

**UNDERSTANDING PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT AND HOW IT
MIGHT BEST SUPPORT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT:
A WORKSHOP**

by

Elizabeth Pero

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Abstract

Appropriate assessment procedures and processes can positively impact teaching and student learning (McMillan, Hellsten, & Klinger, 2010; Phye, 1997; Taylor & Nolen, 2008; Wilson, ~~Floden, & Ferrini-Mun~~2001). Portfolio assessment is a method that has been used within North American Language Arts classrooms for more than twenty years, and can be defined as a “purposeful selection by a student of work/artifacts that represent the student’s pursuits, explorations, and projects as a way of evidencing the student’s progress, effort, achievements, and growth and as a basis for exploring possibilities” (Tierney & Clark, 2002, p. 443). However, the technical challenges of using portfolio assessment are well cited in research literature (see Heller, Sheingold, & Myford, 1998; Herman & Winters, 1994; Valencia & Calfee, 1991). The Ontario Ministry of Education requires the use of portfolios in the Grade 12 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC) and in special education settings. Nevertheless, anecdotal evidence suggests that portfolios are not used in all OSSLC classrooms. Thus, in light of ministry directives, technical challenges, and lack of training the following project and workshop has been designed to add to the existing literature on portfolio assessment, to inform educational practice, and to facilitate educators’ self-efficacy and confidence in using the assessment tool.

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"A hundred times every day I remind myself that my inner and outer life are based on the labors of others." - Albert Einstein

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Chapter One: Introduction

The body of literature on assessment suggests that the selection of appropriate assessment methods aid in the improvement of student performance (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Brookhart, 1997; Crooks, 1988; Shepard, 2006). For instance, Crooks' (1988) synthesis of more than 200 studies on classroom assessment highlights that the type of assessment chosen, under certain conditions, can have a positive influence on student achievement. For instance, assessment has the ability to track students' learning progress, to motivate students to learn, and to promote learning processes (Andrade, 2010; McMillan et al., 2010; Phye, 1997; Wilson et al., 2001). In addition, assessment can be part of an ongoing instructional process, and support instructional decision-making that strategically focuses teaching (Taylor & Nolen, 2008). The synthesis of assessment and teaching practices can be a powerful tool that drives students' positive learning experiences (Stiggins, 2001).

Portfolios are a method of assessment that have been used within North American Language Arts classrooms for over twenty years (Andrade, 2010; Tierney & Clark, 2002). Tierney and Clark (2002) define portfolio assessment as a "purposeful selection by a student of work/artifacts that represent the student's pursuits, explorations, and projects as a way of evidencing the student's progress, effort, achievements, and growth and as a basis for exploring possibilities" (p. 443; see also Growing Success, 2010; Taylor & Nolen, 2008). The above definition suggests that portfolio assessment requires greater degrees of student involvement and that such assessments might represent growth more accurately than traditional, more "objective" assessment methods (Taylor & Nolen, 2008). For instance, in the Language Arts classroom, portfolios have been used to assess the complex processes of reading, writing, and communicating through more genuine and "real world" tasks (Roth, 2004). Portfolio assessment

in the Language Arts classroom might be valuable because the method can subsume multiple curriculum strands and expectations as part of an interconnected whole (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2003). Portfolio assessment might then support improved student learning and performance because it networks ideas and skills together so that they might then be categorized with existing knowledge, thus deepening understanding (Costello & Monti, 2011; Taylor & Nolen, 2008).

My interest in portfolio assessment has developed through my work of the last seven years as a part of my local school board's various literacy support programs. More specifically, my interest in the area of portfolio assessment and how it is used developed over the last two years through my support of students in an Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC) classroom. I have experienced tensions and contradictions in my observations of when, how, and where portfolio assessment is used. For instance, I wonder why portfolios are not used in all OSSLC classrooms across the board, and if portfolios best support struggling students.

Additionally, I have observed that when portfolio assessment is used in remedial literacy classrooms that students are able to express orally what curriculum-focused skills they have improved upon during exam conferences. Students' communication of the skills they have improved upon and the strategies that helped them to improve suggests a self-knowledge of their learning and that that improvement took time to achieve – i.e. at least the length of the semester. The students' ability to communicate in which skills they have grown has the potential to support and promote self-regulated learning skills. The literature on self-regulated learning asserts that the cyclical control of academic performance through key processes that include “goal-directed behavior, use of specific strategies to attain goals, and the adaptation and modification of behaviours or strategies to optimize learning and performance” (Sandars & Cleary, 2011, p.

875). Additionally, differences in self-regulation processes have been identified between higher- and lower-achieving students, where lower-achieving students find difficulty in accessing the above key processes (Sandars & Cleary). Thus my interest in portfolio assessment for struggling learners is piqued as I wonder about its potential to support and promote the development of self-regulated learning skills, skills that possibly enhance learning and achievement and skills that lower-achieving students struggle with.

Purpose

The purpose of this research project then is threefold: (a) to examine the research on effective assessment and evaluation practices as they pertain to the learning process, to portfolio assessment in the classroom, and to struggling learners; (b) to investigate the literature pertaining to the professional development of adult learners through an evidence-based instructional approach; and (c) to develop a workshop for professional learners that details an evidence-based approach for conducting portfolio assessment in the classroom. A deeper understanding of portfolio assessment might facilitate the reliable use of portfolio assessment so that educators might make more valid inferences regarding student achievement from portfolio results, especially considering the sparse guidelines provided by provincial documentation.

