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ABSTRACT

An overview of teaching portfolios is presented so that principals and other school administrators can make informed choices about their use. In its most basic form, a teaching portfolio is a collection of information about a teacher's practice. It becomes a structured documentary history when it is supported by reflective writing, deliberation, and serious conversation. The contents of teaching portfolios can be as varied as the people who construct them. To ensure that they can be evaluated fairly, there should be clear content standards, and a focus on a few key areas of teaching, rather than the entire curriculum. Requirements for a teaching portfolio should be spelled out clearly so that teachers know the portfolio's objectives. Some examples of teaching portfolios are presented. Their design and use emphasizes the necessity of the following steps in portfolio implementation: (1) define the expectations for teacher performance; (2) clarify the purposes for the portfolio; (3) identify the products for the portfolio; (4) develop the guidelines for portfolio construction; and (5) establish the procedures for portfolio evaluation. (Contains 14 figures and 12 references.) (SLD)

Portfolios in Teacher Evaluation

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Teaching portfolios are an increasingly popular tool for both evaluation and professional development. Portfolios are presently in place in a variety of settings, including in university education programs to foster the professional growth of preservice teachers (Borko, Timmons, & Michaelec, in review), in school districts to reward outstanding practice (Wolf, Lichtenstein, Bartlett, & Hartman, in press), at the state level for license renewal (Lichtenstein, Wolf, Pease, Ruckle, & Campbell, in review), and at the national level to certify accomplished practitioners (The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1989).

Why have educators turned to teaching portfolios? Proponents contend that portfolios present an authentic view of learning and teaching over time, offering a more complete and valid picture of what teachers know and can do (Shulman, 1988; Wolf, 1991; 1996). Moreover, they believe that portfolios promote professional development by providing teachers with a structure and process for documenting and reflecting on their practice.

While portfolios have many attractive features, however, they have significant liabilities as well. They can be time-consuming to construct, cumbersome to store, and difficult to score. Nevertheless, the potential of portfolios for addressing assessment needs as well as advancing professional learning suggests that administrators should consider a role for teacher portfolios in their school-based evaluation and staff development programs.

In this chapter we provide principals and other school administrators with an overview of teaching portfolios so that they can make informed choices about their use. We begin by defining a teaching portfolio and discussing issues related to their design. Next, we present examples from actual teaching portfolios. We conclude by offering recommendations for putting portfolios into practice.

What is a teaching portfolio?

In its most basic form, a teaching portfolio is a collection of information about a teacher's practice. While portfolios can come in many different shapes and sizes, in practice they often take the form of a scrapbook filled with photographs of classroom life, along with affectionate notes from students and parents. While this kind of portfolio may be eye-catching and heart-warming, it does not effectively advance either evaluation or professional development goals.

The problem with portfolios such as these is that they are not connected to professional content standards that describe what teachers should know and be able to do, nor are they explicitly linked to a teacher's individual teaching philosophy or the school improvement plan. Additionally, these types of portfolios often lack examples of student or teacher work that illustrate the ways in which the teacher has acted on the professional content standards and their philosophies and goals. Moreover, there is no explicit reflection on the teaching and learning portrayed in the portfolio, nor explanation of the context in which these events occurred. Furthermore, these portfolios are typically constructed without input by colleagues.

What might be a more productive vision for portfolios? Drawing on the work of Lee Shulman (1992), we offer the following (see Figure 1):

> *A teaching portfolio is the structured documentary history of a carefully selected set of coached or mentored accomplishments, substantiated by samples of student work, and fully realized only through reflective writing, deliberation, and serious conversation.*

Figure 1
Key Features of a Teaching Portfolio

- A portfolio should be *structured* around sound professional content standards, and individual and school goals;
- A portfolio should contain *carefully selected examples of both student and teacher work* that illustrate key features of a teacher's practice;
- The contents of a portfolio should be framed by *captions* and written *commentaries* that explain and reflect on the contents of the portfolio;
- A portfolio should be *a mentored or coached experience*, in which the portfolio is used as a basis for ongoing professional conversations with colleagues and supervisors.

