

# The Employment Portfolio

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For nearly twenty years the educational community has utilized portfolios as a method of monitoring the growth and development of candidates earning certification as educators and as school leaders. Professors in the field of education have encouraged their students to share these portfolios with public school hiring officials. There is a belief by some individuals in the field that these documents provide evidence of a candidate's skills, knowledge, and personal characteristics. This article (1) examines the use of the employment portfolio, (2) compares and contrasts the views of professors in the field of education and hiring officials, and (3) offers suggestions for new teachers and school leaders on how to construct an employment portfolio which will be recognized and applauded by prospective employers.

## Introduction

This study was conducted in an effort to improve the likelihood that new teachers and school leaders will be prepared to be competitive candidates when applying for positions in public schools in the United States. The literature and my observations have indicated that many professors in the field of education have been advising graduates to use portfolios as evidence that the candidate is qualified to become employed. This study examined this assumption and compared the views of professors to the views of hiring officials in public schools. The focus was on the usefulness of portfolios in the hiring process and the type of portfolios hiring officials are willing to consider when they are selecting new employees.

## The Portfolio

A portfolio is a collection of documents or artifacts. In finance, a portfolio is a collection of financial products or investments. In the world of art, a portfolio is often a collection of photographs or visual art. In the field of education, a portfolio is an organized presentation of artifacts and documents that demonstrate an individual's skills, knowledge, and abilities. In the field of education, it often contains a collection of materials that explains to the reader how an individual has learned their skills. It also might contain reflections explaining the process experienced by the individual while acquiring this learning. Learning portfolios are widely used in Schools of Education in the United States and have been used recently in Europe (Mansvelder-Longayroux, 2007; Mansvelder-Longayroux 2006; and Tigelaar, 2006).

## Theoretical Framework and Rationale for Study

The theoretical framework that guided the development of this study is that of constructivist learning. Gagnon and Collay (2008) reported, “The work of Dewey, Montessori, Piaget, Bruner, and Vygotsky among others, provide historical precedents for constructivist learning theory.” (p. 2) Dewey suggested that the pragmatic approach calls for us to continually engage in inquiry to improve our practices. Eldridge (2004) commented on Dewey’s approach and indicated,

We are engaged in practices, or ongoing activities. These activities, what Dewey elsewhere terms ‘habits,’ came about to meet some need. Over time they likely will cease to be appropriate to our changing needs. Thus we need to rethink what we are doing, to make sure that there is a match between means and ends. The method whereby we make our practices more intelligent is inquiry. (p. 18)

Furthermore, Eldridge (1998) reported,

The pragmatist proceeds from the basic premise that the human capability of theorizing is integral to intelligent practice. Theory and practice are not separate spheres; rather, theories and distinctions are tools or maps for finding our way in the world. As Dewey put it, there is no question of theory versus practice but rather of intelligent practice versus uninformed, stupid practice . . . (p. 5).

Given the foundational relationship of constructivist learning and Dewey’s work, one may expect that successful constructivist learning will result in improved professional practices.

As this article explains, constructivist learning has greatly influenced professors in the field of education who have adopted the practice of having candidates create exhibits of their work as a way of reporting on the development of their skills and knowledge, as well as, providing the candidate with the opportunity to reflect on this process. A review of the literature indicates that the practice of having candidates create learning portfolios has received praise because creating these artifacts is viewed as a bridge that can assist students in constructing knowledge and demonstrating this knowledge. Gagnon and Collay (2004) categorized the learning portfolio as evidence of (1) a candidate’s knowledge and (2) reflection of the process the candidate experienced gaining this knowledge.

However, these learning portfolios have also been used as a method of providing prospective employers with evidence of learning. Usually these portfolios are quite large and may contain scores of pages of material.

While employed as a teacher, school principal, and district human resources director, I served on many hiring committees. Later, as I served as professor in the field of education, I wondered if portfolios do indeed also function as evidence of learning to hiring authorities. My own observation was that the typical, large learning portfolio was not considered to be of value by those serving on hiring committees. A follower of Dewey might ask, “Is advising teaching and administrative candidates to take the learning portfolios to interviews an effective practice?” My personal query cen-

tered on those materials and artifacts hiring authorities prefer to see when hiring a new teacher or site administrator.

The literature did not reveal any empirical studies that compared and contrasted the views of professors in the field of education and hiring officials related to the use of portfolios. Nor did I identify literature related to how professors in the field of education might best advise their newly trained practitioners regarding the use of portfolios. It is anticipated that his gap in the literature will be partially bridged by this study.

