



# Portfolio Assessment

# What is portfolio assessment?

- ◆ Purposeful collection of student work that has been selected and organized to show student learning progress (developmental portfolio) or to show samples of students best work (showcase portfolio)
- ◆ Portfolio assessment can be used in addition to other assessments or the sole source of assessment.
- ◆ Some schools even use portfolio assessment as a basis for high school graduation!

# What is the purpose of portfolios?

- ◆ To give students the opportunity to reflect on their growth over a period of time
- ◆ To use as a basis for assigning grades (based on effort)
- ◆ To use as a basis for communication with parents
- ◆ As placement/entrance requirements

# What do portfolios contain?

## Developmental Portfolio (or working portfolios)

- ◆ Samples of independent work (initial work compared to more current work)
- ◆ Evaluations by teacher, peer, self
- ◆ Reflections on the growth over a period of time (e.g., “I used to be unsure about punctuation, e.g., where does the comma really go?, but now, I feel comfortable in making decisions about punctuation, and I am right most of the time!”)
- ◆ May be used for instructional purposes and may include various stages of products, various drafts, etc.



# What do portfolios contain?

## Finished portfolio

- ◆ Samples of best independent work
- ◆ Evaluations by teacher, peer, self
- ◆ Samples organized according to some system (e.g., creative writing, scientific writing)
- ◆ Usually used to provide a summative evaluation and is standard format.

# Different purposes of Portfolios

- ◆ All content in a portfolio must be linked to the learning objectives/outcomes
- ◆ In addition to learning objectives, there are many general purposes of portfolios:
  - Enhancing student learning (little emphasis on content, more emphasis on student reflection)

# Different purposes of Portfolios (contd.)

- Assigning a grade (give clear guidelines to ensure that the portfolio consists of standard items)
- Displaying current achievement (pick the best complete work)
- Demonstrating progress (show changes over time, include various drafts)
- Showcasing student work (only best work)
- Documentation (showing work at variety of levels)
- Show finished work
- Show works in progress



# Characteristics of portfolios used for instructional purposes

- ◆ Focus is on development of self-evaluation skills.
- ◆ Teacher and students must meet to discuss evaluations (teachers can get a good window into students' understanding of their progress).
- ◆ In addition to improving instruction, the goal is to help student internalize criteria for excellence.
- ◆ Can be used for student-directed conferences with parents



# Characteristics of portfolios used for assessment purposes

- ◆ Focus is on evaluation of student work in it's entirety and certifying accomplishment.
- ◆ Teacher should provide student with clear guidelines about content of portfolio and scoring criteria.
- ◆ If used to assess program goals, the content and organization of portfolios must be highly standardized.

# Examples of portfolios for different subjects

## ◆ Science

- Charts, graphs created
- Projects, examples, posters
- Lab reports
- Research reports
- Tests
- Student reflections (either weekly, monthly, or bi-monthly)

# Examples of portfolios for different subjects

## ◆ Math

- Samples of problem solving
- Written explanations of how to solve problems
- Charts, graphs
- Computer analyses conducted
- Student reflections (either weekly, monthly, or bi-monthly)



# Examples of portfolios for different subjects

## ◆ English/Language Arts

- Reading log
- Different types of writing
  - ◆ Poems
  - ◆ Essays
  - ◆ Letters
  - ◆ Vocabulary achievements
- Tests
- Book summaries/reports
- Dramatizations, creative endings to stories
- Student reflections (either weekly, monthly, or bi-monthly)

# What should the reflections contain?

- ◆ Reflections should focus on:
  - What all have done in the past \_\_\_\_\_?
  - What have I learned in the past \_\_\_\_\_?
  - What do I need to learn next \_\_\_\_\_?
- ◆ Sometimes, you can give students additional guidelines – e.g, the elements of the learning objectives that they should address (organization, punctuation, coherence, etc.)

