

Purpose: to assemble a collection of items that illustrate your practice as a teacher

A portfolio is a collection of items that you assemble to present an overview of your thinking and practice. The portfolio contains items that reflect who you are, the kinds of beliefs and thinking you make use of, your teaching skill and abilities, and how you are realizing or working towards your goals. Many teachers I have worked with find that keeping a portfolio is a very straightforward way of describing and reflecting on their work and achievements, and one which they find beneficial. As a teacher I worked with recently commented:

It gave me a chance to see how far I have come as a teacher since I started teaching.

This tip describes how to assemble a portfolio.

1 Decide on how you will make a portfolio: a portfolio could either be paper-based or digital. An electronic portfolio contains the same information as a paper-based one but is a multimedia approach allowing you to present the portfolio in a variety of formats, such as audio, video, graphics, and text. Hypermedia links are used to connect each section.

2 Decide on the purposes of keeping a portfolio: is it just for you or will you share it with colleagues or a supervisor? List all the different purposes you think would be important for you, for example: *to monitor my own practice, to contain examples of my students' work.*

3 Decide on the kinds of items to include in your portfolio. If the portfolio is to be shared with others, it would usually begin with an overview written by you to explain what the portfolio contains and why the items in it have been included. Each item would also be accompanied by an explanation of its importance. Finally, the portfolio will include a conclusion with reflections on what the collection means to you.

The following are examples of items that could be included:

- a. A Teaching Philosophy Statement: this consists of a brief account of your approach to teaching and the beliefs and principles you bring to teaching. This could describe the kind of teaching you seek to achieve in your classes; how you view your role in the classroom; the kinds of learning you try to encourage and develop in your learners.
- b. Documents that illustrate your approach to teaching. These could include:
 - An up-to-date CV
 - Sample course descriptions and syllabi
 - List of courses you teach
 - Samples of assignments
 - Samples of materials and assessments you have prepared
 - Samples of students' work
 - Comments on your teaching by a peer or supervisor
 - Student evaluations
 - Photos of students carrying out activities in your classes
 - Video of a class
 - School activities such as committees you serve on, or mentoring you provide to new teachers
 - Professional development activities you have participated in.

4 Using the portfolio: the portfolio is added to and updated on a regular basis. Once it is assembled, it can be used as a basis for reflection on your professional development. It can also be used when applying for promotion or when applying for a new teaching position.

Davis, J., & Osborn, T. A. (2003). *The Language Teacher's Portfolio: A Guide for Professional Development* (Contemporary Language Studies). Westport, CA: Praeger.
Bailey, K. M., Curtis, A., & Nunan, D. (2001). *Pursuing professional development: The self as source*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.