## The Problem

Anecdotal information indicated that the lengthy learning portfolio students create to demonstrate *how* they learned the state standards as new educators and educational leaders, as well as, their *reflections* on their own transformation, may not be the same kind of information potential employers want or need to determine the candidate's skills, knowledge, and personal characteristics. Informal discussions with public school hiring committees indicated that the typical learning portfolio may be too long and may contain information on the student's learning process that is not germane to a hiring decision. In addition, employers have encountered candidates who have an unrealistic expectation on how much time is available during an interview to review their portfolio.

Additional research is necessary to determine if these anecdotal reports from school district hiring officials are accurate, to determine whether employers would like to view an employment portfolio, and to determine what they would like to see in a portfolio. With this information, professors in the field of education might be able to effectively prepare newly trained teachers and school leaders for the hiring process.

## Questions in This Study

Two major questions were addressed in this study:

1. Do school hiring officials and professors in the field of education have the same perception as to the purpose and format of the employment portfolio?
2. What are the types of documents or artifacts that school district personnel, responsible for hiring of teachers and administrators, believe will help them make a hiring decision?

## Different Types of Portfolios

Dietz (1995) proposed criteria for portfolios. Many researchers and practitioners have subsequently embraced these. Dietz suggested that portfolios be presented in different formats, depending on the purpose of the portfolio and suggested that portfolios could be divided into four categories: (1) presentation portfolios, (2) working portfolios, (3) learner portfolios, and (4) professional development portfolios.

Dietz (2008, p.2) added to our understanding by defining the process of developing a portfolio, "Creating a leadership portfolio is not just another activity; rather, it is an opportunity to advance goals, develop action plans . . . to provide evidence and outcomes in the context of a professional learning community." Lambert (as cited in Dietz, 2008), perhaps with a nod to Vygotsky's theories that supported the development of constructivist learning, wrote "This participatory process is a vehicle for the systemic design of an engaging, portfolio development journey-for portfolio is a verb more than it is a noun" (p. vii).

Other authors have proposed additional types of portfolios: the professional growth portfolio (Tigelaar, 2004), the credential portfolio (Tigelaar), the assessment portfolio (Wolf & Dietz, 1998), the employment portfolio (Wolf & Dietz), the electronic portfolio, (Seichmer, 2006, Wetzel, 2006, Dixon, 2005), the Web-Based portfolio (2006), the working portfolio (Campbell, 2001), the clinical achievement portfolio used in nursing (Tracy, 2000) and a "portfolio brochure" (Campbell, 2001). All of the literature reviewed mentions one common theme: the nature and structure of the portfolio is tied to its purpose.

## **Three Major Purposes of Portfolios in the Field of Education**

### **The Learning Portfolio**

First, portfolios are a tool for demonstrating that a candidate has met the criteria set out for a teaching or school leadership credential or certification. There are national and state standards that must be met for an individual to become qualified to receive certification. If the portfolio is organized so that its structure is focused, the portfolio can be evaluated using a rubric tied to those standards. Typically credential students are given a structure for the portfolio. Zechmer (2001) reported that there is a large amount of variation as to how much autonomy credential students have in deciding the format, the content, and the type of evidence that is included in their portfolio. This autonomy varies from university to university. Zechmer also reported that some programs allow a very personal, "scrapbook" type of format, in the hopes it will allow credential students to construct their own learning and develop personal reflections around important experiences gained in their credential program and fieldwork. Furthermore, he indicated that some programs are highly structured and candidates have a prescribed amount of evidence to submit for each standard.

### **The Professional Development Portfolio**

The purpose of professional development portfolio is to provide practicing school leaders an opportunity for professional development. Dietz (2008) proposed that school leaders can and should become engaged in a life-long learning process utilizing collaborative peer support, the portfolio process, regular reflection, and self-directed goal setting. In the goal setting process

Dietz suggested that the participant set personal performance benchmarks, perhaps with input from colleagues at a school site, school administrator peers, or supervisors. Dietz and others (Wolf, 1995) also mentioned the importance of taking advantage of Vygotsky's idea of leveraging learning using the constructivist method of collaboration to increase understanding (UC Berkeley, 2008). This peer support in the development and formative assessment of the portfolio has been favorably reported by participants in this type of activity. Tigelaar (2006) indicated, "The meetings with the (peer) coach were highly appreciated; they were particularly enthusiastic about the individual focus and the feedback tailored to their personal situations" (p.375). The professional development portfolio is often organized using the state or national professional standards.

