

About Portfolio Assessments

Portfolio assessments are student centered and provide a valuable link to instruction. The contents of the portfolios reflect the instructional goals of the unit and represent what the students are doing in the classroom. They are authentic. Portfolios are also useful in guiding students to take an active role in monitoring their own progress.

The key to creating a successful portfolio assessment lies in the student-teacher collaboration. We suggest spending time at the beginning of the unit discussing and developing evaluation criteria for the overall final project. These criteria may take the form of rubrics, rating scales, checklists and so on. The three essential elements of portfolio assessments are self-assessments, teacher assessments, and clearly stated criteria. Without these three elements, a portfolio is simply not a portfolio.

Another important aspect of portfolio assessments is time. The teacher must allot time for students to work on their portfolio samples, enter them, and reflect on them. Student reflections may define their growth over the unit and compare their progress to their learning goals. Second language students who have no experience in doing this kind of work need explicit and intentional guidance.

Portfolio assessments are specific to each class. It is for this reason that we have not included our own rubrics or criteria for evaluation of this unit. Below are some books that are useful in developing and creating a successful portfolio assessment that authentically and meaningfully reflects the student's progress.

Clemmons, J., L. Laase, D. Cooper, N. Areglado, and M. Dill.1993. *Portfolios in the Classroom: Guides 1-6*. New York: Scholastic Professional Books.

De Fina, A. A. 1992.*Portfolio Assessment: Getting Started*.New York.Scholastic Professional Books.

O'Malley, J. Michael and Lorraine Valdez Pierce.1996.Authentic Assessment for English Language Learners: Practical Approaches for Teachers.Addison-Wesley Publishing Company Inc