What purposes might a teaching portfolio serve?

There are three main purposes for preparing a teaching portfolio: evaluation, enhancement, and employment (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
Purposes for Portfolios

- Address evaluation requirements
- Advance professional growth
- Aid in employment searches

While a carefully conceptualized portfolio can address all of these to some degree, each purpose suggests somewhat different design considerations. Portfolios that are used primarily for evaluation, for example, require greater structure than those that primarily serve professional growth. With the evaluation portfolio, *fairness* is a chief concern. Consistency in the portfolio requirements and evaluation process best advances this goal. With the professional development portfolio, however, *ownership* of the learning

process is a major concern. Individual customization of the portfolio best serves this goal. For an evaluation portfolio, for example, the structure and contents of the portfolio should be specified in advance so that the requirements for completing the portfolio are clear and the evaluation process is consistent. On the other hand, for a professional development portfolio, allowing each individual latitude in choosing the focus and format of the portfolio is likely to increase learning because the portfolio will have been adapted to each teacher's specific needs and goals.

A portfolio used in employment searches has still different forces shaping it. In all likelihood, those doing the hiring will have limited time to review the portfolio, and they will be strongly affected by their general impressions. In this situation, as Lichtenstein (in review) has found in his interviews with administrators, the portfolio author needs to pay greater attention to presentation issues, such as the attractiveness of the portfolio and the accessibility of the information.

While we distinguish among these three types of portfolios in terms of their primary purposes to highlight the trade-offs inherent in each, we want to emphasize that a single portfolio can advance all three goals if those responsible for conceptualizing the portfolio are clear about their purposes and thoughtful in their design.

What might go into a teaching portfolio?

The contents of teaching portfolios can be as varied as the people who construct them. A portfolio could include samples of student and teacher work, such as photographs of class projects, lesson plans, student assessments, and evidence of professional activities. In addition, a portfolio might also include a variety of information such as letters of recommendation from parents, evaluations from supervisors, and even teaching credentials and college transcripts. While any number of these items might be desirable, which are essential? We recommend that the items listed in Figure 3 should be included in every portfolio, regardless of its primary purpose.

Figure 3
Suggested Contents of a Teaching Portfolio

- A *statement of philosophy or teaching goals;*
- Samples of *teacher work,* such as lesson plans and student assessments;
- Samples of *student work,* such as reading logs and student projects;
- *Captions* that briefly explain the work samples;
- *Commentaries* that reflect on the teaching and learning documented in the portfolio.

In addition to the samples of student and teacher work, two other types of information are essential: captions and commentaries. Captions provide contextual information about each item in the portfolio (see Figure 4 for an example from the Colorado Department of Education). Commentaries are written accounts that elaborate on and interpret the portfolio contents.

Figure 4
Portfolio Caption
Colorado Department of Education

Title of Evidence: _____

Date Created: _____

Educator's Name: _____

Description of context in which evidence was collected: _____

_____

Interpretation: _____

_____

Additional Comments: _____

In essence, then, a portfolio should be framed by a sound philosophy that is consistent with professional expectations and school goals, illustrated through samples of student and teacher work, and explained through captions and commentaries.

Depending upon the purposes for the portfolio, however, additional information might be warranted. For example, employment portfolios should probably contain a resume, while evaluation portfolios might include previous evaluations. While these additional contents will vary across different settings based on individual and school needs, we believe that the contents described above are essential ingredients for all portfolios.

How might the portfolio process unfold?

Teachers might be given the steps listed in Figure 5 as a guide in building their portfolios.

Figure 5
Suggest Steps for Building a Portfolio

- Prepare a philosophy statement;
- Set goals for the portfolio in consultation with a supervisor;
- Collect a variety of student and teacher work samples;
- Discuss the work samples with colleagues at regular intervals;
- Organize and caption the portfolio contents;
- Write reflective commentaries about the teaching and learning documented in the portfolio;
- Submit completed portfolio to supervisor for review;
- Receive feedback from supervisor;
- Set new goals in light of feedback.

