

WHAT IS A PROCESS PORTFOLIO?

A process portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that documents student growth from novice to master. Successful process portfolios actively engage students in their creation, especially in determining their goals, selecting work to be included, and reflecting on how each piece demonstrates progress toward their goals.¹

WHAT IS NOT A PROCESS PORTFOLIO?

A process portfolio is not a collection of a student's best work. Showcase portfolios serve that purpose. The purpose of a process portfolio is to promote student reflection and ownership over the learning process. By having students set goals for their process portfolios, decide which works to include in them, and reflect on how the chosen pieces document growth, student learning becomes more self-regulated.

Process portfolios should not be used as large-scale, summative evaluations—they work best when used formatively, for classroom-level assessment purposes.²

HOW CAN I USE PROCESS PORTFOLIOS WITH MY STUDENTS?

- > [Getting Started: Using Process Portfolios](#)
- > [Examples: What Do Process Portfolios Look Like?](#)
- > [Additional Resources](#)



guide

GETTING STARTED

USING PROCESS PORTFOLIOS

1. DETERMINE THE PURPOSE OF THE PROCESS PORTFOLIO.

What type of student learning do you want the process portfolio to document? What topic, task, or unit will the process portfolio focus on?

2. DETERMINE THE FORMAT OF THE PROCESS PORTFOLIO.

Will students be compiling paper documents in a folder or binder, or will they be constructing electronic process portfolios that use computers and the Internet to store student work? See examples on [page 3](#).

3. STUDENTS SET GOALS FOR THEIR LEARNING.

Introduce the overarching learning goals for the topic or unit, and then have students set individual goals for their own learning. Ask students to identify their current knowledge and abilities, as well as where they would like to progress to by the end of the project.

4. STUDENTS CREATE A PROFILE OR PERSONAL STATEMENT.

Have students create a personal statement that will serve as an introduction to the portfolio. This can include information about themselves as people and students.

An example of a student's personal statement can be found in the [examples section](#). Alternatively, this step can be done at the end of the project, when students have more to say about what they learned, how they learned it, and how the portfolio demonstrates that learning.

5. STUDENTS SELECT PIECES TO BE INCLUDED IN THEIR PROCESS PORTFOLIOS.

Engage students in the selection of pieces to be included in the process portfolio. The selected pieces should demonstrate growth, and so may include several drafts of an assignment as well as the final product.

6. STUDENTS REFLECT ON THE PIECES THEY HAVE INCLUDED, IDENTIFYING THEIR LEARNING PROGRESS.

Students should reflect on the pieces they choose to include in their portfolios, explaining how each selection is representative of their learning journey. These reflections should be included in the process portfolio.

7. TEACHERS, STUDENTS, AND OTHERS USE THE PROCESS PORTFOLIO TO MAKE JUDGMENTS ABOUT STUDENT LEARNING.

Throughout the process portfolio process, teachers, students, and administrators can view student learning in progress by examining student process portfolios. Students can reflect on their learning progress. Teachers can provide tailored assistance where students need it most. Administrators can find out what is happening in classrooms.





tools

EXAMPLES

WHAT DO PROCESS PORTFOLIOS LOOK LIKE?

Online examples of:³

- > [Student personal statement](#)
- > [Student justification for including book report](#) in process portfolio
- > [Student reflection on development in written communication](#)
- > [Biology process portfolio](#)
- > [Electronic process portfolio](#) with reflection on growth in the area of digital media creation and editing and editing

SIMPLE, PAPER-BASED VERSION OF A PROCESS PORTFOLIO ENTRY

Example of student reflection on her decision to include a solar system model in her portfolio.⁴

Name: Abigail

Date: October 17

Project: Solar system model

I earned a B on this project.

I know this is because I reached the benchmark on every part of the rubric. I also know that I learned a lot from doing the model of the solar system.

I am putting it in my working portfolio because it shows that I know how to follow directions, use a rubric, and work hard to make a good model.



resource

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

FOR MORE INFORMATION

> **Electronic Process Portfolios**⁵

An electronic process portfolio, e-process portfolio, or digital portfolio harnesses technology by using the Internet or a computer as a container. Using e-portfolios, students can link, archive, collaborate, and publish.

Some e-process portfolio tools are:

DIGI[cation]⁶, a fee-based e-portfolio creation, storage, and assessment tool

Wix⁷, a free website to display digital process portfolios

- > For more on student-centered assessment, see [Assessing Learning: The Students at the Center Series](#) (Heidi Andrade, Kristen Huff, & Georgia Brooke, 2012).⁸

ENDNOTES

¹ See Susan Belgrad, Kay Burke, & Robin Fogarty. 2008. *The Portfolio Connection: Student Work Linked to Standards, 3rd ed.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

² See Black, P. & William, D. (2004). "The formative purpose: Assessment must first promote learning." *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, 103, 20-50.*

³ See <http://bstepnyok.webs.com/bookreport1.htm#797593732>

See <http://lindseygiaccio.wix.com/portfolio#!written-communication>

See <https://sites.google.com/site/carlysdp/11th-grade/biology>

See <http://punkfloyd.wix.com/portfolio#!video>

⁴ See Belgrade, Burke, & Fogarty (2008).

⁵ See Helen Barrett. 2007. "Researching Electronic Portfolios And Learner Engagement: The REFLECT Initiative." *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*. Vol. 50, No. 6, 436-449.

⁶ See <http://www.digation.com/>

⁷ See <http://www.wix.com>

⁸ See Heidi Andrade, Kristen Huff, & Georgia Brooke. 2012. *Assessing Learning: The Students at the Center Series*. Boston, MA: Jobs for the Future. Available at: <http://studentsatthecenter.org/topics/assessing-learning>

Students at the Center synthesizes and adapts for practice current research on key components of student-centered approaches to learning. Our goal is to strengthen the ability of practitioners and policymakers to engage each student in acquiring the skills, knowledge, and expertise needed for success in college and a career. The companion volume Anytime, [Anywhere: Student Centered Learning for Schools and Teachers](#) (2013) is now available from Harvard Education Press. This Jobs for the Future project is supported generously by funds from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation.



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