

Preface

The first edition of *The Portfolio Connection* was envisioned as “just a little book” by the authors in 1993. At that time, portfolios had just arrived on the horizon of authentic assessment. It was natural for us to think metaphorically about academic portfolios as the artists’ showcase of their accomplished and evolving media. The chapter titles flowed effortlessly into many of the images of an artist selecting the work that best “spoke” or gave voice to his or her body of work. The artist-centered actions of *projecting* the purposes of the portfolio, then *interjecting* individuality, *self-assessing* the product using the relevant standard, and *perfecting* the message of the work became the inspiration that led our thinking and conversation throughout the book’s chapters.

The trend toward authentic assessment of student learning was well under way in 1993. There was a great deal of hope that alignment between a student-centered curriculum and instruction, together with collections of evidence of student performance, might forestall the achievement-testing tidal wave that was about to sweep across the United States. The book anticipated that educators would need to have clear purposes and comprehensible procedures for students to collect work samples over time, store them efficiently, and ultimately select them as the messages about themselves that they believed would “tell their story of learning and achievement.”

While seven of the chapters addressed the portfolio process, the final two chapters briefly touched the top of the rich canopy of portfolio assessment—the presentation. Since the first and second editions of *The Portfolio Connection* were published, it has become clear that student voice must be positioned at the center of the portfolio process. Similarly, the audience, or “gallery” where that voice is heard, is in essence the true goal of portfolios and electronic portfolios (e-portfolios)—to assess, evaluate, respect, and celebrate accomplishments.

The second edition of *The Portfolio Connection* was published in 2002. While its content was not substantially changed, it addressed the arrival of electronic media as an important new “container” for the academic portfolio. The e-portfolio, complete with multimedia, including audio and video evidence and student reflection, has since transformed the landscape of authentic assessment. Advances and availability of technology have brought many more opportunities for educators and the students they teach to “tell the story” of their lives as learners—and as readers, writers, social scientists, mathematical and scientific thinkers, and, yes, artists.

This edition of *The Portfolio Connection* returns to the metaphor of the artist with its focus on the student at the center of the learning and assessment process. It further develops the image of the artist's metacognition and voice as the artist sets standards for the work, and applies this image to the student portfolio process. It looks at the critical inquiry and creativity that the artist surely uses in determining if each piece truly speaks for the essence of his or her ability and talent. It envisions the K–12 student engaged in the very same reflection. It also aligns the portfolio process with the evolving authentic assessment movement. Rather than assessment *of* student learning, the portfolio is now positioned as representing assessment *for* student learning. It explores the innovation promised by the e-portfolio and provides a number of ideas, resources, and procedures for safely sailing the elementary and secondary student into cyberspace.

WHAT'S NEW IN THIS EDITION?

- Addition of e-portfolios throughout the book
- More attention to international perspectives on portfolios
- More examples, samples, and blacklines (tools that are needed, useful, and well executed) in all chapters
- More portfolio examples for different grade levels, and for children with special needs
- Expanded ideas of how portfolios become integrated within curricula and student voice
- More information on portfolio conferences and Web showcases
- More information on how and when to get parents involved
- Discussion of the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act on student assessment
- Additional information on student peer assessment