In this scenario, teachers and their supervisors meet to set the goals and expectations for the portfolio. Throughout the school year, teachers gather a variety of work samples for possible inclusion in their portfolios. At regular intervals, teachers use these artifacts as departure points for discussions with colleagues about their teaching. When they are ready to submit their completed portfolios, teachers organize and caption the portfolio contents, and explain its significance in written commentaries. Finally, the portfolio is formally evaluated by the school principal or supervisor, who rates the portfolio performance and provides written, and possibly oral, feedback to the teacher. Teachers then set new goals in light of what they have learned. While not a part of the portfolio process *per se*, it is assumed that teachers will be constantly *acting* on what they are learning to improve their practice and their students' learning.

How should a teaching portfolio be evaluated?

Portfolios are exciting as assessment tools because they allow teachers to represent the complexities and individuality of their teaching in great detail. They are problematic, however, for the very same reasons. Each portfolio is thick and unique, making evaluation a daunting task.

Ensuring that the evaluation process is manageable and fair requires putting several pieces into place in advance, including identifying sound content and performance standards for teachers, specifying the requirements for constructing the portfolio, and designing an efficient evaluation system. Taking these steps will increase the likelihood that the evaluation system will successfully meet the essential requirements of validity, reliability, and utility (Stronge & Helm, 1991).

Identifying Content and Performance Standards. The evaluation of a teacher's portfolio should be based on clear content standards (what teachers should know and be able to do) and performance standards (how well they should know and be able to do it). These standards should be spelled out in advance, providing teachers with clear targets for their performance. These standards serve to guide teachers in the construction of their portfolios as well as reviewers in their evaluations.

We recommend identifying a small set of content standards (about three to seven), with each of these standards composed of several statements that clarify the meaning of that standard. For example, the Douglas County School District in Colorado has three content standards for teachers (e.g., Assessment and Instruction) for evaluating a teacher's performance, each of which is explained with five statements that operationally define the standard (see Figure 6).

Figure 6:
Professional Content Standards for Teachers
Douglas County School District, Colorado

Assessment and Instruction

Outstanding Educators:

- Act on the belief that all students can learn
- Recognize, value, and adjust for individual differences, while maintaining an in-depth understanding of how students develop and learn
- Implement a variety of instructional strategies
- Motivate and engage students
- Draw on multiple strategies for assessing student learning and development, and clearly communicate assessment results to students and parents

Content and Pedagogy

Outstanding Educators:

- Know the subjects they teach
- Know how to teach those subjects to students
- Know how subjects are related to one another across the curriculum
- Can relate the subjects they teach to real world applications
- Are reflective practitioners who facilitate professional growth through self-assessment, and whose knowledge is based on both practical experience and professional literature

Collaboration and Partnership

Outstanding Educators:

- Collaborate with other school professionals
- Work effectively with parents and community
- Draw on school and community resources to benefit students
- Contribute to the school, community, and profession in a variety of ways
- Respect diverse individuals and groups

Along with setting content standards, performance standards need to be established as well. Performance standards address the question of "How good is good enough?" What level of performance is required for an "outstanding" designation, for example? Are the expectations different for beginning and experienced teachers? Determining these levels may take several exploratory efforts. During the development of these performance levels, we suggest that the emphasis of the portfolio process should be on professional growth rather than on high-stakes evaluation.

How many performance levels are desirable? Ratings can vary from satisfactory/unsatisfactory to a scale with multiple designations, such as accomplished/proficient/needs improvement. Ratings can be made at the overall performance level or for each of the content standards. We recommend a rating system that is as simple as possible to avoid the problems associated with making many fine (and probably not supportable) distinctions about a portfolio performance. Feedback to teachers, however, should be detailed and linked to the information in the portfolio so that teachers have a clear understanding of the specific strengths and weaknesses in their performance as well as the reasons for their ratings.