### ***The Employment Portfolio***

The employment portfolio is used as evidence to employers that the candidate possesses the skills, knowledge, and personal characteristics for the position. The literature is meager when it comes to this concept. It is unclear if the portfolios which student teachers and administrative credential students prepared for their professors and/or licensing agencies were originally taken to potential employers because credential students were advised by university professors to take them to interviews or if credential students did this on their own. As a K-12 administrator, I started seeing this kind of portfolio in the late 1990's on a fairly regular basis. In one memorable instance, I had an applicant who did fairly well at her interview and then when it was time for the next candidate, she pulled a three-inch thick portfolio out of her bag and asked if we would like to see it. I told the applicant that if she left her portfolio, we would look at it later and then she could pick it up from our office assistant. It turned out that this was the only copy of her portfolio and she could not risk leaving it with us. The team did not review it and several members wondered aloud about why the candidate brought it.

Zeichner (2001) reported that pre-service candidates believe that the most important reason to have a portfolio is to help obtain employment. He stated: "The credential students' focus on the "showcase" aspects of portfolios and in presenting a favorable image to prospective employers sometimes conflicts with the goal of using the portfolio for . . . assessment and has created tensions between credential students . . . and professors" (p. 618).

There is a great variation in what researchers believe should be part of an employment portfolio. Wolf and Dietz (1998) recommended that . . . portfolios generally contain a resume, certificates and letters of recommendation, a few eye-catching samples of . . . work, and brief reflective comments about . . . philosophy or practices (p.16)." They continued, "The employment portfolio has a slicker, more visually appealing appearance . . . it is more slender than other portfolio (p.19)." Balch (2006) recommended that the candidate for an administrative position present the entire portfolio to a

potential employer, “A reflective, standards-based portfolio is especially helpful to candidates seeking new positions. Such a portfolio can be made available electronically by posting it online, providing it as a CD to a potential employer, or presenting in hard-copy form” (p. v). In addition, Balch explained how to formulate and frame the portfolio by following the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders, including addressing over 160 elements from those standards.

In a study of state school administrators, Moseley (2005, p.64) found that (1) the items most popular with employers who might look at an employment portfolio are items that are normally required as part of the job application: resume, copy of credential, transcripts, and letters of recommendation; and (2) other portfolio items were also of interest to employers, (3) school employers prefer that portfolios be given to the district at the interview stage and not at the time of the initial application and (4) most employers do not want to see case studies, research papers, art projects, audiotapes, and videotapes in the portfolio (p. 67). Unpopular aspects of employment portfolios with employers included (1) they are too unstructured, (2) it takes too long to review a portfolio, (3) the portfolios are too large, and (4) it is too difficult to assess the candidate’s abilities objectively using a portfolio.

In another study conducted by Theel (2001), school hiring officials were asked if they valued the portfolio in the hiring process. After interviewing eighteen school officials, Theel found that the portfolio was not a significant factor in the hiring decision. His subjects indicated that, “Excellent portfolios did not necessarily reflect excellent on-the-job performances” (p. 123). One official said, “I have gone through the portfolios . . . I look at them, but I don’t put much credence in them” (p. 125). Some texts on portfolios recommend that candidates “. . . may wish to add touches of creativity such as pertinent art work . . . and be creative with the cover of your portfolio . . . develop the portfolio around a theme (*such as: the writer is a traveler on a journey*) (Campbell, 2001, p.15). However, Theel (2001), collected comments which indicated some hiring officials to do not value this type of creativity in an employment portfolio. One administrator said, “Portfolios are smoke and mirrors” (p. 224). Another added, “Portfolios are overdone, trite” (p. 221). Perhaps most contrary to the idea of an employment portfolio being an avenue for expressive creativity, one administrator said that she considered portfolios to be, “Glorified Scrapbooks (p. 222).”

Theel (2001) collected suggestions from school officials on how an applicant could improve the portfolio. These suggestion included (1) do not include narratives, be succinct, provide evidence of what kids learn, and (2) include a photo of the candidate working with children (pp. 223–225).