Additionally, I hope to facilitate educators' feelings of self-efficacy and confidence in their use not only of portfolio assessment, but also assessment more generally. Finally, in completing my Master of Education program at Queen's, I hope to help build our understanding of portfolio use in supporting the education of struggling students [help build our understanding of portfolio use in supporting the education of struggling students.](#)

Rationale

The rationale for this project arises from anecdotal evidence I have encountered suggesting a misalignment between curriculum documentation and practice. The Ontario Ministry of Education requires the use of portfolio assessment in the Grade 12 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC). As described by the OSSLC curriculum document: “in this course, students will maintain and manage a literacy portfolio to demonstrate and help them assess their growth in reading and writing skills throughout the course” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2003, p. 10). The OSSLC is designed to provide intensive literacy support and an alternative method of expressing reading and writing skills for those students who have not successfully completed the provincially mandated Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). However the rationale for portfolio use in the OSSLC is not clear as the curriculum document does not explicitly state why a literacy portfolio should be used beyond general implications that portfolios support student success by documenting improvement over time in the areas of reading and writing. Moreover, suggested “guidelines” are imprecise and scattered throughout the document leaving much to interpretation.

Similarly, the Ministry of Education’s *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools*’ (2010) document also describes the use of portfolio assessment, especially in special education contexts. For example, *Growing Success* posits that teachers should obtain assessment through a variety of means including portfolios, that portfolio assessment helps provide continuous communication to parents and students about achievement, that portfolios are important when planning for students with special education needs, and that portfolios are valuable as an accomodation for students with special education needs (see pp. 28, 52, 71, & 78).

According to *Growing Success* a portfolio is:

“a collection of samples of student work that the student, with teacher support, carefully selects and adds to on an ongoing basis to track what the student has learned throughout the year. Both teachers and students assess the work in portfolios. Because students are asked to actively reflect on their learning in order to choose the samples that will go into the portfolio, a portfolio is an especially powerful self-assessment tool” (Growing Success, 2010, p. 152).

Growing Success is more explicit in addressing the question: “Why portfolio assessment?,” and states that beyond demonstrating learning processes and being a “powerful self-assessment tool,” portfolio assessment is a viable tool for special education programs because it considers student strengths, needs and instructional level (p. 152).

While portfolio assessment is included in both of the OSSLC curriculum and *Growing Success* documents, anecdotal evidence suggests that portfolios are not used in all OSSLC classrooms. Further, where portfolios are being used the format of the assessment appears to differ and does not always follow ministry guidelines. Yet the portfolio’s continued inclusion in government documentation suggests that the Ontario Ministry of Education values portfolios in the accommodation and support of students’ learning in alternative educational contexts.

Implemented in the 2003-2004 school year, the OSSLC was designed only two years after the OSSLT. The OSSLT is supposed to be the accepted measure for students to demonstrate that they have acquired the reading and writing skills necessary for full participation in twenty-first century society. Successful completion of the OSSLT or the OSSLC is also a graduation requirement (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2003). The OSSLT is administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), an independent, arms length agency of the Ontario provincial government. The OSSLC provides an alternative course-based method to

assist Grade 12 students who have been unsuccessful on the OSSLT. Students enrolled in the OSSLC receive intensive instruction, practice and support, and demonstrate their literacy skills through multiple opportunities.

I have observed that portfolios are used for a combination of purposes in the OSSLC classroom: as a working folder to house works-in-progress, as a showcase for summative evaluation, and as a growth portfolio to tell the story of student improvement over time (see Taylor & Nolen, 2008; Valencia & Calfee, 1991). For example, in one school, all student work was stored in the portfolio and was not organized or reflected upon throughout the term. At the term's completion, students were required to organize their portfolio into three categories: Reading Strategies (organized by each of the 10 taught strategies), Opinion Piece writing, and News Report writing. From each category, students were to choose a piece that was most meaningful to them or a piece that they were most proud of, and discuss each of their three chosen samples in a end-of-semester conference with their teacher. The one time conference held at the end of the term acted as the students' final examination for the course.

In my experience, it does appear that portfolio assessment as used in the OSSLC classroom incorporates some of the ministry outlined "guidelines" for the required literacy portfolio. While students in the above example did not manage their portfolios throughout the term and reflect on their improvement, they arguably had the opportunity to "assess their growth in reading and writing skills" by the end of the course (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2003, p. 10). Nevertheless, there was no directed tracking of texts read, writing produced, nor was a learning journal incorporated. Thus literacy portfolios in the OSSLC classroom vary from what is stated in provincial documents.

The above led me to wonder if portfolios really are a reliable source of assessment information regarding student performance, if they are more effective in remedial and special education contexts, and if teachers feel hindered in their use of portfolio assessment due to the lack of clear guidelines and rationale in ministry documentation. Thus I set forward to research portfolio assessment, how it might be better used in OSSLC classrooms, and how best to share that information with other practicing and interested teachers.