Designing the Portfolio. To help ensure that the portfolio construction and review process is manageable, a portfolio should be focused on a few key areas of teaching rather than the entire curriculum, and be slender in size rather than thick as a metropolitan phone book. For example, an elementary school teacher might address aspects of only two content areas, such as mathematics and art, and link the two through a similar topic, such as patterns. Along the same lines, a secondary school teacher might choose two broad topics within his or her subject matter. For example, a middle school English teacher might document aspects of his or her writing instruction and literature discussions over a semester, while a high school American history teacher might focus on units on the American Revolution and the Civil Rights movement.

An alternative approach to focusing on a specific topic or subject matter might be for teachers at any level to conduct small-scale case studies on three diverse learners in their classrooms in which they investigate the students'

learning across a variety of content areas and contexts. The point here is that while the focus for the portfolio can productively vary, trying to address too broad of a scope within a single portfolio is more often a problem than too narrow of one.

"Less is more" not only in terms of breadth of coverage but also in amount of information as well. A carefully selected set of evidence can be used more productively by both teacher and administrator than can a file cabinet full. In any case, a portfolio already contains far more information than is available in most evaluation contexts. But how much is enough?

Five to ten teacher work samples, such as lesson plans and classroom tests, and a similar number of student work samples, such as homework assignments and self-assessments, might be sufficient, assuming they are carefully selected to illustrate their connection to the content standards and portfolio goals. Along with captions for each piece of information, and one or two commentaries of two to three pages in length, the portfolio evaluator has a wide range of information on which to base decisions and feedback.

Another way to make the portfolio construction and evaluation process more manageable and fair is to specify the requirements for the portfolio in advance. This information might be packaged in a "Portfolio Construction Handbook" (see Figure 7). Clarity of the portfolio procedures will allow teachers to spend more time reflecting on their instruction and less on trying to figure out how to "play the portfolio game."

The handbook should include specific information about constructing the portfolio, such as the types and numbers of work samples, the length and structure of written commentaries, and timelines for submitting materials for review by mentors or supervisors. In addition, the handbook should address the evaluation process, including information about who will participate in the review, what additional sources of information might be used, and what options teachers will have for revising or remedying less than proficient performances.

Figure 7
Suggested Contents for a Portfolio Construction Handbook

- Purposes for the portfolio
- Procedures for constructing the portfolio
- Timeline for completion and evaluation of the portfolio
- List of required and/or suggested portfolio contents
- Evaluation process
- Evaluation criteria (content and performance standards)
- Feedback and appeals process

Evaluating the Contents. Given the challenge of comprehensively reviewing a thick set of documents and materials, we recommend that administrators follow a systematic review process, such as the one described in Figure 8.

Figure 8
Evaluating a Teaching Portfolio

- Read the entire portfolio to get a sense of the overall performance;
- Review the portfolio in light of the content standards and teacher goals;
- Take notes about significant pieces of information in the portfolio;
- Assign a rating for the portfolio (if appropriate);
- Provide feedback to the teacher.

It is important that the reviewer examine the portfolio for each of the content standards. This can best be achieved by reading the entire portfolio first, then by reviewing the portfolio with each standard as a separate lens. During these

cycles through the portfolio, the reviewer should note significant sources of evidence that will be used in the evaluation and as feedback to the teacher.

Additionally, the reviewer should keep the teacher's goals for the portfolio in mind. A portfolio, while a thick collection of information, is still a thin slice of one's entire performance as a teacher. Thus, it is unrealistic to expect teachers to represent all that they know and do within a single portfolio. A teacher's goals for the portfolio, which have been set in consultation with a supervisor, should provide the focus for the evaluation.

