

Stage 3 – The Reflective Portfolio

This stage of the electronic portfolio development process usually precedes evaluation reviews (for summative portfolios) or employment applications (for marketing portfolios). In the formative portfolio reflections typically occur at significant points in the learning process, and are added contemporaneously as noted in the previous stage. Reflection on one's work is requisite if the portfolio owner is to learn from the process. As John Dewey said, "We don't learn from experience; we learn from reflecting on experience." One challenge in this process will be the need for confidentiality of these reflections. This is the place where the personal, private reflections of the learner need to be guarded, and not published in a public medium, such as the World Wide Web.

Record feedback on work and achievement of goals. Strategies that I have found useful with my students' portfolios include:

Review the reflective statements written for each artifact as it was stored, elaborating on its meaning and value and why you are selecting it for your presentation portfolio.

Refer back to the goals or standards identified in Stage 1 and write general reflective statements on your related achievement.

Select the artifacts that represent achievement of the standards or goals.

From the reflections and feedback, set learning goals for the future

Here are three simple questions to ask which clarify this reflective process (Campbell, Melenyzer, Nettles, & Wyman, (2000) based on Van Wagenen and Hibbard (1998)

1. "What?"
2. "So what?"
3. "Now what?"

To use these questions, the student would first summarize the artifact that documents the experience, in order to answer the question "What?" Second, the student would reflect on what he or she learned and how this leads to meeting the standard, which answers the question "So what?" And third, the student would address implications for future learning needed and set forth refinements or adaptations, in order to answer "Now what?" (p.22)

This process of setting future learning goals turns electronic portfolio development into a powerful tool for professional development. That's why the "Now What?" question becomes important. I also think semi-public commitments to professional development goals can become motivation to work on those areas. As Kay Burke (1996) insists, quoting Kenneth Wolf (1996), a professional portfolio system invites "teachers to become the architects of their own professional development." (p.37)

Here are some specific questions to answer from the EPPlanningWorksheet for this stage:

How will you select the specific artifacts from the abundance of the working portfolio, to demonstrate achievement of the portfolio's goals.

What are your criteria for selecting artifacts and for judging merit?

How will you record self-reflection on work and achievement of goals?

The quality of the learning that results from the portfolio development process may be in direct proportion to the quality of the student self-reflection on their work. One challenge in this process will be the need for confidentiality of these reflections. This is the place where the personal, private reflections of the learner need to be guarded, and not published in a public medium.

How will you record goals for future learning based on the personal reflections and feedback? *It is this process of setting learning goals that turns the portfolio into a powerful tool for long term growth and development.*

How will you record faculty or teacher feedback on student work and achievement of goals?

Even more critical is the confidential nature of the assessment process. Teachers' feedback should also be kept confidential so that only the student, parents and other appropriate audiences have access, and not published in a public medium.

You will know you are ready for the next stage when:

You have selected the artifacts that are going into your formal or presentation portfolio.

You have written the reflective statements and identified learning goals for the future.

More practical tips for completing this stage using common tools:

Create archive of artifacts, converted to Acrobat format, store on server

If you will be storing your documents in Acrobat format, you will learn to convert your artifacts into PDF, and will merge all documents into a single Acrobat file. This portfolio document may be copied to an online server.

Update Portfolio-at-a-Glance

As part of the process of updating the portfolio reflections, update the Excel spreadsheet or the database file with information and reflections on all artifacts. Either of these files can be converted to Adobe Acrobat or HTML and included in the portfolio.

Create a Standards-Based Electronic Portfolio using Common Software Tools

Look in the **Step Guides** for a series of short “At-a-Glance Guides” that describe the strategies that you could use to create your Standards-Based Electronic Portfolio. These one-page summaries provide a quick guide to the process. A comprehensive handbook with more detailed instructions and videos is available on CD-ROM. Permission is granted to educational institutions to print each page for non-profit educational purposes only. All other rights reserved.

Electronic Portfolios in Education - Stages of Electronic Portfolio Development

Create Electronic Portfolios using Microsoft Word

Cross-Reference Standards and Artifacts using Microsoft Excel

Present Electronic Portfolios using Microsoft PowerPoint or Keynote

Build Electronic Portfolios using Macintosh OS X and PDF (Adobe Acrobat)

Develop Electronic Portfolios using Netscape Composer or your favorite Web Page Editor

Collect, organize and publish image-based e-portfolios using Apple’s iPhoto

Create Electronic Portfolios using eZedia

Create Electronic Portfolios using HyperStudio

Create Electronic Portfolios using Inspiration

Create Electronic Portfolios using Kidspiration

Create Electronic Portfolios using KidPix

Create Electronic Portfolios using AppleWorks

Create Electronic Portfolios using a Relational Database