



Creating Your ePortfolio: a Guide

Why build an ePortfolio? You learn a lot of skills that never get captured in your transcript or resume. Unfortunately, many of these skills are the very ones that interest employers and graduate schools. They want to know:

- How you will fare when confronted with ill-defined problems;
- Or when you work with a group of diverse people, across disciplines, cultures, time zones, and temperaments.
- How good are you at negotiating approaches that satisfy multiple stakeholders?
- Do you have the ability to assess and interpret information and communicate clearly to different audiences?

These kinds of skills are not gained in one class but rather across multiple classes in combination with your life outside of class. They don't come with a grade and they don't show up on your transcript. If you develop the habit of capturing different aspects of your learning you will have evidence of these skills ready to demonstrate when the time comes.

The ePortfolio Process

Below are the basic steps for the ePortfolio process: **collect**, **select**, **reflect**, and **present**. These are followed by **getting feedback** and **identifying next steps**.

Collect

Building a repository of your work for an ePortfolio is a gradual process. Start by getting in the habit of saving your work. The pieces of work you save will be your ePortfolio "artifacts." A repository can be anything that has the capacity to house digital artifacts but for our ePortfolio it will be your blog in Weebly, which will allow you to categorize your work with the program's outcomes.

What kind of work should you save? Most everything. Artifacts can come from your coursework but they can also come from your life outside school. Since these artifacts are going into your blog repository you can save work in various stages of completion—it doesn't all have to be your best and most polished work. In fact, it is better to save less polished work or even work that went south because you can often capture your problem solving skills with "before and after" work.

Remember to categorize your work when you post it to your blog. This will make it easier during the selection process when you need to come up with credible evidence of how you have met the program outcomes. Remember that you can add more than one category to an artifact. Also make sure you add a brief comment or reflection to your post when you upload, embed or link to an artifact in your blog. These reflections will help jog your memory and may provide useful wording for your ePortfolio narrative.

Select

This is the most interesting part of ePortfolio building. When you are ready to start building your ePortfolio, take some time to look through your work. Pay attention to patterns. Are there connections between things you are doing in different areas of your life? Did you learn something in one area that gave you insight into another? Did you master something that originally seemed impossible? Did you discover you had a talent or an interest that you intend to follow up on? The selection process is really about connecting the dots and becoming aware of what it is that you are learning so that you can consciously decide how to direct your learning in the future. Select those artifacts that can act as the best evidence for the points you want to make to your ePortfolio audience. Here are some questions to ask yourself as yourself while selecting evidence.

- What does the evidence reveal about your learning?
- Is the evidence convincing? (Is there any ambiguity about the evidence?)
- Have you selected different kinds of evidence?
- Is the evidence balanced?
- Have you considered any biases the evidence might contain?
- Are there other sources of evidence that you may have overlooked when you initially gathered your materials?

Reflect

OUTCOMES PAGES: This is where you tie it all together into a coherent narrative for your ePortfolio audience, demonstrating the patterns in your learning, discussing what you have learned and pointing out where you would like to learn more. In this narrative you can hyperlink to specific evidence as needed. In other words, you may want to point readers to “before” and “after” posts about something you have learned or to a post in which you began to question an assumption. You can link to areas within your blog or to evidence and information at other sites. This is where you will write the narrative that contextualizes all of your evidence for this category. This is where you will connect the dots for your target audience and persuade them – based on the evidence you are highlighting – that you are proficient in this category. When describing your learning:

- What's the key point / key concept that emerges for you?
- Why is it interesting or important to you?
- What are the possible consequences of your experience?
- Where do you see significant growth, and why?
- Where do you see less change, and why?
- What other interpretation of your experience or work might be possible?
- How would you go about considering different viewpoints?
- What connections can you make between yourself and society—whether that is local, national, or global—in connection with what you have learned or experienced?
- Can you identify and analyze your own learning process, and how you will continue to guide it? (You may consider your own strategies, your work with peers or mentors, experience inside and outside of school, other resources you could seek, other choices you may have to make.)
- What were the limitations of your experience?
- How could future experiences be less limited?

Present

Keep your ePortfolio at the presentation stage clear and simple. Readers should be able to start with your reflection and then delve into your evidence as needed. Make their experience exploring your ePortfolio intriguing but don't overwhelm them with massive amounts of information that they have to sort through by themselves. Make it so readers can easily explore the areas of your ePortfolio that they find most interesting. This takes some ingenuity but you will improve with practice. Ask yourself:

- Is the portfolio laid out in a logical fashion visually and spatially?
- Is your verbal communication unambiguous and professional?
- Will it be obvious to a viewer who doesn't know you and is looking at your portfolio for the first time to navigate through pages, subpages, and links?
- What information or explanations are essential for the audience to understand?
- Can viewers engage with your portfolio on multiple levels based on their interest and understanding?
- Will the information presented in the portfolio keep their attention?
- Is the format you are using appropriate for your target audience?

Get Feedback

- Who can you ask to give you constructive feedback?
- Ask for feedback from multiple sources—mentors, peers, professionals, experts, people from other disciplines.
- Ask them to use the same rubric your reviewers will be using. [Click here for the eportfolio rubric.](#)
- Refine your portfolio based on the feedback. Effective portfolios constantly evolve to reflect the learner.

Identify Next Steps

- After refinements, do you feel that you have chosen the best evidence to reflect your learning growth? Showcase the best evidence to date.
- How has constructing the portfolio changed the way you think about future learning opportunities?
- What kinds of work do you need to do in the future to help you evolve as a learner? How might that be captured in an ePortfolio?