In light of the above, this project incorporates three key components: (a) a literature review of the most current assessment and evaluation practices, with portfolio assessment being a key focus, and how they support learning, and perhaps, more specifically, the learning of low-achievers; (b) a literature review of effective professional development practices and instructional approaches for adult learners; and (c) a workshop design that can be delivered to adult learners that presents research-driven strategies for the use of portfolio assessment in schools.

The first major component of the project will outline the literature on current assessment and evaluation praxis in the classroom, and will be used to outline a discussion of portfolio assessment and assessment for struggling learners. The literature review will be used to inform the content of the workshop.

The second key section will review research on professional development practices and adult learners so as to support the creation of an effective professional learning experience.

The final significant element is the workshop that addresses helpful, evidence-based strategies for the implementation of portfolio assessment in the classroom.

Some basic assumptions underlie my project and frame its contents – even those which are evidence based. First, four constructivist propositions “central to all learning” that inform my

project are: “(1) learners construct their own learning; (2) new learning depends on students’ existing understandings; (3) social interaction/dialogue plays a critical role; and (4) authentic learning tasks are needed to ensure meaningful learning” (Ledoux & McHenry, 2013, p. 387). Second, that some, but not all teachers desire professional development opportunities. Third, that professional development opportunities improve self-efficacy and thus teaching and learning. And fourth, that struggling learners are a unique population that deserve the opportunity to learn and develop the literacy skills believed to be necessary for success.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature on the history of assessment and evaluation with a focus on portfolio assessment. Additionally, a section on struggling learners will be considered so as to explore the question of how portfolios might support such learners in light of Ontario Ministry of Education directives. Finally, literature that addresses professional development practice and adult learners is considered. All literature was reviewed so as to inform the selection and organization of the workshop and to determine how best to present that information.

Assessment For Learning

Historically, assessment practices in North America have focused on summative achievement testing intended to sort, classify and place students. The scientific management and social efficiency movements of the early to mid 1900s that informed testing in other fields played a role in the classroom as well. Multiple choice tests were the standard, and were developed outside of the classroom for use within because assessment was considered to be too burdensome for classroom teachers (Brookhart, 2004; Shepard, 2006). Shepard's review of teacher education textbook chapters between the 1940s and 1990s is an excellent example of how teachers were excluded from assessment practice. "Textbooks provided little explication about how teachers were to make sense of assessment data so as to redesign instruction," Shepard (2006) writes (p. 625). More specifically, of 30 textbooks analyzed only two contained sections that discussed classroom assessment (Shepard).

A shift in educational thought in the 1980s highlighted constructivism and the learning theory that students actively construct new knowledge. It also led to the understanding that richer assessments that could secure more information about student achievement, in the hands of

classroom teachers, had the potential to provide more accurate information regarding students' understandings and proficiency in any given subject area (Brookhart, 2004; Shepard, 2006).

Simultaneously, there was evidence that assessment reform could be used to provide more [assessme](#)meaningful educational experiences that served to motivate students and direct student learning in a more focused way (Lane & Stone, 2006).

It is well cited in the research literature that appropriate assessment procedures and processes can positively impact teaching and student learning (McMillan et al. [et al.](#), 2010; Phye, 1997; Taylor & Nolen, 2008; Wilson et al., [et al](#)2001). While both large-scale and classroom-based assessments affect the learning experiences of students, research has begun to explore more thoroughly the advantages and disadvantages of both alternative and formative assessment practices (e.g., Orly, 2005; Waters & Burns, 2004; Whitehead, 2008). Alternative assessment is a broad term that incorporates notions such as the ability of all students to participate in assessment, the use of nontraditional (not paper and pencil) assessment tools and assessments that more closely mirror the skills and strategies being taught in the classroom (Young, 2010). Alternative assessment can occur during instruction, inform instructional decisions that support student learning and can be formative in nature (McMillan et al., 2010; Shephard, 2006). Formative assessment is argued to support and enable student learning and achievement better than summative grading procedures (e.g. Brookhart, 1994, 1997, 2004, 2006; Shepard, 2006). Recently, educational documents have increasingly promoted the use of formative and alternative assessment practices. The Ontario Ministry of Education's *Growing Success* (2010) is an example of one such document.

The Canadian Context

The Ontario government has recognized the need for and impact of alternative assessment praxis, for example, the use of portfolio assessment, in their *Growing Success* (2010) and OSSLC curriculum documents (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2003). *Growing Success* purports that the primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning, and there is much focus on both assessment for learning and assessment as learning as inclusive practices. *Growing Success* asserts that assessment for students should be an “ongoing and continuous process that is an integral part of the daily teaching and learning process” (p. 7). The document then suggests that portfolio assessment be one of the varieties of educational tools and assessment strategies that special education teachers use to support their students various strengths and weaknesses.

Educational policy reform in both the United States and Canada has focused on assessment for learning practices while simultaneously instituting high-stakes testing accountability measures. For example, despite some educational policy reform in the United States that focused on assessment for learning practices in the 1990s, in 2001, the United States passed the “No Child Left Behind” Elementary and Secondary Education Act that emphasized the use of high-stakes testing to advance accountability goals in K-12 (Brennan, 2006). Brennan suggests that most policy-makers assumed that high-stakes testing was one of the only ways to achieve educational accountability. Brennan argues that Yet high-stakes testing has the potential to breed negative consequences such as the narrowing of curriculum, or “teaching to the test,” and the misuse of tests in a way that counters meaningful learning and authentic, fluid, and responsive teaching (p. 10). A way to counter high-stakes testing is a focus on classroom assessment that is locally developed, -with the classroom context in mind. Brennan states that classroom assessment should “provide a more seamless integration of testing and assessment that

permits formative evaluation of student progress” (p. 10). Alternative performance assessment such as portfolios began to be considered a “valuable tool for educational reform by policy makers and advocates for curriculum reform” (Lane & Stone, p. 389).