Whether the portfolio actually receives a rating (e.g., exemplary, proficient, unsatisfactory) will depend on the purposes of the program. In most cases, it may be unnecessary, and even undesirable, to rate the portfolio. Assigning a score to the portfolio may focus conversations among the teachers, and between the teacher and administrator, on scores rather than on issues of teaching effectiveness. To offset this possibly, we recommend basing the evaluation on a variety of evidence such as direct observations, parent feedback, student achievement, along with the teacher-constructed portfolio. Using multiple measures also helps to ally the concern voiced by some administrators and teachers that a teacher might be an excellent portfolio maker but a poor teacher. While we believe that this concern is exaggerated, the perception itself is enough to undermine the credibility of the process. Hence, to offset the possibility of an ineffective teacher receiving a high rating, as well as to strengthen the credibility of the portfolio process, drawing on multiple sources of information beyond the portfolio in evaluating a teacher is recommended.

While specific scores should probably not be assigned to a portfolio, detailed feedback is critical. Ideally, feedback on the portfolio should be presented in both written and oral form. However, time constraints may limit the amount of energy that administrators can devote to the feedback process. It is important to remember that feedback from the administrator is not the only, or even the primary, source of information for the teacher about his or her practice. Regular portfolio-based conversations among teachers should be an integral and ongoing feature of the portfolio process.

In the previous section we discussed a number of issues in the design and implementation of teaching portfolios. In the next section, we present actual examples of teacher portfolios.

Examples from Teaching Portfolios

In this section, we present examples from two teachers' portfolios. The first set of examples are from Nancy Hall, a first grade teacher in a preservice education program at the University of Denver in Colorado. Preservice teachers at the University of Denver are required to prepare portfolios as part of their professional preparation program. The second set of examples comes from Janet Junkin, an experienced middle school social studies teacher in the Douglas County School District in Colorado who submitted a portfolio to qualify for the district's outstanding teacher program. Teachers in the Douglas County School District are invited to prepare portfolios in an attempt to qualify for a designation of outstanding and a one thousand dollar bonus for that school year.

Elementary School Teacher Portfolio Example

Nancy Hall, a first grade preservice teacher at the University of Denver, placed the table of contents shown in Figure 9 in her portfolio:

Figure 9
Portfolio Table of Contents

Section I
Resume
Letters of Recommendation
Educational Philosophy

Section II
Unit Plan Overview
Lesson Plan
Reflective Summary
Artifacts

Section III
Professional Development Plan
Professional Development Expertise

The first section of her portfolio provides background information about her experiences and perspectives. The second section presents direct evidence of her teaching. The third section describes her future professional development plans and evidence of her professional expertise in one area of education (cooperative learning).

In the one-page statement of her philosophy of education, she described her academic instruction in the following way:

> My approach to teaching will incorporate the integration of the four academic disciplines (math, social studies, science, and language arts), as well as the arts. For example, study of the tropical rain forest would include learning about the kinds of trees, animals, and weather patterns that are particular to those regions. The height of the jungle trees could be compared to the indigenous trees of Colorado. The word "tropical" would generate a geography lesson. There is [abundant] literature related to the rain forest that could lead to a discussion on social issues and ecology. Through art projects the classroom could be transformed into a multi-rain forest. Our daily lives are interconnected with things around us, and it makes sense that we approach education in the same manner.

Nancy Hall also incorporated several overviews of a unit that she taught on the rain forest. One overview was presented in the form of a calendar, with each day's activities briefly summarized. In another overview, she described each week's focus in greater detail. Here is her description of week three's events:

> This week the class will learn about biodiversity and why it's important. We will begin the study of rain forest animals and feature a different animal each day. The student will learn about the characteristics, classification, habits, and habitat of each animal. This week we will study the toucan, hummingbird, sloth and armadillo. I will incorporate [information about] the animals in the math journal problems.

She also included a lesson plan from the unit, examples of student work, assessments from the students about the value of the unit, and the university supervisor's visitation report on the lesson documented in the portfolio.

