

Preparing a Portfolio

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A portfolio is a collection of professional materials that documents your best work. Similar to a résumé, a portfolio is a concise compilation of written and visual examples that demonstrate your knowledge and skills. The materials within your portfolio should exemplify your capabilities as a professional art specialist.

Professional Portfolios

A portfolio is something that you share for professional reasons such as job searches or promotion. When you begin to put together your portfolio, think of it as an expanded version of your résumé. Ask yourself:

1. What does a potential hiring committee or promotion committee want to know about my philosophy of art teaching, my pedagogical style, and what my students learn?
2. What are the best examples of the above items?

Content

Your portfolio serves as an expanded résumé, but it should not be padded with extraneous materials. Think of your portfolio as a department store window; only items that will grab the viewer's attention are shown.

Hiring and promotion committees do not welcome portfolios filled with materials beyond the scope of what is required. Your portfolio should show only your strengths, goals, and achievements.

If you are not provided with specifics to include in your portfolio, the following is a good outline:

1. Table of contents.
2. A one-page résumé.
3. A brief mission statement.
4. A one-page teaching philosophy.

The materials within your portfolio should exemplify your capabilities as a professional art specialist.

Include examples of student-produced artwork to demonstrate the quality of your art lessons.



5. Two or three signed letters of recommendation.
6. Original art lessons (one each for elementary, intermediate, and secondary. Note: Since your lessons should include assessment rubrics, it is a good idea to include a photo of student work that represents each range in the rubric; that is, a photo of student work that exceeds, meets, or falls below expectations.
7. Photos of completed student work.
8. Additional material placing you "at the head of the class."

This can be a record of exhibition, a presentation at a conference, a publication, community outreach—any other activity that will give you an edge.

9. Include a disk of your portfolio if you create an electronic version.

Format

After you have gathered the materials you wish to showcase, call upon your design skills to put the portfolio together.

For a traditional format:

1. Use an easy-to-read font.
2. A standard three-ring binder is suf-

ficient. Choose a neutral color.

3. A binder with a plastic front sleeve offers a place to insert your identification and adds a bit of polish to your presentation.
4. Use plastic sleeves for each page of the portfolio.

For an electronic format:

1. Burn all of the portfolio content to a disk, or create a website.
2. Organize the electronic version in the same fashion as the hard copy. Make sure it is easy to access and that all the links are active.
4. Include a brief video of a classroom activity or a short slide show of artwork, but use these types of add-ons sparingly.

Reflect

Your portfolio should change as your knowledge and abilities as a teacher change. Do not put your portfolio away and forget it until it is time for the next job search or promotion. At regular intervals, review your portfolio. Replace or update materials that are no longer relevant. Keeping your portfolio current informs your teaching. 🔄

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