Like the United States, Canada too has been faced with educational policy that emphasized the use of high-stakes testing so as to make public educational praxis more transparent to the public. The Ontario provincial government’s introduction of the OSSLT is a prime example. Yet Ontario Ministry of Education documents and directives also suggest a belief in classroom assessment that is developed with the classroom context in mind (e.g., *Growing Success*, 2010, Ontario Ministry of Education, 2003). Canada’s assessment trajectory will be discussed further below.

Portfolio Assessment in the Classroom

~~Valencia and Calfee (1991)~~They report that ~~in the United States~~ portfolios began to be used ~~in the United States in during~~ the 1970s and 1980s when writing as a process became part of the curriculum and a more routine part of instructional practice. While interest in portfolios may have peaked during the 1980s and subsided since that time, there has been a continued interest in portfolio use in the research literature (e.g., Valencia & Au, 1997; Meeus, Van Petegem, & Engels, 2009; Driessen et al., 2006).) For instance, literature pertaining to portfolio assessment and its use focused on its technical challenges and the perceived barriers in its implementation (e.g., Herman et al., 1993). Additionally, as portfolio assessment began to be used in conjunction with high-stakes testing in the United States, a great deal of literature addressed issues of reliability such as rater reliability (e.g., Herman et al., 1998). Portfolio assessment continues to appear in assessment and evaluation literature as a response to high-stakes testing educational reform in the United States (Lane & Stone, 2006).

The use of portfolios as a part of classroom assessment practice in Canada was stimulated by a policy reform in the late 1980s in British Columbia that focused on “student centered curriculum,” which referred to “curriculum and related activities being aimed at fostering student learning geared to the abilities and interests of the child” (Anderson & Bachor, 1998, p. [p.356](#)). Anderson and Bachor (1998) assert that British Columbia’s policy reform mirrored developments in other educational systems throughout the country. Thus portfolios became a viable assessment technique in the collective conscience of Canadian teachers (Anderson & Bachor).

The research literature seems to support the use of portfolios as a beneficial method of classroom assessment. Hewitt-Gervais (2000) examined what primary/junior teachers perceived were the instructional, learning, and assessment roles of students’ language arts portfolios. Their study surveyed 314 Kindergarten through Grade 5 teachers in 13 of 26 elementary schools in a midsize Florida school district. Survey questions were based on a review of literature that covered organization, content, functions, applications, and purported strengths and weaknesses. A subset of teachers was then interviewed to explore their perceptions about the impact of student portfolios on themselves and on their students. Interview questions were developed in the same way as survey questions and fell into the following categories: (a) criteria for inclusion of materials in portfolios; (b) the role of portfolios in marking and grading; (c) the impact of portfolios on students; (d) the impact on teachers’ teaching; and (e) the impact on teachers’ communication with stakeholders. Hall and Hewitt-Gervais used descriptive statistics to analyze survey data, and interview data were examined for themes. Sixty-one percent of teachers reported that student effort and motivation had been impacted, and seventy percent of teachers identified that portfolios helped them to focus on the needs of students and used them in deriving

grades. Hall and Hewitt-Gervais' work suggests that portfolio assessment was being used in the American elementary context to motivate students, to drive instruction, and to determine final grades.

Underwood (1998) studied the benefits of portfolio assessment on student motivation and achievement more specifically. Underwood worked with two groups of teachers in a middle school serving an urban population on the west coast of the United States: the portfolio teaching group and the non-portfolio teaching group. The middle school enrolled 1633 seventh-and eighth-grade students from a variety of backgrounds. Students in the portfolio group submitted both self-selected and required class work in their portfolios to a committee of English teachers. Additionally, teachers provided details of the explicit instruction used to support student growth based on criteria as well as marking rubrics to the committee. The purpose of the study was to determine whether students in the portfolio classrooms demonstrated higher levels of achievement and motivation as readers and writers than did students in the non-portfolio classrooms. Three measurement tools were used to identify any differences amongst classrooms – one for reading, one for writing, and a motivation survey. Data from each group were analyzed using separate mixed-model analyses of variance. Results indicated that placement in the portfolio classrooms appeared to have neither a favorable nor an unfavorable effect on writing achievement as measured by the site's direct writing assessment. Placement in portfolio classrooms had a statistically significant positive effect on students as measured by a direct reading assessment and on students' motivation. Thus Underwood's study also points to portfolio assessment as a student motivator, yet while a positive effect on reading achievement is indicated based on the site's assessment of reading, there exists little to no effect of portfolio assessment on writing achievement.