Nancy Hall then offered a one-page reflective summary of her lesson on the monkey. She noted the following strengths and weaknesses in her instruction:

> I felt that the lesson on the monkey went particularly well. It was successful because of the following reasons: the information itself was of interest and I planned two activities which require student participation. To demonstrate the sensitivity of finger tips and the precision grip that primates use, I blindfolded [a student] and had him pick up and identify beans, nuts, and raisins. I chose a few students to pantomime phrases I had written down to prove that communication is achieved through means other than words and that monkeys have this capacity. I have found interactive lessons to be rewarding and plan to involve the students in demonstrations of various concepts whenever possible.
>
> I didn't feel that the student surveys I provided gave an accurate picture of what the students thought about the lesson. I would not repeat the survey assessment. I felt that a better evaluation of the lesson were the reactions and information generated during the "think, pair, share." As the students verbalized information it was clear that they had listened, learned, and enjoyed the lesson.

Middle School Teacher Portfolio Example

Janet Junkin, a middle school social studies teacher in Douglas County School District in Colorado prepared a portfolio for the district's "Outstanding Teacher Program." In her portfolio, she explained why she believed her performance met the district's criteria for outstanding for each of the three content standards. In this excerpt, she addresses the content standard "Collaboration and Partnership."

> I believe that my performance is outstanding in the area of collaboration and partnership because I believe and model the philosophy, "It takes a whole village to raise a child." Quality education occurs when the school staff, parents, and community contribute to this process as a team....
>
> I visit my core students in their elective classes throughout the year for a variety of reasons. I enjoy seeing "my kids" in another setting. I value our elective program and I want the students to know this. This provides an avenue for collaboration with other teachers to benefit my students....
>
> Recruiting and working with parent volunteers through the magazine sale, geography bee, student council, team field trips, community service projects, and the cruise is a very positive experience for me and has accomplished many things to benefit our students....
>
> I draw on the community and private sector through phone calls, letters, and personal contacts.... These efforts provide my students with additional classroom resources as well as support for school-wide events.

To support her claim of outstanding performance in the area of "Content and Pedagogy," for example, Janet Junkin included information associated with a unit that she taught on Western Europe. In one activity, she asked the students to prepare an orientation brochure for American families who were about to move to Western Europe. Instructions that she gave to the students, which were documented in her portfolio, included the following:

> You work for a major American corporation that is expanding its business overseas...to Western Europe. You have been promoted to the position of Director of Expatriate Orientation. You are to provide training and information for FAMILIES about to move overseas.

She asked the students to begin the assignment by first identifying the questions that they might address in the orientation brochure.

- Three questions YOU might ask if you found out your family was moving overseas.
- Three questions your SIBLING might want answered.
- Three questions one of your PARENTS might want answered.

As evidence of what students had learned, she included one student's brochure called, "A Traveler's Guide to France" in her portfolio. The brochure gave information about topics such as attractions, climate, and holidays.

In addition to a variety of work samples from herself and her students, Janet Junkin also included surveys from students and their parents about her effectiveness as a teacher. These surveys, which were required for all teachers participating in the Outstanding Teacher Program, were mailed to 20 different families. The surveys were designed to be parallel to the content standards for the district's teachers. Excerpts from one family's response to the 13 question survey is presented in Figure 10.

Figure 10
Client Survey
Douglas County School District

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Observed
1. This teacher believes that ALL students can learn.	SA	A	SD	D	NO
Comments: *She offers extra opportunities and experiences for students such as the Geography Bee.*					
2. This teacher makes adjustments for individual differences among students.	SA	A	SD	D	NO
Comments: *They can choose what they want to do on projects.*					
3. This teacher uses a variety of strategies to meet my child's needs.	SA	A	SD	D	NO
Comments: *There are creative projects that help them learn.*					

These surveys are anonymously returned directly to the teachers, who then include a commentary in their portfolios about what they learned from the surveys. In her one-page reflections on the client surveys, Janet Junkin stated that she learned the following:

> My clients value guest speakers and a focus on current events. Biweekly progress reports are very time consuming, but based on these surveys they are a very successful form of communication with my clients.

