

# Session #2

## Creating a Professional Portfolio

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### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

By completing this session's required reading and learning activities, you will:

- Examine various criteria for selecting examples of student work to be included as artifacts in your professional portfolio.
- Review the videos from a previous taken QEP course.
- Create an instructional unit based on your video viewing to enhance your students' academic achievement.
- Analyze your instructional plan for the unit in terms of portfolio requirements of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards.
- Plan to teach your instructional unit to your students.

### **PREPARATION:**

In order to focus your thinking as you begin this session, please read the following excerpt from "Assembling and Presenting Your Professional Portfolio" (University of Northern Iowa, 1998) and then consider the questions that follow. If you are taking this course as a member of a study team, discuss your answers with your colleagues. If you are taking this course as an individual, consider the implications your answers might have for your teaching situation.

Your goal, when selecting items for placement in your portfolio, should be to show the reviewer (a) what you have done, (b) what you can do, and (c) how you have been improving. This normally does not take a large number of items. Choose them carefully. Try to select items that show the progress you have made and how you have learned from your experiences.

Remember, learning never ends. Your instructors and your future employers want to know if you are someone who will continue to learn. A good place to begin is with the document you believe best portrays your ability to perform in the area being assessed. Then, before you add another item, ask, "What will this second item add to what the reviewer has already learned from the first item?" Add only those items that provide new or different insights regarding your performance. This "value added" principle will not only help you decide what to add but will also keep your portfolio from becoming too large.

### **FOCUS QUESTIONS:**

In reference to the above excerpt, consider the following questions. If you are taking this course as a member of a study team, discuss your answers with your colleagues. If you are taking this course as an individual, consider the implications your answers might have for your teaching situation.

1. Bring to mind an instructional unit that you recently completed teaching. Of your students' work, what two examples would you select as artifacts to include in your portfolio?
2. Why did you select these particular artifacts? Did they: show what you have done, or what you can do, or how you have been improving? Please explain your answer.
3. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (*Middle Childhood/Generalist Assessment and Scoring Kit*, Entry 2: Portfolio Instructions, pages 6-7) directs teachers to address specific questions with regard to their

selection of artifacts. With respect to the artifacts that you selected, answer the following questions.

- a. How do the artifacts demonstrate that learning experiences built on one another?
- b. How do the artifacts show that the sequencing of learning experiences led to deepening understanding of the overall theme of the unit?
- c. How do the artifacts show evidence that the students were engaged in the learning process?
- d. How do these artifacts illustrate your approach to creating multiple paths for student learning?

4. Considering your answers to Question #3, would you change your choice of artifacts? Why? Why not?

Notes from Discussion:

*Ideas to remember:*

*Ways to use them:*

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**READING ASSIGNMENT:**

Please read chapters 3 and 4 in the course text, *With Portfolio in Hand: Validating the New Teacher Professional*.

**READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

With respect to the reading assignment, consider the following questions. If you are taking this course as a member of a study team, discuss your answers with your colleagues. If you are taking this course as an individual, consider the implications your answers might have for your teaching situation.

1. In chapter 3, page 41, author Dennie Wolf describes a classroom portfolio culture as one that develops “a kind of learning environment of intense expectations, care and richness.” How does your current (or most recent) classroom environment align with the author’s description of a portfolio culture?
2. With respect to your answer to Question #1, what changes could you make in your classroom environment that would bring it closer to a portfolio culture?
3. Review the “Public Standards for Good Work” paragraph on page 42 in the text. What are the implications of this paragraph? Is the author advocating doing away with grades?
4. With respect to the excerpt referred to in Question #3, what is the significance of the following story told by Dr. Glasser, “A fellow starts out on a trip from Los Angeles to San Diego, but only makes it half way there. He did not *fail* San Diego, he just didn’t get there.”
5. In chapter 4, author Helen Feidus states that in portfolios “conscious reflection on one’s teaching experiences serves as a vehicle for professional development.” What role has “conscious reflection” played in your professional development in the past? Why does the author place such a high value on reflection?
6. In chapter 4 page 67, Dewey is quoted as stating “Learning is active. It involves reaching out of the mind. It involves organic assimilation starting from within . . . It is he and not the subject-matter which determines both the quality and quantity of learning.” In this statement, Dewey was referring to students. Does this apply equally as well to teachers? Why? Why not?

Notes from discussion:

*Ideas to remember:*

*Ways to use them:*

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### **VIDEO VIEWING ASSIGNMENT**

Select two video videos from your previously taken QEP course that you wish to use as the basis for creating an instructional unit. As you view the videos make notes below regarding the key points in the videos that may relate to your instructional unit.

#### **Video #1**

**Previously Taken Course Title**

**Video Title:**

**Brief Description of Video Content:**

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**Key Points in Video #1 That Relate to Your Instructional Unit:**

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**Video #2**

**Previously Taken Course Title**

**Video Title:**

**Brief Description of Video Content:**

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**Key Points in Video #2 That Relate to Your Instructional Unit:**

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### **VIDEO DISCUSSION**

Consider content presented in the videos as it relates to the reading assignment for this session. Consider the following questions. If you are taking this course as a member of a study team, discuss your answers with your colleagues. If you are taking this course as an individual, consider the implications your answers might have for your teaching situation.

1. The readings in the text suggest that instruction should be student-centered: “It is [the student] and not the subject-matter which determines both the quality and quantity of learning.” Do you believe the videos support or deny this statement? Why?
  
2. Considering the key points that you identified in your viewing, develop a list of possible units. Consider the strengths and weaknesses of each of the units.

3. From the list of units determined in answer to question 2, select a unit to teach to your students. Share your ideas about teaching the unit with a colleague and receive feedback.

4. With the unit you have selected, what assignments will students submit? Will these assignments make appropriate artifacts for your portfolio? How will they relate to the educational standards you are using?

### **APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT:**

The objective of this assignment is to fully describe the instructional unit identified in the preceding activity. Your assignment for the next session is to teach the unit to your students. However, if you feel it is appropriate, you may begin teaching the unit prior to beginning the next session.

In describing your unit, remember that the rubric for this course calls for your description to provide clear, convincing, and consistent evidence that you have met course requirements for describing your instructional units. To successfully meet the requirements, your description must address each of the following questions in detail:

#### **Description of Unit:**

- What is the unit?
- What are the goals of the unit? How are the goals clear, worthwhile, and reachable?
- How does the unit reflect your knowledge of your students?
- What activities will the students complete? How will the strategies engage students in discovery and exploration?
- What concepts will students have to learn to successfully complete the unit activities?
- In what way did you provide a supportive, congenial, and purposeful learning environment?

- What is your plan to assess student learning at the end of the unit?

Your assignment now is to create Section II of your portfolio. It should be titled “Instructional Unit #1: Description.” Describe your unit by addressing the questions in the foregoing Application Assignment.