In the same year, Anderson and Bachor (1998) published their review of three Canadian studies that involved the use of portfolios. Their study suggests that the value of portfolios lies in their flexibility to include more “authentic” and regular classroom learning activities rather than special events such as tests and large-scale assessments (p. 374). Through survey data, Grades 3/4 and 6/7 British Columbian teachers described three typical uses of portfolios as: (a) a collection of student work that reflected student achievement of established learning goals; (b) a collection of works-in-progress for students to review and evaluate; and (c) a way to report grading decisions to parents/guardians (Anderson & Bachor). So, British Columbian data might support Underwood’s (1998) argument that portfolio assessment facilitates favorable student performance and Hall and Hewitt-Gervais’ (2000) findings that final grading decisions might be made based on portfolio results.

In Alberta, 637 elementary, junior high and high school teachers described similar uses of portfolio assessment as those found in British Columbia. Anderson and Bachor’s theme-based analysis of survey results suggest that portfolio contents must be relevant to desired student outcomes. Albertan teachers also believed that portfolios motivated their students, that portfolios were an integral part of the teaching and learning cycles, and that portfolios supported the communication of final grades. Unfortunately, while these surveys report teacher beliefs, they do not provide any evidence that a connection exists between portfolio use and desired student outcomes.

Finally, Aschbacher (1993) conducted action research in a mid-size secondary school in the United States. Through interview data that asked teachers’ about their instructional practices with regards to portfolio assessment, Aschbacher found that a majority of teachers attitudes

towards students had changed as 2/3 of teachers expected higher levels of performance from their students.

Thus, when all reviewed studies are taken together, findings suggest that portfolio assessment is believed to motivate students, has an impact on teaching, and is valuable in the communication of grades. The challenges of implementing portfolio assessment in the classroom are considered next.

Challenges of Portfolio Assessment in the Classroom

Wolf and Miller (1997) had 206 Californian teachers identify potential barriers to the implementation of portfolio assessments. Their survey included a list of 30 barriers determined through a review of literature and participants were asked to note them using scales that ranged from 1 (*unlikely problem*) to 4 (*serious problem*). Barriers were categorized into five groupings: Instruction, People, Resources, Scoring, and Time; the majority of teachers struggled with time and scoring of portfolio assessment.

Hall and Hewitt-Gervais (2000) also suggested that a major challenge of portfolio assessment was the ability of educators to make valid inferences regarding student achievement from portfolio evidence. Hall and Hewitt-Gervais suggested a framework that could improve validity, but recognized that it might be a challenge to implement. That framework will be discussed in further detail in the next section. Hall and Hewitt-Gervais, like Wolf and Miller, found that the time it takes to implement portfolio assessment is a major drawback for educators.

Thus time and scoring appear to be major hurdles for educators when it comes to the implementation of portfolio assessment. The next section will review the literature on validity.

Issues of Validity

Gearhart and Wolf (1997) demonstrated that portfolio assessment supports students' writing processes and competencies. They interviewed two teachers and six, teacher-selected students in four urban, rural and suburban classrooms in the United States. The students were chosen to represent a "diversity of ethnicity, gender, and language arts competencies (two high, two medium, and two low)" (p. 4). The interview data considered what evidence from the portfolios demonstrated aspects of the writing process. For example, they looked for evidence that suggested "(a) students' opportunities to learn to use a range of resources, processes, and standards in ways that enhance the effectiveness of their writing; (b) students' opportunities to produce "hard copy" evidence of their uses of processes; and (c) students' capacities to analyze their writing processes" (p. 265). Evidence of opportunity to learn was drawn from teacher interviews and portfolio materials. Evidence of opportunity to produce hard evidence was based on comparisons of teachers' reported practices with the artifacts found in the portfolios. Evidence of students' capacities to analyze their writing processes was based on analyses of student interviews and portfolios. The evidence of opportunity to learn writing processes showed that students were engaged in planning, drafting, revising, and editing. The evidence of opportunity to produce hard evidence was found primarily in the form of editing and teacher created templates/graphic organizers. Gearhart and Wolf (1997) also found that analysis of writing processes was weak in that students often simply parroted closed prompts like "Yes, I did include prior knowledge" from worksheets provided by teachers (p. 280). Additionally, student interviews found that students often completed steps because they knew it was part of an evaluation. Findings indicate a misalignment between portfolio dimensions and evidence found in portfolios. While curriculum requirements were clear, there may have been gaps in teachers'

pedagogic decisions. Gearhart and Wolf also questioned whether work in portfolios accurately reflected students' writing processes or those of teachers.

Valencia and Calfee (1991) explored the possibilities for literacy portfolio procedures and formats that might improve upon the validity of the assessment method. Based on a review of literature, Valencia and Calfee suggested design features that might be included in classroom portfolios. The features include: a summary sheet for recording student growth, supporting evidence from other sources of assessment, and a synopsis of instructional activities to appraise the alignment between the teaching and learning cycles. These features were intended to provide opportunity for teachers to make more valid inferences from portfolio data about student achievement; inferences that would also lead to improved instruction (Valencia & Calfee).