After she turned in her portfolio to her administrator, Janet Junkin received an overall rating as well as written feedback from her administrator about aspects of her performance for each of the district's three content standards (see Figure 11 for an example for one of the standards).

Figure 11
Administrator Feedback on Janet Junkin's Portfolio

Content Standard: Content & Pedagogy

Areas of Strength	*Areas for Growth*
• uses wide variety of techniques • connects to outside experiences • celebrates diversity • plans interdisciplinary units • employs authentic assessment • piloted district standards	• If possible, carry out inter-disciplinary units with core teammates as well as with elective teachers

Based on her portfolio, portions of which were presented in this chapter, Janet Junkin was awarded a designation of "Outstanding."

These examples from the portfolios of Nancy Hall and Janet Junkin were intended to suggest the possibilities for what might be included in a portfolio. Ultimately, the contents that are selected will vary depending upon the purposes for the portfolio, expectations for teacher performance, school improvement plans, and individual teachers' interests and needs.

Putting Portfolios into Practice

In the following section we offer suggestions for putting portfolios into practice. We propose a series of steps that administrators might follow in introducing portfolios in their school or district, as well as considerations for creating a productive climate for the teachers willing to try out portfolios (see Figure 12).

Figure 12
Steps for Putting Portfolios into Practice

Step 1: Define the expectations for teacher performance;

Step 2: Clarify the purposes for the portfolio;

Step 3: Identify the products for the portfolio;

Step 4: Develop the guidelines for portfolio construction;

Step 5: Establish the procedures for portfolio evaluation.

Step 1: Define the expectations for teacher performance in your building or district. Before portfolios are actually introduced, it is critical to first examine the expectations, or content standards, for teachers in your building. What are teachers expected to know and be able to do? Are the expectations for performance different for beginners than they are for experienced teachers? Many good examples of content standards currently exist (see Figure 6, for example), and these can be adapted for use in other settings.

Step 2: Clarify the purposes for the portfolio. Decisions about the purposes of the portfolio will influence issues related to the portfolio design, construction, and evaluation. If the primary aim of the portfolio is for *evaluation*, then the portfolio process should be similar for all participants; otherwise, administrators may not be able to evaluate the portfolios in a fair and consistent fashion. However, a portfolio that is intended primarily for *professional development* purposes may be completely different from teacher to teacher in format and focus. In this instance, the administrator's primary responsibility is not to evaluate the portfolio, but to provide feedback to the portfolio owner. Clarity about these purposes will help prevent the portfolio process from becoming a paper chase for teachers or an evaluation nightmare for administrators.

Step 3: Identify the products for the portfolio. While many different products could be productively placed in a portfolio, requiring (or recommending)

certain types of information will allow teachers to discuss their instruction with each other more easily and will enable administrators to evaluate the portfolio more efficiently. What types of information should be included in a portfolio? We offer a general list in Figure 3, but an even more detailed set of products and specifications is recommended. For example, a school or district might require that all teachers submit a one page narrative overview of three consecutive lessons, and a two-page lesson plan for the second lesson in the series. Again, it is worth mentioning that if the portfolio is not being used for evaluation, then the need for consistency in the type and number of portfolio products is much less critical.

As the portfolio products are being identified, it is important to link the products to the expectations, or content standards, for teachers. The question to be answered, then, is "What kinds of information in a portfolio can best provide insights into a teacher's performance for a particular standard?" A matrix (see Figure 13) is a useful tool for examining the relationship between the portfolio products and content standards. For example, for what content standards might the following portfolio products--a lesson plan, student assessments, and parent feedback--provide evidence?

