Chapter Three: Portfolio Design

"Portfolio: A purposeful collection of students' work that illustrates efforts, progress, and achievement"

Dr. Helen Barrett

Dr. Barrett (1998) stated: "As we move to more high stakes performance assessments for high school graduation, it will become more critical to have a flexible recordkeeping system that can track these demonstrations of competency in a variety of multimedia formats. Too many of the current examples of electronic portfolios, both "classroom-grown" and commercial, focus on the glitz and glamour of high tech multimedia; very few commercial programs provide the capability of directly linking students' digital portfolio artifacts to the standards for which they demonstrate achievement. The very definition of a portfolio noted above, implies a purpose, tied to progress and achievement...but of what? I propose that we need to begin focusing our attention less on the "electronic" and more on the "portfolio" -- the standards that our students need to demonstrate. Most states have adopted standards for both students, practicing teachers, and new teachers. These standards form an ideal framework for thinking about organizing an electronic portfolio."

"I propose that a portfolio without standards is just a multimedia presentation or a fancy electronic resume or a digital scrapbook. There is a place for that type of format in classrooms or in employment searches, but a savvy administrator will look for evidence that the candidate meets the teaching standards that have been set for the district or state; a savvy teacher will look for evidence that a student's portfolio demonstrates achievement of at least one of the district/state/national standards. Without standards as the organizing basis for a portfolio, the collection becomes just that...a collection, haphazard and without structure; the purpose is lost in the noise, glitz and hype. High technology disconnected from a focus on curriculum standards will only exacerbate the lack of meaningful integration of technology into teaching and learning." (Barrett, 1998 - http://electronicportfolios.org/portfolios/TelEd98Abstract.html)

The design of your portfolio will depend on your classroom and professional needs. You may wish to have a portfolio for one or more particular subject matter areas. You may plan on using the portfolio development process as a means of developing technology skills or creating student-generated project for self reflection. You may wish to show

growth from the beginning of the year to the end in one or more subject areas. The availability of resources for hardware and software, as well as the time to collect, digitize, and preserve artifacts will influence this decision greatly. However, if the purpose of using portfolios as assessment is clearly focused on meeting competencies according to state or national standards, the time and money spent may be justified. Your first step will be to decide what the purpose of this portfolio will be and what is reasonable and feasible for your budget and overall classroom environment.

Education World has posted links to all the national and state standards - http://www.educationworld.com/standards/. Locate the appropriate state standards for your students and determine if a standards-based portfolio is appropriate for your needs. The California content standards are at: http://www.cde.ca.gov/standards/.

Dr. Barrett provides us with a guide for planning at the Apple Learning Exchange websites - http://ali.apple.com/ali_sites/ali/exhibits/1000156/The_Process.html. She describes the following stages:

Stage 1 – Determine the portfolio context and goals

- Identify the assessment context, including the purpose of the portfolio
- Identify the goals to be addressed in the portfolio
- Knowing the primary audience for the portfolio
- Identify the resources available for electronic portfolio development (hardware/software)
- Determine the assessment context

Assessment Context - What is the purpose?

- Show growth over time
- Document ongoing learning and professional development
- Assessment – achievement of standards or goals

Stage 2: The Working Portfolio – Archive Creation and Digital Conversion

- Collect Artifacts - "Become a digital packrat."
- Select the software development tools most appropriate for the portfolio context and the resources available.
- Set up electronic folders to organize the artifacts
- Save word processed documents, database, spreadsheets, hypermedia programs, Powerpoint presentations, etc.

- You will be converting some of this material into linked files (html webpages or Adobe Reader pdf files)
- Microsoft Office is an integrated software application which includes Word, Excel, Access, and Powerpoint. Most of your textual material can be copied and pasted from one of these programs directly in to Powerpoint.
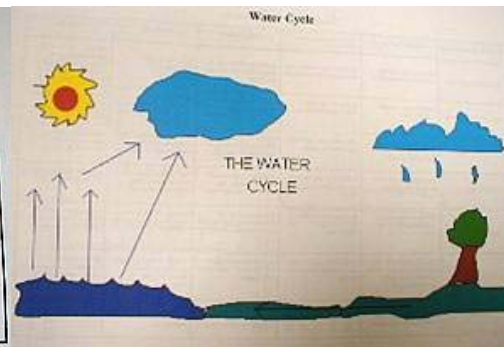
 The Digital Camera: Your best tool!