Valencia and Au (1997) also investigated the validity of portfolio assessment. Valencia and Au (1997) utilized two established American elementary literacy portfolio programs to conduct their research. Each program used portfolio assessment for different purposes, one for improving instruction and engaging students, and the other to meet the requirements of large-scale assessment. Through survey data, Valencia and Au (1997) discovered that three assumptions underscored teachers' beliefs that portfolio assessment was a valid assessment tool: (a) that all identified outcomes or benchmarks are adequately documented in the portfolio, (b) that evaluation criteria was aligned with the identified outcomes and benchmarks, and (c) that teachers agree that the evidence translates the outcome. The work of Valencia and Au (1997) also stresses the need for a synopsis of instructional activities that might make explicit the alignment between outcomes or benchmarks and portfolio evidence. Such a synopsis might be linked to the creation of specific and explicit criteria, for example a checklist that both students and teachers might refer to throughout the teaching and learning cycles.

To add to the work of Valencia and Calfee (1991), Simon and Forgette-Giroux (2000) proposed that a framework should guide the selection of the contents that form the collection. This framework calls for the “cross-curricular sampling of entries that provide evidence of the cognitive, behavioural, affective, metacognitive and developmental dimensions of a single but complex competency, such as problem solving or effective communication” (p. 88). Evidence is collected over time, in the form of students’ productions from drafts to final versions, and self-reflections and progress reports inserted regularly into the portfolios. Simon and Forgette-Giroux echo Valencia and Calfee’s (1991), and their call for the incorporation of a representative sample of student work in the decision-making processes that determine achievement. The common thread is that an imposed framework or design will improve the validity of portfolio assessment because it will help teachers to grasp the portfolio’s capacity to measure competencies that have not been effectively evaluated using traditional approaches. They suggest that teachers begin by acknowledging the use of the portfolio primarily for assessment purposes, and then focus on a single competency such as problem-solving viewed from “various angles and applied within a variety of cross-curricular learning contexts” (Simon & Forgette-Giroux, 2000, p. 93). Thirdly, teachers should acknowledge the using of the portfolio to yield a holistic picture of the student’s development of the competency. Finally, the study suggests that portfolio assessment must go beyond “communication or showcasing purposes” in order for it to serve as an assessment tool, and include specific guidelines for what is to be included (p. 99).

Herman, Gearhart, and Baker (1993) examined if existing scoring rubrics could be used to assess portfolio work with similar levels of rater agreement as was typically reported for standard writing assessments, if different scoring procedures such as an aggregate of scores for individual pieces versus a single score of the portfolio as a whole provide similar information, and if

portfolio scores demonstrate expected developmental levels and scores that correspond to other indicators of the same performance. In an American elementary school, Grades 1, 3, and 4 students maintained writing portfolios that included monthly narratives plus all other writing work. In addition, all students were given 30-40 minutes to respond to the field-tested narrative prompt “A Very Special Memory” near the end of the school year (p. 204). Grades 1 and 4 teachers submitted the portfolios of two high-, two medium-, and two low-ability students, and the Grade 3 teacher, who was more involved with the project, submitted all portfolios. With all identifiers removed, all final assignments were submitted to raters in a chronological order. A rubric that was created based on extensive research, and that had been used and refined by a local school district over several years, was used. The rubric contained four 6-point subscales for assessing General Competence, Focus/Organization, Elaboration, and Mechanics. Only the General Competence category was used to assess the portfolio as a whole. All raters were experienced teachers within the district who had used the rubric previously.

Heller, Sheingold, and Myford (1998) examined what they believed to be sound rater reasoning. Heller et al. based their research on a 1983 model of cognitive processes used to assess essay writing proposed by Freedman and Calfee that includes reading and interpreting the text, creating a picture of the text as a whole, evaluating that image, and articulating a score. Once read and interpreted, texts must be monitored for admissibility, and then evaluated. Upon evaluation of all submissions, evaluation across text images must occur before a final rating is articulated. Heller et al. propose that one threat to validity might be that raters use different sequences of the above processes.

Student portfolios from children in Grades 4 and 8 were used and only included personally selected, with help from classroom teachers, classroom work that when taken together

would provide strong evidence for achievement with respect to the dimensions outlined below. They randomly sampled 10 raters of a population of 84 to test a model for portfolio rating within a large-scale portfolio assessment system in California. Raters' reasoning during think-aloud interviews was analyzed as they determined if the portfolio rated "Beginning, Developing, Accomplished, or Exemplary" in a single dimension (p. 13). One rater from each of the 10 dimensions (Composing and Expressing, Constructing Meaning, Communicating Math, Math Content, Putting Math to Work) and grade-level groups (Fourth and Eighth) was represented. Raters represented a pool that consisted of 75% practicing teachers, 20% school and district administrators and 5% various other educational stakeholders.

Raters did not follow a linear rating sequence, but rather cycled through the "component processes," i.e. reading and interpreting the text, creating a visual of the text as a whole, and evaluating the image. Heller et al. found that score validity was threatened when raters omitted one of the major processes, evaluated portfolios without consideration of important criteria in the rating guide, or applied extraneous assessment criteria, e.g. brought their beliefs to bear on the scoring procedure. The three raters who exhibited such behavior generated ratings at a portfolio reading that were inconsistent and unreliable.

While many of the results discussed above pertain to policy-driven, large-scale portfolio projects, some important information regarding the validity of portfolio assessment results can be derived. Primarily, clear purposes, criteria for inclusion, criteria for scoring, and scoring procedures for portfolio assessment must be set. In addition, a rater might consider scoring the same piece of included work from each portfolio first before moving onto another piece and their cognitive processes while scoring. Finally, variables such as genre demand different skills and

products. Thus a single competency mark for overall performance might not be a valid measure of student ability (Nystrand et al., 1993).