Campbell (2001) suggested that a professional portfolio be streamlined and include the number of artifacts and documents which may be held in a credential student’s learning portfolio, before sharing it with a potential employer. Furthermore, he stated, “A good guideline is to reduce the num-



ber of documents to two for each standard . . . no more than twenty artifacts” (p.53). Campbell did not indicate how this number was derived. Campbell also recommended that the candidate develop a two-page brochure which highlights the main points of the portfolio. However, Campbell’s sample portfolio brochure (pp. 99–100) listed 53 documents, which are in the employment portfolio (not particularly an example of a streamlined collection.) Campbell suggested that the candidate decide ahead of time if s/he is willing to leave the portfolio with the potential employer (p. 67). The implication is that some individuals may elect to show the interviewers the portfolio, but not leave it for a long enough period of time for the interview panel to review it.

In summary, the three types of portfolios commonly used in education: the standards based learning portfolio, the professional development portfolio, and the employment portfolio are very different and have very different purposes. A review of the literature indicated that those who have published on the subject have very different ideas of what should be in a portfolio, particularly in the employment portfolio. There is not a consensus of opinion regarding the contents of the employment portfolio, how long it should be, and how it should be organized. Opinions regarding the size of the employment portfolio range from ten pages to scores of pages of material. There is also little information regarding what professors in the field of education believe should be in an employment portfolio.

## Methodology

### Participants

There were two populations for this study: (1) professors in the field of education and (2) public school hiring officials. These two populations were selected because education professors prepare teacher or school leader candidates and hiring officials select candidates for employment.

The first population was educational professors. A sample of convenience was selected to represent the population. This sample included individuals who voluntarily participated in the survey when they attended the California Council on Teacher Education Regional Conference for professors in the field of education. Of the approximately 120 individuals attending this conference, 61 turned in a questionnaire, which asked them to respond to a series of questions regarding employment portfolios created for the purpose of demonstrating competency to a school employer. The professors returned their questionnaires to one of many boxes located near the exits of the conference rooms. A limitation of this study is that this sample represented only California’s professors in the field of education.

The second population was the hiring officials from all 17,500 public school districts in the United States. A randomly generated sample of 400 school districts was sent a mailed questionnaire that mirrored the questions given to the professors. The envelope that contained the survey was ad-

dressed to “The Person Who is Responsible for Hiring in the School District.” The school officials returned the questionnaires in a self-addressed stamped envelope provided by the researcher. A single mailing of the questionnaire was made, due to fund limitations. A second wave of reminder postcards were mailed one week after the survey was sent.

Of those districts surveyed, 86 returned completed questionnaires. Approximately 65% of the responding hiring officials were superintendents, assistant superintendents, or directors in charge of human resources. The remainder was mostly school principals assigned the responsibility for hiring employees in smaller districts. About 10% of the questionnaires were completed by districts which have over 8000 students and most of the rest of the responding districts have less than 3000 students. Both of these results were to be expected, since this was a random sample and the responses approximately represent of the actual population of small and large districts in the United States (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2008.) Since the literature does not contain a study regarding portfolios that has had a similar targeted focus group as the sample, it is difficult to know if this response rate is sufficient to generalize the results. This is a limitation of the study.

In both cases the questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter which explained the purpose of the study and that participation in the study was optional. Participants were promised confidentiality.

### **Instrumentation**

The research instruments used in the study consisted of two paper surveys. The survey for the professors had 21 items. The survey for the hiring officials had 17 items. A five point Likert scale was used for most of the questions. A preliminary draft of each questionnaire was designed and a panel of experts who were professors of education was asked to review the questionnaire for professors. A panel of experts who were hiring officials were asked to review the questionnaire for that profession. Additionally several professors with an expertise in research design, including one with a Ph.D. in statistics, made several suggestions regarding the format. The logic behind the questionnaires was to gather data which would answer the research questions regarding the type of portfolios these two populations would recommend to newly trained teachers and school leaders. Previously published research on this topic was considered when developing the questionnaire. Once the draft questionnaires were revised, a small sample of professors and hiring officials (who were not part of the final study) completed the questionnaire and offered their comments. These suggestions and comments were helpful in the development of the two questionnaires.

## **Results**

The results in Table 1 show interesting data regarding the perspectives of



**Table 1**  
**Summary of Results: Criteria for Employment Portfolios—**  
**Agree and Strongly Agree.**

<b>Questionnaires used a 5-point Likert.</b> <b>* = Significant</b>	<b>Professors</b>	<b>Hiring Officials</b>
<b>Criteria for Employment Portfolios</b>	<b>% Agree and Strongly Agree</b>	<b>% Agree and Strongly Agree</b>
1. We prefer portfolios be submitted in this format: hard copy (not statistically significant as less than 30 respondents in one of the groups)	52%	77%
2. We prefer portfolios be submitted in this format: electronic	50%*	39%*
3. We believe the best portfolios contain this material from the candidate: samples of work	70%*	79%*
4. We believe the best portfolios contain this material from the candidate: resume	73%*	88%*
5. We believe the best portfolios contain this material from the candidate: photos of candidate demonstrating a skill	45%*	29%*
6. We believe the best portfolios contain this material from the candidate: letters of recommendation	40%*	86%*
7. We believe the best portfolios contain this material from the candidate: philosophy statement	88%*	75%*
8. We believe the best portfolios contain this material from the candidate: reflective statements	89%*	54%*
9. We believe the best portfolios contain this material from the candidate: sections addressing the state or national standards for teachers or administrators	86%*	68%*