With the current reasonable costs of digital cameras, I recommend that you learn to use your camera and photo editing software. You will probably create most of your artifacts by taking quick shots and uploading them to your computer. You will want a basic photo editing program for cropping your photo shots and adjusting the lighting. The following images are cropped digital photos.

Scanners, Digital Cameras, and Photo Editors

OPTIONAL: If you have a scanner or digital camera, you can add original artwork, black and white line drawings for a coloring book, and photographs of locations, fieldtrips, etc. Powerpoint will recognize most graphic formats (.tiff, pcx, bmp, etc.) However, you may want to save your images as either .gif or .jpg files in order to have them work on a web page. I also advise you to use only 8 letters, all lower case, without spaces or caps in order to make sure they are readable on all computer formats. This is the old DOS format, but it still is the most reliable system of naming files when it comes to posting on a web server. You will need a photo editor in order to resize images, crop, and adjust color. Most scanners and cameras come with some sort of photo editor similar to Photoshop.

- Adobe Training Page - http://www.adobe.com/misc/training.html
- Frog Prints - Help with your Digital Photos - http://www.frogprints.co.nz/help/index.cfm
- Explore Digital Photography with Windows XP - http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/digitalphotography/default.asp
- Fix Photos with Digital Imaging Software - http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/digitalphotography/default.asp
- Prep your Photos for the Web - http://graphicssoft.about.com/library/weekly/aa000516a.htm
- Gif Animators - http://animation.about.com/cs/gifanimators/
- Free Photo Editors from About.com - http://graphicssoft.about.com/cs/imageediting/tp/freephotoedw.htm
- Short Courses - http://www.shortcourses.com/

Scanners:

- About.com Scanning Tips - http://desktoppub.about.com/cs/scanning/
- Link to Learn Scanning Tutorials - http://205.146.39.13/lrn_scanning.html
- A Few Scan Tips from Wayne Fulton - http://www.scantips.com/
- Scanner Guide from Scan Soft - http://www.scansoft.com/scannerguide/ - Check the glossary of terms at http://www.scansoft.com/scannerguide/glossary/

See the audio and video hardware and software discussion for more on how to digitize sound and video.

Electronic Folders for Each Student

You will want to create a portfolio folder for your class on your hard drive or in your server folder. Within that folder, you will want to create a folder for each student. You may plan to have each student create one Powerpoint presentation or you may have them create a number of different presentations within just one folder. However, you may wish to have the students collect artifacts and create a number of folders for each subject matter area in order to save artifacts directly into folders. Students may be assigned folders on your school server. Once you have determined the purpose of your portfolio project and evaluated your resources with hardware and software, you will want to plan your file management system. The first example below is recommended for beginning a portfolio project. Students may create several Powerpoint presentations and then create a Powerpoint index linking all of their presentations. The teacher can then create a master Powerpoint index linking to each student portfolio Powerpoint index. A number of templates are included on the CD-Rom. You may wish to design your own templates prior to having the students begin the project. The designs in this tutorial include templates for portfolios based on subject matter standards or portfolios based on the multiple intelligences.
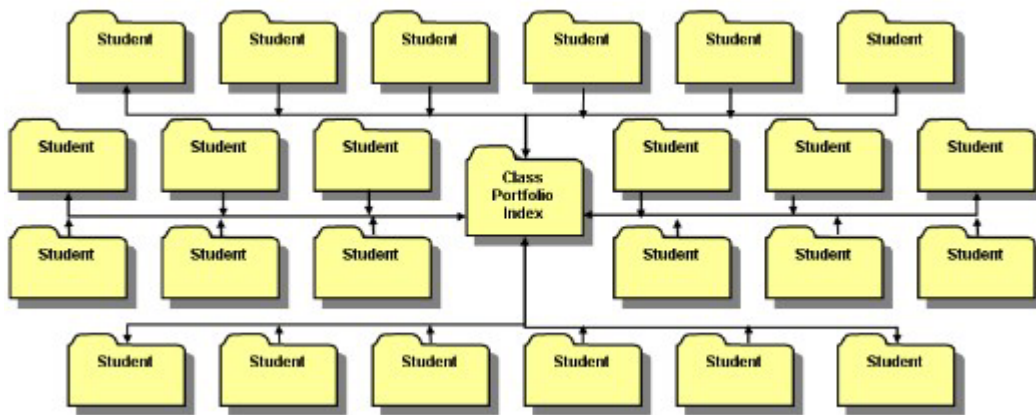