Portfolio Use for Struggling Learners

I have not been able to identify research that specifically addresses the intersections of portfolio assessment and struggling learners (learners who are more likely to experience difficulty in high school such as failure and drop-out) or students with special education needs. However, there is literature in the field of assessment that discusses the positive impact of formative assessment on all students and more specifically, the large, positive effect sizes of the feedback that accompanies formative assessment (Hattie & Timperely, 2007). Feedback is especially effective for struggling learners as it supports and promotes self-regulated learning skills, can encourage students' investment and persistence on tasks and can support their motivation to take on more challenging tasks (Margolis & McCabe, 2003). Portfolio assessment, with feedback being one of its characteristics when the tool is designed to demonstrate growth and provide opportunities for students to self-reflect, might then support struggling learners through its use of feedback. Thus portfolio assessment when used formatively, and when it incorporates feedback consistently, has the potential to motivate students to become more engaged in their learning and, more specifically, to reshape their autonomous motivation.

More specifically, an extrinsic factor like feedback may add more value to an activity and so become integrated in a person's sense of self, thus making activities that include feedback more intrinsically motivating. Additionally, as the learner has the choice to accept or reject parts or the feedback in its entirety, it becomes even more effective and perhaps more motivating. Therefore, it might be deduced that assessment practices that include effective feedback, with the opportunity to accept or reject that feedback in parts or as a whole, has the potential to positively

affect the motivation of struggling learners, learners who encounter many external factors that also affect their motivation. Struggling learners in turn may feel more competence and success in regards to academic achievement.

Feedback can be understood as “information with which a learner can confirm, add to, overwrite, tune, or restructure in memory, whether that information is domain knowledge, meta-cognitive knowledge, beliefs about self and tasks, or cognitive tactics and strategies” (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 82). Feedback should also “reduce discrepancies between current understandings and performance and a goal” (p. 86). Hattie and Timperley’s synthesis of twelve previous meta-analyses that included specific information on feedback in classrooms included 196 studies and 6,972 effect sizes. The average effect size was 0.79, which was twice the average effect of general schooling on achievement and which fell in the top five of the ten highest influences on achievement. When students received informative feedback about a task and how to do it more effectively, effect sizes were the highest (Hattie & Timperley).

In a comparative review, Brookhart (1994) discusses how feedback can be used to motivate and enhance student performance. She elucidates that evaluation should be frequent and challenging – within students’ capabilities, but also require some effort. Included in this condition for effective student evaluation is the need for students to receive feedback at reasonable intervals. Brookhart posits that students’ inclination, desire, or drive to accomplish a task – all of which may be improved upon with effective feedback – is as important to the teaching and learning processes as cognitive ability.

Brookhart’s (1994) discussion of motivation and feedback is verified by more current motivation research. For instance, self-determination motivation theory addresses multiple aspects of the individual, e.g. universal psychological needs, and the way in which one might

make adjustments to opportunities for learning gains in an effort to achieve in school (Deci & Ryan, 2008). More specifically, self-determination theory (SDT) posits that *autonomous motivation*, including intrinsic motivation and types of extrinsic motivation that come from an activity's value and perhaps have been integrated into a person's sense of self, can predict important outcomes like effective performance because of the experience of volition (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Thus, to experience choice might support the best and most positive adjustments to opportunities for learning gains (Mithaug, Campeau, & Wolman, 2003).

Besides challenges with motivation and self-regulation, struggling learners typically encounter multiple other challenges that can affect their motivation (Mithaug, Campeau, & Wolman, 2003). For example, social forces and interpersonal environments affect self-determination, and if students experience positive and secure relationships with teachers and relatedness with peers, than they are more likely to be engaged in academic work (Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Deci & Ryan, 2008). In addition, students who seek alternative outlets of achievement success to feel competent might experience disidentification with academic achievement or a devaluing of domains in which poor success is expected (Wigfield, 1994). Low-achievers characteristically experience both poor interpersonal relationships and success in non-school activities (Guskey, 2007). Therefore, there exists a strong correlation between low-achievement and low self-determination, and low-achievers experience difficulty adjusting to opportunities for academic learning gains (Mithaug, Campeau, & Wolman, 2003).

Ganske, Monroe, and Strickland (2003) surveyed 191 practicing teachers in the United States regarding their three most pressing questions about working with struggling learners. A majority of the questions returned with the survey concerned testing and assessment. For instance, a common question was: "How can I fairly assess their growth without discouraging

them and yet not be too subjective about their ability?” (Ganske, Monroe, & Strickland, p. 126).

The authors suggest that examinations of early and later work samples from portfolios have the potential to positively impact struggling learners as they see firsthand the benefits of their efforts and, through explicit reflection, where to set new goals.

Wormeli (2006) proposes that valid inferences of student achievement are especially important for struggling learners and students with special education needs who require learning and assessment accommodations. Wormeli’s assertion is reminiscent of the Ontario Ministry of Education directives discussed above (Growing Success, 2010; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2003). Wormeli argues that more valid inferences can be made from alternative types of assessment, e.g. portfolios, because of their authenticity and ability to provide choice.

