

# Preface to the Second Edition

## Why We Wrote This Book

Portfolios have become commonplace assessment tools in schools of education and, in fact, in all disciplines of higher education. The professional portfolio has become important as an alternative assessment as well as a required assessment for teachers who seek National Board Certification. The portfolio is also a tool for assessing the folios and program reviews of universities seeking national accreditation. Many states now require teacher education graduates to develop a professional portfolio to show their prospective employers. Oklahoma teacher education graduates, for instance, must address fifteen competencies mandated by the state legislature and enforced by a commission on higher education. By collecting artifacts and reflecting on how those artifacts prove proficiency in the various competencies, educators show the commission that they can meet the demands of the classroom. However, there are few guidelines to assist teachers and prospective teachers to develop and effectively use portfolios as assessment tools. Although we found several books on assessment within disciplinary domains, few of those texts crossed over to be useful in other areas of learning. More educators have begun to analyze the portfolio as a professional development tool, but most of them still approach the portfolio from a highly theoretical perspective. We found few publications that dealt with both the theory and technique of developing a portfolio and using it well. We decided a good practical guide was needed, so we set about to write one. Those who acquired the first edition of this book have told us that our plan worked, but they would like to see more activities, updated information regarding technological aspects of portfolio development, and inclusion of various national standards for portfolio development.

## What Is New in This Edition?

While the first edition of this book had essential information about portfolios, with strong theoretical foundations and our CORP process (Collection,

Organization, Reflection, and Presentation), we found that there were other issues that needed to be addressed. There were many who needed more information about electronic portfolios and the role technology plays in portfolio development. Others sought information on very specialized educational portfolios for national certification, for tenure, or for promotion.

We added Chapter 9 to consider the various options for electronic portfolio development, examining advantages and disadvantages. We added Chapter 10 to look at the portfolio that is required for National Board Certification, with the idea that any specialized portfolio could be adapted to fit the format with minor adjustments. With these additions, the book will better meet the needs expressed by the portfolio users.

Many have remarked on the practicality of the ideas presented in our book. The portfolio remains a viable assessment tool to be used by administrators, mentors, future employers, or others who would evaluate teachers and students. The new material has met the needs of students in our undergraduate and graduate classes, as well as those outside the classroom. Our plan is a practical approach for putting together a creative, yet summative, documentation of professional qualifications.

## The Purpose of the Book

The purpose of this book is to offer universities, colleges, school districts, professors, teachers, applicants for National Board Certification, and students a primer for a practical approach to portfolio preparation. The book may be used for individual professional development, in teacher assessment for tenure and advancement, and in teacher preparation courses. It may also easily be adapted by disciplinary fields to help those who have to present a portfolio to understand both the theory and good practices for individual fields of study. We have defined a portfolio, given the theoretical base for the various kinds of portfolios, and shown how to collect data for an appropriate portfolio presentation. This theoretical and explanatory material is contained in the first four chapters of the book. These chapters deal with the importance of creativity in the collection, organization, reflection, and presentation of the assessment portfolio, a process we call CORP. They offer several tools for each of the processes and compare the portfolio process approach with the other disciplinary processes.

In addition to portfolio theory, we have included forms, guidelines, protocols, sample rubrics, and other practical materials to make the portfolio a working document that shows student teacher growth and student teacher accomplishment. We have added some sample exercises that could be used with the text to supplement the assessment and professional development aspects of portfolios. The practical tools of the portfolio are contained in Chapters 5 through 8, where the practitioner will find samples, checklists, and other hands-on materials for completing the portfolio project. Chapter 9 discusses the pros and cons of electronic portfolios. It explains how to develop

an electronic portfolio, and the hardware, software, and technological considerations of creating an online or CD-ROM portfolio. Many online resources and examples are included for the reader. Chapter 10 looks at the special portfolio requirements of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and how the CORP process of portfolio building fits those requirements.

## Who Can Use This Book?

Educators who teach the portfolio process to students, and experienced and novice teachers and administrators compiling portfolios, will benefit from this book. We have been teaching the portfolio process at East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma for several years, and we searched long and hard to find a single, useful text for both the theory and the process. When we found none that we thought practical or useful enough, we decided to prepare one that could be used in our classes. The book incorporates many of the templates we have found useful in our teaching and assessment as well as templates that have been developed recently as a result of the portfolio boom.

We have seen that students approach portfolio development with fear and trepidation. Without a guide, they have difficulty understanding the meshing of theory and application. We now have exemplary portfolios assembled, and prospective employers have commented that the portfolios presented by our students have made our students more marketable. Their portfolios show how convinced they are about their competencies. We feel that we have taken the fear out of the portfolio approach to assessment because more and more, education demands more individualized, sophisticated, and complex methods of documenting learning. The professional portfolio exemplifies that kind of expertise.

## The Portfolio Can Work for You

We certainly are not the originators of the portfolio in educational assessment, but we have both used portfolios extensively in our teaching at both the elementary and secondary levels prior to our experiences in teacher preparation. We have tested the portfolio as an assessment tool with students at all three levels, and in addition we have used the materials in workshops and presentations at state, regional, and national educational conferences. Our theories and tools have been examined by the conference participants, and they've commented positively on the CORP approach to building a portfolio. Reviewers also enjoy the suggested processes, which make portfolios come to life.

We hope that this book meets your needs as well as it has ours. Since we have used these materials for several years, we have selected the very best resources that have helped our students. Our acronym, CORP, will help users of the material to more easily understand the process application. The

portfolio can be a tool to allow teachers at every level to prepare well-collected, suitably organized, appropriately reflected on, and well-presented (CORP) portfolios.

