portfolio type connect to instruction? Portfolio at center of instruction Through student centered assessment.

Examples of Portfolios Questions you might Ask

Do you have some evidence in your portfolio that shows you can ...(newly observed ability or competence)?

What evidence do you have in your portfolio now that shows what you are able to do as a...(writer, artist, reader, mathematician, etc.)?

What would you like people to know about you as (writer, artist, reader, Mathematician, etc.)? How could you show that in your portfolio?

How have you changed as a (writer, artist, reader, mathematician, etc.)?

What could you put in your portfolio to show how you have changed as a..?

Tell me about this (item in the portfolio).

What does this (item in the portfolio).

What does this (item in the portfolio) tell me about you?

(Try to avoid the question, "Why did you put his in?")

Questions Submitted by Team Teachers

What are the different kinds and purposes of Portfolios?

What are the kinds of storage formats being used as portfolios and then for the storage of the portfolios?

What are some good portfolio share questions for teachers, for peers, and for families?

How to document reasons for student selections?

Scheduling shares and interviews: time allocations and frequency, individual and small groups?

What are the core components we should all have in our portfolios?

What would an interdisciplinary personalized portfolio look like?

What about teacher portfolios?

What about electronic portfolios?