

Learning Portfolios:  
Reflective Practice for Improving Student Learning

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**Objectives**

Engaging students not only in collecting selected samples of their work for assessment, evaluation, and career development but also in continuous reflection about such work and about the process of developmental learning is a powerful complement to traditional measures of student achievement. The portfolio approach to gauging student learning—while not entirely new in higher education—is yet a compelling and widely diverse method of recording intellectual growth and, importantly, of involving students in a higher-order, critically reflective process that enriches and refines their educational experience, helping to make them more aware of their own learning at more sophisticated levels.

This workshop will offer both a foundation for the value of reflective practice in student learning and a variety of practical applications of print and electronic learning portfolios from across disciplines and institutional programs. The underlying assumption of the session is that the deep value of portfolios in improving student learning resides in engaging students not just in collecting representative samples of their work for assessment, evaluation, or career preparation but in addressing critically stimulating questions such as *what* one has learned; *how* was it learned; *when* was it learned and how does it fit into a comprehensive, continual *plan for learning*; *what difference* has the learning made in one's intellectual, personal, and ethical development; and *why* was it valuable to learn at all. Exploring existing best-practice fundamentals, models, and new ideas through interactive conversation and resource sharing are

key objectives of the workshop.

### **Activities**

We will combine presentation of information about portfolio development, learning theories that support the value of reflective practice, and diverse models with active discussion of successful uses of portfolio use in participants' own experiences and contexts. Participants will be encouraged to share both successes and challenges in creating learning portfolio projects for a variety of purposes. We will address several fundamental questions. How have items collected in a portfolio contributed to higher-order learning? What has the student learned from the process of generating the work? How does the work fit into a larger framework of learning which goes beyond simply completing assignments? Why was the work valuable in the student's overall intellectual development? But we will also examine practical issues of developing, assessing, and archiving of learning portfolios. The workshop is structured to encourage active conversation and sharing of ideas and resources in individual reflections and small-group discussions and exercises.

### **References/Resources**

#### **Print:**

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- Schön, D.(1983).*The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. NY:Basic Books.
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- Yancey, K.B.,& Weiser, I. (Eds.), *Situating portfolios: Four perspectives*. Logan: Utah State UP.
- Zubizarreta, J. (2003). *The learning portfolio: Reflective practice for improving student learning*. Bolton: Anker.

**Web:**

AAHE electronic portolio site: <http://ctl.du.edu/portfolioclearinghouse/index.cfm>.

Albion College, digital portfolio: <http://www.albion.edu/digitalportfolio>.

Alverno College Diagnostic Digital Portfolio: <http://ddp.alverno.edu/>.

Barrett, Helen, edu./com./consulting site: <http://www.electronicportfolios.com>.

EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative: <http://www.educause.edu/E-Portfolios/5524>.

Indiana University, Open Source Portfolio Initiative: <http://eport.iupui.edu/>.

Kalamazoo Portfolio web site: <http://www.kzoo.edu/pfolio>.

LaGuardia Community College, ePortfolio: <http://www.eportfolio.lagcc.cuny.edu/>.

Lankes, Maria. "E. Portfolios: A New Idea in Assessment." ERIC: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/>.

St. Olaf College, CIS: [http://www.stolaf.edu/depts/cis/web\\_portfolios.htm](http://www.stolaf.edu/depts/cis/web_portfolios.htm).

Wesleyan University, electronic portfolio for advisement:  
<https://portfolio2.wesleyan.edu/names.nsf?login>