vhlcentral

Portfolio Implementation

Educator Guide

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Portfolio:
Stories of Students' Own Growth and Achievement

What is the Portfolio tool?

The **Portfolio** tool is a purposeful collection of student work that allows learners to create their own stories of growth and achievement. With **Portfolio**, students document, reflect, and showcase their language learning journey, and build a community of learners. As an instructor, the **Portfolio** tool allows you to evaluate your students' performance, provide meaningful and purposeful feedback, and track their language development journey more efficiently. These samples of student work can also offer valuable insights into the learning outcomes at the course and program levels.

What are the benefits of using Portfolio?

> **"We do not learn from experience...**
> **we learn from reflecting on experience."**
> John Dewey

Implementing the portfolio tool consistently and regularly in your curriculum will enhance the effectiveness of this tool in fostering your students' agency and in allowing you to better guide them to their next proficiency level.

For Students:
- Provides visible evidence of growth over a certain period of time as learners can see what they can do with the language.
- Offers valuable insights into students' learning and thinking as they reflect on their own learning and set new goals.
- Enhances organization and presentation skills as students select how to best represent their learning. Both are highly valued skills in today's academic settings and the workplace.
- Allows students to see the purpose in what they are asked to do.
- Offers evidence of learners' language abilities to prospective employers and other stakeholders.
- Fosters motivation, active learning, and sense of ownership of learners' own learning.

For Instructors:
- Offers a visual representation of students' growth and their language journey that cannot be captured with single project assignments or regular tests and exams.
- Improves the visibility of the articulation of tasks and assignments by allowing students to tell cohesive stories of their own growth.
- Effectively tracks student's progress over time, at the course and program levels.
- Allows you to target individualized learning needs strategically and effectively by providing meaningful and purposeful feedback that connects to the overall course goals.

How do I best implement Portfolio in my course?

Choose an implementation plan that best aligns with your course goals:

Option 1: A showcase portfolio to celebrate accomplishment at the end of a semester
As a final project, have students create a portfolio at the end of the course to showcase how their language skills have improved and what they can do with the language. Questions to consider: How would you describe the growth you have experienced from the start of this semester to now? What do you feel most proud of? Why did you choose this/these sample(s) to showcase in your last portfolio?

Option 2: A learning portfolio to measure growth within a semester
Have students add to their portfolio three times throughout a semester:

   i. **Beginning of a semester:** Have students add one work sample of their own choice. As part of the reflection, have students set a goal for the semester based on what they know and what they realistically can accomplish.

   ii. **Middle of the semester:** Have students add another work sample that represents their learning up until that point. As part of the reflection, have students reflect on the goal that they set at the beginning of the semester. Questions to consider: How would they describe the growth they have experienced up to this point? Would they like to adjust their goals based on their progress so far? Is there anything else that they should focus on?

   iii. **End of the semester:** Have students add a final work sample. It could be their best work or one that best represents their growth. As part of the reflection, have students reflect on the goal that they set at the beginning of the semester. Encourage them to notice and reflect on all the learning that has happened so far.

Option 3: An assessment portfolio to strengthen a project-focused approach or to supplement and/or replace traditional exams
At the end of every chapter or lesson, have students create and present their portfolio(s) after they submit their final projects. Have them submit two or three work samples that best represents their learning from that chapter and have them explain why they chose these samples as part of their reflection. Have them present their portfolios to the class and/or in lieu of the lesson tests and/or exams.

How do I start?

1. **Set a clear goal:** How do you envision that students will use their **Portfolios** after the course has ended? Do you want students to reflect on their language learning, their understanding of different cultures, or both? While these objectives can be pursued concurrently, your goals will guide how you incorporate **Portfolio** into the course grade and shape your expectations for student engagement with the tool.

2. **Choose an option**: Consider how you would like to use **Portfolio** with your students. Choose one of the three implementation options above.

3. **Share your plan:** Introduce **Portfolio** to your students at the beginning of the course and be transparent about its purpose. Explain how it aligns with their coursework and how they can benefit from engaging with it. Student's motivation will increase if they understand why **Portfolio** is relevant to their work and growth as language learners.

4. **Assign Portfolio activities:** Take note of activities with the **Portfolio** icon 🖥 in the Supersite. Assign a diverse selection of these activities so students have ample options to choose from when creating their own **Portfolios**.
5. **Conduct an orientation tour:** Guide students through **Portfolio** access on the **Supersite**. Prior to the first **Portfolio** assignment, provide students with an orientation to the tool.
6. **Use the Portfolio Rubric:** Whether you decide to use **Portfolio** as a showcase portfolio (Option 1), learning portfolio (Option 2), or as an assessment portfolio (Option 3), use the **Portfolio Rubric** to provide meaningful and consistent feedback. **Tip!** Share the **Portfolio Rubric** with your students in advance to help them understand how their work will be assessed.
7. **Build a supportive community of learners:** In addition to having students create their own portfolios, encourage students to share them with you and the entire class, and to allow for peer comments of each other's work. This approach creates opportunities for collaborative learning and recognition of each other's achievements.
8. **Encourage peer feedback:** Ask students to review three to five of their peers' **Portfolios** and provide constructive feedback, mentioning one aspect they appreciated or learned from and one suggestion for improvement or an alternative approach. Model how students can offer feedback to each other in a supportive and collaborative environment. **Tip!** Consider what would be appropriate to share with the class and what is better left to a private conversation between you and each student.