professors in the field of education and school hiring officials. A nonpooled t-Test was used to perform a hypothesis test comparing the two population means. The significance level used was 0.05. The data provided sufficient evidence to conclude that there is a difference in mean score between the two populations for the criteria marked with a \*. The raw scores for Likert ratings for Agree and Strongly Agree were combined, in order to simplify the presentation and analysis of the data. Given that some individuals choose more than a single option, for example they selected Agree or Strongly Agree for both number one and number two, the totals for all of the portfolio formats may be larger than 100%.

There are significant differences between what professors in the field of education believe should be in a portfolio and what the employers believe

should be in a portfolio. The traditional application package contains a letter of application (which may touch on one's philosophy), a resume, letters of recommendation, and a copy of the credentials. The responding hiring officials would like to see these documents in an employment portfolio, if one is submitted to the school district. Over three quarters of the responding hiring officials prefer that those submitting a portfolio only provide it in hard copy format. Although 89% of faculty felt that reflective statements were important for the employment portfolio (the highest rating of all items), only 54% of the employers agreed (the second lowest rating of all items.)

The earlier discussion in this article mentioned that many authors have reported that the purpose and function of the portfolio should determine what kind of documents and evidence are included in the portfolio. Candidates may be wise to consider the priorities of the employers when creating a table of contents for the employment portfolio.

Given that over half the employers either never return portfolios or they return portfolios in over four days as indicated in Table 2 below, candidates may wish to consider providing employers with consumable (non-returnable) portfolios. Table 2.

### Additional Findings

The data show that over half of the professors indicated that an employment portfolio should be over twenty pages in length; however, only 20% of hiring officials felt that portfolios over twenty pages in length were useful to in the hiring selection process. The data also indicate that only 5% of all hiring officials *require* that a teacher or school leader applicant provide an employment portfolio.

Respondents were offered an opportunity to add their comments to the questionnaire. The following comments are a compilation of all of the comments, paraphrased for the reader.

**Table 2**  
Summary of Hiring Officials' Return of Portfolios—  
Agree and Strongly Agree.

Return of Portfolios	District Officials
	% Agree and Strongly Agree
We return portfolios to applicants on the same day	38%
We return portfolios to applicants in 2–3 days	8%
We return portfolios to applicants in 4 or more days	20%
We never return portfolios	32%

### **Comments from Professors**

I am a professor, who is a former assistant superintendent of personnel/human resources. In over a decade, I received perhaps four or five portfolios. The problem with portfolios is the content deals with the student's coursework and student experiences, which is fine, but does not provide a perspective of the manner in which a student would "fit" into an organization . . . the employer wants to determine which candidate is best suited to the school and the selection criteria that deals with the *school or districts needs*, which are more or less not reflected in the portfolio content.

Eight respondents indicated that portfolios take too much time to create and review and 22 respondents indicated that portfolios help demonstrate a student's reflections and growth.

### **Comments from hiring officials:**

It was suggested by hiring officials that portfolios should include (1) credentials, (2) a DVD of applicants demonstrating a skill, (3) documentation which demonstrates that the applicant is highly qualified according to the No Child Left Behind Act, (4) proof that the qualifications in the job description have been met, (5) evidence that the applicant can perform the job and (6) information that does not exceed 15 pages. Three respondents indicated that the candidates' transcripts should be included; whereas another preferred interviews to portfolios because of their ability to see how an applicant thinks on her feet thus determining if she is a good match for a particular district.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The theoretical framework for this study was based on the ideas of constructivism and pragmatism. The purpose was to provide students with learning experiences that allow them to construct knowledge and to be effective practitioners. As professors in the field of education, we would like to give them the best possible instruction to prepare them to work as teachers and school leaders. We also want our capable students to find gainful employment. The answer to the research questions addressed in this study will assist us in these important tasks.

Two questions were addressed in this study.