# Guidelines for portfolio entries

Give students the

- ◆ Purpose of the portfolio
- ◆ Time period that it should span
- ◆ Name people who will have access to it
- ◆ Description/list of types of work to include
- ◆ If applicable, what criteria will be used to evaluate portfolio



# Guidelines for portfolio entries (contd.)

- ◆ Ensure that you allow for flexibility (however, for summative/showcase portfolios, you might have to include strict guidelines for organization)
- ◆ Ensure that students have access to resources to construct portfolios (e.g., technology, materials)
- ◆ Ground rules for working independently or collaboratively
- ◆ Guidance on physical structure of portfolios
- ◆ How portfolios fit into their grades

# Who decides what goes into a portfolio?

- ◆ The student choice is the primary determinant of entries in a portfolio. Teacher guides by giving a general structure to the portfolio. Student and teacher may be asked to explain why they selected each entry.
- ◆ Teacher may meet with student regularly to reflect on student growth. (S)he provides input, student reflects on growth, and they talk about agreements, disagreements on evaluations

# How do we decide what to include in the portfolio?

- ◆ Start with early works to provide a basis for comparison of later work
- ◆ Include a variety of works in each category
- ◆ Include works that reflect the learning objectives that would need to be taught
- ◆ Include works that address the criteria that may be used for judging the portfolio
- ◆ Works should be complex (assess many different elements) to enable reflections



# How do we decide what to include in the portfolio?

- ◆ Entries should be selected by student
  - Because in selecting, student has to apply a higher level of understanding/thinking about his own learning
- ◆ Portfolio should be assessed using criteria developed ahead of time

# Where should we store the portfolio?

- ◆ Usually, portfolios should be manageable (not serve as a collection of ALL of students' work) and should be within reach of a student (preferably stored in the classroom)
- ◆ They should be referred to regularly
  - teacher should provide for time to place entries in portfolio

# How is a portfolio organized?

- ◆ It may be organized by concepts, skills, subjects, learning objectives... whatever seems appropriate
- ◆ For example, in writing, it may be organized as different types of writing



# Evaluating entries in portfolio

- ◆ Teacher and student both independently provide evaluation of growth/learning.
- ◆ Entries in portfolio should be evaluated using standards from learning objectives

# How do we evaluate the portfolio?

- ◆ What is important for the students to have learned over 4 months (or 8 months, or 1 unit)?
- ◆ Based on what is important (comes from learning objectives), decide on elements of portfolio to evaluate.
- ◆ We can develop ratings for each element

# How do we evaluate the portfolio?

- For example – scientific thinking can be rated on the following scale:
  - 4 = conclusions are based on hypotheses  
guesses, hypotheses are set based on valid reasons
  - 3 = More than half the conclusions are based on hypotheses....



# Analytical or Holistic?

- ◆ If it's a developmental portfolio, use analytic rating scale
  - E.g,  
<http://www.umes.edu/education/exhibit/docs/PORTFOLIO%20RUBRIC.doc>
  - <http://www.mashell.com/~parr5/techno/content.html>
- ◆ If it's a showcase portfolio, you can use holistic rating scale

No rating scale is perfect. No rubric is perfect. As you use these, you will continue to improve them.

# In evaluating a portfolio, remember to:

- ◆ Share the rubric with students before they work on the portfolio
- ◆ Allow students to reflect on their portfolio, using the rubric
- ◆ Ensure that you have checks for biases (e.g., rate portfolio with another teacher)
- ◆ Rate portfolio without looking at student name
- ◆ When making major decisions based on evaluations, ensure that you use more than one rater and all raters are trained

# In sum...

- ◆ Entries in portfolio must be selected by student
- ◆ Entries are biased toward selecting the best work
- ◆ Reflections are an important part of the portfolio
- ◆ Criteria for evaluating portfolio must be shared with student beforehand
- ◆ Portfolios can be an excellent communication tool between students and (a) teacher; (b) parents; (c ) peers