Best practices for implementing Portfolio	
1. Make sure the purpose of the Portfolio aligns with your language learning goals and what students can realistically do.	**2.** If you are new to Portfolio, *start small* with Option 1 (Showcase Portfolio) or Option 2 (Learning Portfolio).
3. Clearly communicate purpose and expectations.	**4.** Guide students with an orientation for creating student portfolios to ensure their success.
5. Model how to set up the profile, create the first portfolio, and offer constructive feedback.	**6.** Emphasize the learning process and growth that has happened, instead of the grade.
7. Encourage students to include a variety of work samples, such as composition, videos, and chats if enabled.	**8.** Assign cultural-focused activities from the Supersite and encourage students to showcase new understanding they have gained by learning about a new culture and reflecting on their own.
9. Encourage students to engage in reflection to better document process and showcase their learning.	**10.** Include students in the process. Can they suggest ways to better implement portfolio in your own course?
11. Offer timely and constructive feedback on student portfolio submissions.	**12.** Foster a culture of reflection. Remember Dewey's words!
13. Celebrate outstanding student portfolio submissions to motivate students.	**14.** Actively seek feedback from both students and instructors to refine portfolio implementation in our course/department.

How should I support students through reflection?

Offer these questions to guide students in the reflection process.
- Why did you choose these specific work samples?
    - Are these samples intended to demonstrate your growth over time?
    - Do they represent the best examples of your language skills?
    - What knowledge or cultural insights do they reflect?
- Which work sample do you find most significant, and what makes it stand out to you?
- How do these work samples showcase your learning journey?
- If given another opportunity, what aspects of your work would you approach differently?
- What are your goals as you move forward? In which areas would you like to focus more?
- How do you plan to apply the skills and knowledge acquired in this language class in real-world situations?
- In what ways do you foresee using the language and cultural understanding you've gained in your future career or personal life?
- What steps will you take to continue improving your language skills after this course?

How should I foster a collaborative and supportive community of learners?

Your role as an instructor is vital in fostering values of respect, collaboration, and support for one another. Share this pledge at the beginning and discuss it as a class community. Invite students to modify and add to it to promote a sense of ownership over the process.

Class Pledge

As a member of this language class, I pledge to:

1. Share Thoughtfully: I will share my portfolio with the class, showcasing my language learning journey and cultural insights with honesty and respect.

2. Provide Constructive Feedback: I commit to providing constructive and supportive feedback on my peers' portfolios, focusing on strengths and areas for growth in a respectful manner.

3. Be Respectful: I will maintain a respectful tone in my feedback.

4. Offer Specific Suggestions: I commit to offering specific and actionable suggestions that can help my peers enhance their language skills and portfolio presentations.

5. Embrace Diversity: I will appreciate and learn from the diverse perspectives and experiences reflected in my peers' portfolios, respecting cultural differences.

6. Be Open to Feedback: I will approach feedback from my peers with an open mind, understanding that it is a valuable opportunity for personal growth.

7. Engage Actively: I will actively engage in discussions and conversations about the portfolios, fostering a collaborative and supportive learning environment.

8. Maintain Confidentiality: I will respect the confidentiality of personal information shared in portfolios and discussions, keeping the content within the classroom setting.

9. Grow Together: I am dedicated to learning and growing together as a community of language learners, supporting each other in our language proficiency journey.

How do I assess students' progress in Portfolio?
Use this **Portfolio Rubric** to provide meaningful and consistent feedback and share it with your students prior to every **Student Portfolio** submission to help them understand how their work will be assessed.

Criteria	Exceeds expectations (5)	Meets Expectations (4)	Partially meets Expectations (3)	Does not meet expectations (2)
Demonstration of Learning	Demonstrates a thorough understanding and practical application of language concepts, cultural insights, and linguistic skills for creative expression in the language.	Demonstrates a clear understanding and application of language concepts with some gaps in depth or complexity to create with language.	Demonstrates partial understanding and limited application of language concepts, with noticeable gaps or inconsistencies.	Demonstrates minimal understanding and application of language concepts, lacking coherence or accuracy.
Evidence of Learning (Knowledge & Skills)	Presents a rich variety of work samples, showcasing a wide range of language skills, cultural understanding & language growth.	Presents clear evidence of language skills and cultural awareness, though some areas may be underrepresented or less developed.	Presents limited evidence of language skills and cultural understanding, with significant gaps or lack of depth.	Presents minimal or insufficient evidence of language skills and lacks substantive cultural insights or growth.
Reflection on Learning	Reflects deeply on work samples chosen, how they show language growth, including areas of improvement & difficulty, strategies used & personal growth within the course.	Reflects thoughtfully on work samples chosen & how those show language growth, though some areas may lack depth or specificity.	Reflects partially on work samples chosen & how those show language growth, with surface-level insights or lack of detail.	Reflects minimally on work samples chosen & how those show language growth or personal growth within the course.
Presentation and Organization skills	Shows exceptional organization, creativity, & clarity in the presentation, showcasing content in a visually appealing & well-structured manner.	Shows good organization, creativity, & clarity in the presentation and some creativity, although minor improvements in presentation could be made.	Shows basic organization but lacks creativity or visual appeal, with content presented in a somewhat disjointed or inconsistent manner.	Shows poor organization, creativity in a disorganized, unclear manner. It is difficult to comprehend how it reflects growth.