

# Appendix C

## Long-Term Activities: Creating a Course Portfolio

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# Course Portfolios

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The course portfolio activity requires each learner to review and reflect on his or her work and learning throughout the course. The portfolio starts as a “working portfolio” in which the learner deposits the work he or she produces for the different sessions. This work can take different forms, including work—papers, lesson plans, assignments developed, etc.—and other forms of work including audio- or videotapes, visual representations, feedback on presentations, or student work.

Near the end of the course, learners will choose assignments to be included in their “showcase portfolios.” They will choose assignments that demonstrate their growth in understanding as well as applications of learning theory in their classrooms. Learners will share their learning and portfolios with an audience, which might include fellow classmates, professional colleagues, and/or friends and family.

## Portfolio Components

Course faculty or facilitators may have their own requirements, but here is a list of components that might be included in a typical teachers’ portfolio for this course:

- An artifact (or artifacts) that addresses or includes a learning theory or concept you found *particularly valuable in your professional development*. This concept might come out of a particular session’s focus, (e.g., cognitive processing) or might cross sessions (e.g., assessing students’ prior understanding). In a brief (one paragraph) written reflection, explain why and how this concept is valuable to you as teacher. Attach this to the front of the artifact.
- An artifact (or artifacts) that shows how different learning theories and concepts *interact and connect for you*. This might be a piece of work that required you to draw on several learning theories in order to complete it or one that analyzes the application of differing concepts to the same event. In a brief (one or two paragraphs) reflection, describe how the theories interact and connect in this work. What conclusions, questions, and ideas do you have about how learning theories work as a whole? Attach this to the front of the artifact.
- An artifact (or artifacts) that has *practical applications* for you and your classroom. In one paragraph, explain how you will use this piece of work as an influence, guide, or resource in your teaching practice. Attach this to the front of the artifact.
- An artifact (or artifacts) that shows your learning or *learning processes* during this course. This might be a reflective essay or a comparison and analysis of two pieces of your work. Attach a brief explanation about why and how this artifact shows your learning.
- An artifact (or artifacts) that can or does support your *assessment* of what students bring to your classroom or what they learn while there. Attach a brief explanation about your choice of artifact.
- An artifact (or artifacts) that demonstrates an answer to one of the *essential questions of the course*. Include a reflection about the degree to which your work answers the question, as well as the aspects of the question that are left unanswered.
- An artifact (or artifacts) that shows how something you did in the classroom supported *successful student learning*. Include a reflection about why and how you believe your strategy influenced student learning and how it relates to one or more topics in the course.

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## Sample Rubric

The following is a list of criteria that might be used to assess the portfolios. Leaders may use these or develop their own rubrics.

- Fulfills expectations, with all required components clear and complete
- Provides evidence of growth in knowledge about learning theory and practical applications
- Demonstrates that the learner has made personal connections to the course content
- Demonstrates that the learner has considered implications for his or her future teaching practice
- Demonstrates serious reflection upon learner's own learning progress
- Makes a unique, creative, and neat presentation

# Notes for Facilitators

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## Suggestions for Planning

Read over this assignment and choose what kinds of work learners should include. Use the list in “Portfolio Components” as a guide. We recommend requiring between three to five components—enough for a varied and deep perspective on each learner’s thinking, yet not so many components that learners become overwhelmed. Also decide what the final portfolios might look like, how they will be presented, and how they will be assessed (see “Sample Rubric”).

Consider these things:

- When will the assignment be announced? When will it be due?
- What kinds of intermediate due dates will you use?
- Who will establish the criteria for assessing the portfolio?
- Who will assess the portfolio?

## Timeline Considerations

In Session 1 or 2, introduce the portfolio assignment. Direct learners to “Portfolio Components” for suggestions of what to include, or pass out your own list of requirements and expectations, including your criteria for assessing their portfolios. You should urge learners to create a safe place to keep all their work. By the middle of the course learners should have an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned thus far and to reflect on which assignments demonstrate this progress.

By the last few sessions of the course, if you have not done so previously, communicate your portfolio requirements. Allow learners enough time to select and compile artifacts and write appropriate reflections. Plan time for sharing portfolios inside or outside of class sessions.

## Portfolio Presentations

Portfolio presentations give learners an opportunity to articulate, reflect on, and explain to an audience what this course has meant for their professional development. Individual presentations can be used to begin conversations that address big ideas, lingering questions, and practical applications. Structure those presentations appropriately for your group of learners. They may be made to small peer groups or an invited audience. You might also set up a portfolio gallery where learners can peruse one another’s work. A whole-group discussion might conclude any of these activities.