## Brief Chapter Overviews

**Chapter 1** deals with the definitions of a portfolio and details the thoughts behind the development of the portfolio as an assessment tool. The chapter answers the following questions: What is a portfolio? What are the important factors that guide portfolio preparation? What is the difference between a portfolio and a scrapbook? Why do I need a portfolio? This chapter also discusses authenticity, ownership, and creativity in the preparation of the portfolio.

**Chapter 2** details the developmental portfolio and its background as a tool for reflections on individual growth. The questions answered by the chapter include: What constitutes a developmental portfolio? What makes this kind of portfolio useful? How is a developmental portfolio different from other kinds of portfolios? What kind of student would prepare a developmental portfolio?

**Chapter 3** discusses the showcase portfolio, highlighting its uniqueness as a tool for success and self-esteem building. The salient points of this chapter answer the following questions: What constitutes a showcase portfolio and makes it unique? How does one select the “best” materials for use in the portfolio? When is a showcase portfolio more necessary than any other kind of portfolio?

**Chapter 4** characterizes reflection as a heuristic device in self-examination. Reflection is the backbone of the portfolio. It helps one gain ownership of the plan and design of the portfolio. The chapter examines the following questions: How do I evaluate the artifacts that I have found for the portfolio? What does self-reflection do for the compiler and also for the portfolio audience? How do I make the reflections wholly mine and yet acceptable to the assessors?

**Chapter 5** is about the planning and organizational stages of the portfolio. It answers questions about what one must include in a portfolio and how the completed portfolio will look. The chapter examines the following questions: What am I required to include in the portfolio? What do I want to include? How should the completed portfolio look so that it truly reflects me? The chapter also presents various methods of organizing ideas and artifacts that will help the student be understood by the evaluators.

**Chapter 6** delineates the importance of the audience and how the portfolio will help its compiler get good grades or get a job. The chapter helps the reader understand the following questions: Who will be looking at this collection?

How can I tailor the portfolio to meet my needs? How will the portfolio address professional standards? How do I know which artifacts to include? The chapter discusses the materials that are useful for obtaining a promotion, for faculty review, or for a capstone for graduation. It also attends to self-assessment tools as a part of the reflective process.

**Chapter 7** contains the nuts and bolts of putting the work together and getting it ready for presentation to your desired audience. It answers the following questions: How do I assemble various portfolio components? What electronic sources are available to help me? How can I create an electronic portfolio? The chapter contains charts, forms, plans, protocols, and rubrics that will aid the evaluator who assesses the portfolio and the compiler to complete the personalized self-awareness journey that concludes with the final copy of the portfolio.

**Chapter 8** contains details of the presentation of the portfolio to its audience. It answers the following questions: How do I prepare for an oral presentation? What questions are frequently asked during presentations and interviews? How do I integrate my portfolio during a job interview? This chapter gives the portfolio owner insight and ideas for better presentation and communication.

**Chapter 9** provides resources regarding planning strategies for electronic portfolios, including recommended hardware, software, and Web page designs. Checklists, rubrics, and many online resources, including actual online Webfolios, are included. Whether a preservice teacher or an experienced educator, new possibilities regarding technology and the role it plays in portfolio development are provided.

**Chapter 10** tells how one who is compiling a portfolio for the National Board Certification can use the precepts of CORP in that process. It answers the following questions: How is the portfolio an integral part of the National Board Certification process? How do I establish parameters for this specialized portfolio? How does the portfolio complement the Core Propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)? How do the subject area standards help plan the portfolio? What are the special challenges for collecting data for this kind of portfolio? How are the NBPTS presentation goals unique? How are simple “reflections” and NBPTS “written commentary” alike? What are the rubric questions to check this portfolio format?

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We do appreciate our colleagues for their confidence in our ability to complete this project. We appreciate the help of colleagues at East Central University in designing rubrics and various other forms for making the process of portfolio preparation better for us and more relevant to the needs of our students when they prepare portfolios as the capstone for their professional education course work.

Thanks also to those who pioneered the ideas and values of portfolio assessment. We have studied from, listened to, and read about so many of them, and we have adapted many of their ideas in crafting our own theories of portfolio development. We owe each of you a heartfelt thanks.

We need to add a special thanks to those at Corwin Press who have guided us through these two processes of creativity. We are especially grateful to Rachel Livsey and Phyllis Cappello for their work on this second edition. Their faith in the book and its usefulness is greatly appreciated. We appreciate those who do the book layouts, those who edit, and those who do the difficult tasks such as proofreading our material. We certainly appreciate the marketing division of Corwin for their continued support of our work in the catalogs they prepare. We appreciate their marketing strategies, which have kept our book visible to those who could benefit from it in their classes or for their own personal use. We appreciate those who have purchased the first edition, and we would hope that this second edition will become just as valuable for you in your quest to have the best tools for portfolio preparation.

Without this assistance, we might not have persevered. We hope the reader is pleased with the reflections and new information found within these pages. They are truly the compilation of ideas, inputs, and personal philosophies of many people. Our book is a work of love of and for teaching. Between the two of us, we have accumulated so many years of watching teaching grow. All of

us, no matter how long we have worked in the field, know that teaching is dynamic and continues to grow. Pedagogy, at whatever level, must also continue to evolve and offer new insight to those of us who teach. Knowledge of subject matter, skills in presenting that knowledge, and a good disposition toward that knowledge is what keeps education so dynamic and so alive. Education means a continued chance to maintain freedom for those who would be free.

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