Subject Matter Design

Within each student portfolio folder, an elementary teacher may wish to have students create a series of Powerpoint presentations, each one based on a subject matter area. You may choose to focus one just a few areas as you begin. The secondary teacher will be focusing on one subject matter area. You may also decide to create your portfolios based on a particular unit of study or as a part of project-based learning with hypermedia and multimedia. Design your portfolio project using a graphic organizer in Word or Powerpoint. The organizer below was created in Inspiration. The multiple intelligences organizer was created in Powerpoint. Prepare student Powerpoint templates or have your students participate in the conceptual design by organizing their own portfolios

before beginning. The simplest way for a multiple subject teacher to design a beginning portfolio is to create a single Powerpoint with one slide for each subject area. For single subject teachers, you may wish to design student portfolios based on the standards. See the CD-Rom for templates for Powerpoint presentations. A list of templates included on the CD-Rom is provided in the appendix.
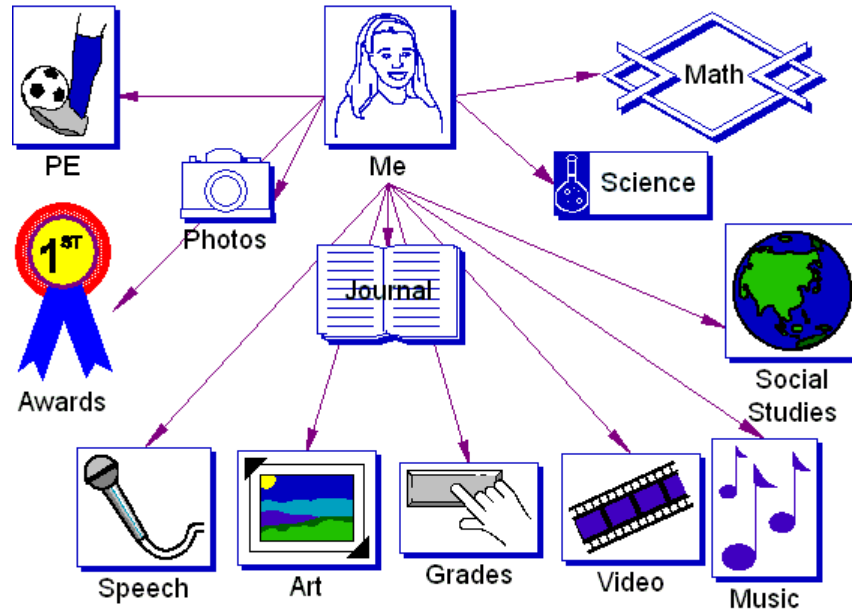
Multiple Intelligences Design

To develop student portfolios based on the multiple intelligences, you will focus on each of the eight intelligences. Information on the multple intelligences is provided in this tutorial and CD-Rom. You may want to have the students create one presentation for each intelligence or create one presentation with one or two slides devoted to each intelligence. See the templates on the CD-Rom.
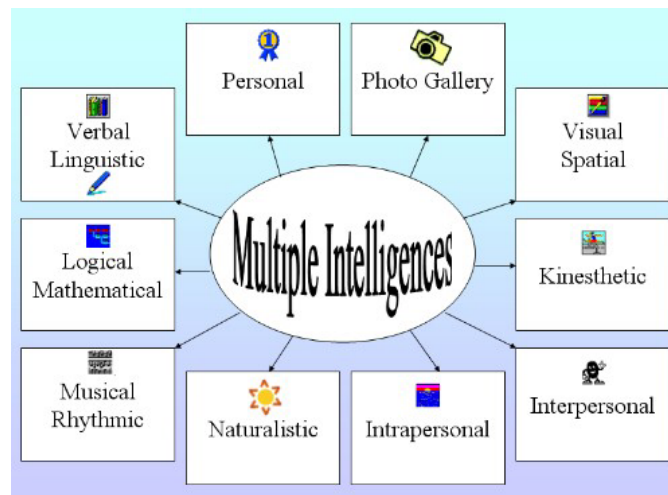
Other Designs

As you review your purposes for starting the student portfolio process, you may decide to create your own portfolio design based on your specific classroom needs. You may wish to begin with a personal "All About Me" presentation. You can then expand on your project by adding additional presentations as the students go through the year. Your last page should be an index with links to each new Powerpoint presentation. A template is provided on the CD-Rom.