Figure 13
Matrix of Content Standards by Portfolio Contents

	Lesson Plan	Student Assessments	Parent Feedback
Assessment & Instruction	X	X	
Content & Pedagogy	X		X
Collaboration & Partnership			X

Step 4: Develop the guidelines for the portfolio construction process;
It is important to establish guidelines for portfolio construction so that teachers will have to spend as little time as possible thinking about portfolio logistics and as much time as possible considering issues of teaching and learning. These guidelines should discuss information such as the timeline for completing the portfolio, the required or recommended contents, specifications for preparing information (e.g., date and caption each piece of information), and the evaluation process. This information might be presented in a handbook (see Figure 7) or in a series of one-page handouts.

Step 5: Establish the procedures for evaluating the portfolio.
In evaluating the portfolio performance, a number of issues need to be addressed. Who will evaluate the portfolio--the principal, a trusted peer, a committee? How will the information be used--as part of an individual evaluation, for self-assessment, for discussion about school goals? What kind of feedback will teachers receive--scores, written comments, a conference with a supervisor? Teacher confidence in the program will be greatly enhanced if evaluation-related decisions such as these are made well in advance.

Introducing Portfolios in Your School
Along with the steps described above, the following considerations should be kept in mind as portfolios are being introduced in a school or district (see Figure 14).

Figure 14
Considerations in Introducing Portfolios

- Enlist volunteers;
- Start small;
- Keep the risk low;
- Encourage portfolio-based conversations;
- Use multiple measures of evaluation.

Enlist volunteers. Identify a core group of enthusiastic volunteers who are willing to be carpenters constructing their own portfolios at the same time that they are architects building the overall program. These teachers, then, will not only be trying out the process by preparing their own portfolios, but they will also take leadership roles in tasks such as identifying the content standards and developing the portfolio procedures. Many new ideas in education fail not because the concept is flawed, but because they did not have teacher input or buy-in.

Start small. Begin by having teachers focus on only a single content standard or school goal, or only on a few types of portfolio products. Portfolios can quickly become unmanageable if a lot of information is collected without clear purposes and procedures for their organization and use. After the initial design issues have been worked out, and portfolios have been successfully introduced, then the focus of the portfolio can be expanded to more content standards or multiple goals or a greater variety of information.

Keep the risk low. The portfolio pioneers should feel confident that the work that they do will, at a minimum, have no negative consequences. Clarity about the agenda of the program and the uses for the portfolios will help to establish an atmosphere of trust. Moreover, not only should the risk remain low, but providing incentives for teachers, such as release days or bonuses, will increase the likelihood of the program taking root.

Encourage portfolio-based conversations. Portfolios provide an opportunity for teachers to work together to foster their professional development and to address difficult problems of practice. Administrators should promote these collaborative interactions through a variety of strategies such as devoting a portion of faculty meetings to portfolio-based conversations or structuring schedules so that teachers have shared planning times. Wolf, Hagerty, and Whinery (1995) offer suggestions for organizing and conducting portfolio-based conversations among teachers.

Use multiple measures of evaluation. Like any assessment approach, portfolios have strengths as well as limitations. They may provide a clear view of a teacher's instructional strategies, for example, but may not give information about that teacher's classroom management practices. Furthermore, portfolios are better at revealing someone's strengths, rather than providing information about their weaknesses. For these reasons, portfolios should be part of an overall evaluation system that might include classroom observations, evidence of student achievement, and client feedback.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we defined the concept of a teaching portfolio and discussed the various forms that portfolios can take. We also provided examples from actual portfolios. Finally, we suggested steps that administrators might take in putting portfolios into practice.

In essence, we believe that all portfolios should contain carefully selected examples of teacher and student work, be framed by commentaries and captions, and brought to life through extended conversations with colleagues and supervisors. We also emphasized that a portfolio's purpose drives many decisions about the specific contents of the portfolio, as well as the process for constructing and evaluating them.

Whether teachers are creating portfolios as part of a school evaluation plan or for their own professional development purposes, we believe that the process of carefully documenting and reflecting on selected aspects of one's practice

enhances performance. Thus, while the purposes for creating portfolios may vary, they all contribute to the same ultimate aim—to advance student learning through the professional development of teachers.

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