*Question 1:* Do school hiring officials and professors in the field of education have the same perception as to the purpose and format of the employment portfolio?

*Conclusion:* No, there are significant differences in the way administrators and professors view the employment portfolio. Generally, professors in the field of education appear to view the employment portfolio as an extension of the learning portfolio and that its earlier university functions of supporting the students' learning, collaboration, and assessment while participating in the credential program will also serve the employers' needs.

However, employers generally see the employment portfolio as an enhanced version of the application packet. The enhancement employers are most interested in seeing will show how the applicant will help meet the needs of the district. A candidate's reflections and work samples are not as relevant as letters from qualified individuals who can attest to the candidate's skills, resumes which list specific accomplishments, and most importantly an interview in which the candidate showcases the skills, knowledge, and abilities which the district has so carefully outlined in the job description.

*Question 2:* For school hiring officials who are willing to review an employment portfolio, what are the types of documents or artifacts they believe will help them make a hiring decision?

*Conclusion:* The data show that only 5% of school hiring officials require an employment portfolio. However if a candidate elects to share a portfolio, over half of the school hiring officials would be interested in seeing a resume, letters of recommendation, a philosophy statement, reflection, and information addressing the state or national standards. On the other hand, hiring officials also commented on the need to keep the portfolio small, no more than 10 to 20 pages in length.

### **Implications for Educational Programs and Applicants to Public School Districts**

The following suggestions are made for candidates leaving education programs and seeking positions in public schools:

Refrain from submitting a large learning portfolio or a professional development portfolio to a potential employer. These portfolios focus on how one learns and in an employment portfolio districts are seeking information regarding your skills and experience. An employment portfolio is considered an enhancement to the cover letter, application forms, and placement packet. The placement packet usually contains items 1–4 listed below.

Based on a review of the literature and this study, the following items should be considered for inclusion in an employment portfolio:

1. A cover page with your name, the position, and your contact information. Always include several phone numbers which will allow you to be reached at any time of the year, including during the summer. Consider putting your portfolio behind just one hard cover (60 pound paper) and use just one top left corner staple. Documents in plastic document protector sleeves increase the size of the portfolio and are unnecessary. Unlike other types of portfolios, the employment portfolio has a short lifespan.
2. A copy of your resume. Use the skill words which tie to the qualifications listed in the job description. Include actual accomplishments related to how you worked to improve student learning for all students.
3. A copy of 3 to 5 letters of recommendation from your current supervisor,

- a former supervisor, and perhaps a colleague. Optional: a fourth or fifth letter from a professor and from a credential fieldwork supervisor.
4. Credentials or certificates.
  5. Transcripts from colleges with your degrees and credentials if your grades are above average. Date of birth should not be included.
  6. A one-page statement of your philosophy, which is in alignment with the district's stated mission and culture (if it is not in alignment, do not apply for the position.)
  7. If your employment portfolio is no longer than 10 pages, consider adding another page or two with a sample of your work. For example one might include (a) a letter in the home languages of parents from your school when you have invited families to become part of your school's decision-making process, (b) a photo of you working with a diverse student/parent group and (c) an article you wrote for your local paper, sharing the success of your intervention program to improve the learning of students and close the achievement gap.
  8. This is a business document, do not include any material which some of the hiring panel members may consider to be overly creative, artistic or "cute."
  9. Each portfolio should be tailored for each position. Ask the human resources department if they have any guidelines on submitting portfolios. Read the district information at their website and other public websites, including: their vision, their disaggregated data on test scores, published articles about their efforts to improve their schools, and their demographic of students, families, and employees.
  10. Bring one or two consumable employment portfolios to the interview and do not be concerned with getting them back. Never put an original document in a portfolio that you are going to leave with the district.
  11. Consider creating a website or a CD with your portfolios' materials. Most employers indicate they do not need an electronic copy of the portfolio, but providing both formats shows you know how to use technology. Test the electronic version to be sure it will actually open.
  12. Over 70% of hiring officials do not wish to see photographs. If your objective is a position which requires a skill that you can only demonstrate with a video, then consider this option. Provide the employer with copies of signed releases from all of those visible in the video or DVD.

There is evidence that some school hiring officials will give serious consideration to employment portfolios, if they are prepared with the purpose in mind of providing the employer with evidence that the applicant has met the qualifications contained in the job description/announcement. To be a competitive job applicant, the candidate should remember that the focus should be on meeting the needs of the employer and not on honoring work previously collected for assessment or professional development purposes.

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