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An additional challenge for struggling learners is that they typically experience low socio-economic status familial backgrounds, and as such “hear and learn [in the home environment] discourses that are different from those that commonly characterize schools and classrooms;” patterns reinforced through to adolescence (Franzak, 2006; Paratore & Dougherty, 2011). When teachers recognize or appreciate students’ “discourses” and preferred ways of learning or demonstrating what they have learned on an assessment task, the students’ risks of academic failure decrease (Andrade & Cizek, 2010). Assessment strategies such as portfolios that give students a fair chance to demonstrate what they know and can do work well (Andrade & Cizek).

Finally, much reading intervention research indicates that struggling learners benefit from and are motivated by literacy programs that provide choice, set clear purposes, support meaningful peer connections, engage with students’ prior knowledge, and select interesting and

applicable texts (e.g., Franzak, 2006; Gaughan, 2001; Moje, 2000). Portfolio assessment facilitates many of the aspects outlined above.

Professional Development and Adult Learners

“One constant finding in the research literature is that notable improvements in education almost never take place *in the absence* of professional development. At the core of each and every successful educational improvement effort is a thoughtfully conceived, well-designed, and well-supported professional development component. Hence, although professional development by itself may be insufficient to bring about significant improvement in education, it is an absolutely necessary ingredient in all educational improvement efforts” (Guskey, 2000, p. 4).

The knowledge base in the discipline of education continues to expand rapidly, thus making evidence-based professional learning among teachers and school administrators a valuable endeavour (Guskey, 2000). As research continues to extend thinking and questioning, the ability of educators to support student success in multiple ways and areas extends to. There also exists the need to meet changing educational philosophies and beliefs, systems, and educational reforms – all of which can demand teachers to adopt new roles. “Professional development is necessary for teachers and administrators at all levels so that they can learn these new roles and succeed in them” (Guskey, p. 16).

A key aspect of this project is to develop a portfolio workshop for teachers. In the design of the workshop, I have heeded the thoughts of Guskey and others who have explored what makes professional learning effective. Research has also recognized that much professional development practice is problematic as “many conventional forms of professional development are seen as too top-down and too isolated from school and classroom realities to have impact on

practice” (Guskey, 2000, p. 3). Moreover, educators often do not regard professional development opportunities to be a valuable use of their professional time and believe such opportunities have little impact on their day-to-day responsibilities (Guskey). The following workshop will address such issues as educators are encouraged to use examples they have encountered in their own classrooms so as to make the learning more relevant and meaningful.

The notion that professional learning and opportunities for development might be extraneous is similar to Cranton’s (1989) process of planning instruction for adults. Cranton summarizes commonly discussed characteristics of adult learners. One characteristic is that since adults have chosen to learn, they will have specific goals and will expect the instructional situation to be relevant to their needs. Thus collaborative goal setting will be a feature of the workshop.

Nelson and Slavit (2008) recommend six characteristics of effective professional development that support teacher learning and school improvement. They suggest that professional development should be “grounded in the work teachers do in support of student learning goals, engage teachers in inquiry and reflection, be collaborative, supported, and ongoing, and be meaningfully connected to other school and district initiatives” (p. 102). Thus, opportunities for developing practice in inquiry, exploration, peer collaboration, and reflection are critical aspects of an effective professional learning model. My workshop design incorporates the above four components; however, due to the parameters of a one-time workshop design Nelson and Slavit’s characteristics of supported and ongoing development cannot be met.

Notions of inquiry, exploration, peer collaboration, and reflection extend from the collaborative inquiry professional development model. Collaborative inquiry research suggests

that when professional development is situated around fundamental components of teaching practice, for example, specific classroom scenarios that clear connections to classroom practice can be made and so professional learning becomes more relevant (Nelson & Slavit, 2007). Thus the professional development situation proves more meaningful to participants as also evidenced in the work of Guskey (2000) and Cranton (1989). Further, explicit connections support “creating questions about practice that become the focus of further inquiry” (Nelson & Slavit, 2007, p. 24). Additionally, professional development often occurs within collaborative frameworks (Guskey, 2000). For instance, Nelson and Slavit (2007) posit that when “teachers share their varied understandings of pedagogy and/or discipline” that individual meaning-making occurs (p. 24). The effectiveness of “discourse communities” is also supported by theories of cognition that assert knowing as distributed across individuals, and constructivist learning theories (Nelson & Slavit, 2007, p. 24). Finally, the collaborative inquiry professional development framework purposefully incorporates “the critical processes of reflection and collegial communication directly into the development experience” (Nelson & Slavit, 2008, p. 101)

Thus the workshop design takes into consideration elements of the collaborative inquiry framework in that teachers will share their varied understandings of how portfolio assessment functions within their classrooms, and problem-solve and clarify their thinking about portfolios as a assessment tool. Educators will have the opportunity to engage with one another and in deeper thinking and understanding through times of collaborative work and networking. Additionally, the workshop will begin with and hinge on collaborative goal setting that will facilitate a more collegial learning environment and position the learning to take place in school and classroom realities.

Adult Learners

So as to best support the adult learner throughout the workshop and in its design, research has been considered that discusses the ways in which adult learners' learn and the teaching strategies that best support their learning.

To continue a discussion that began at the outset of this section of the literature review, I will outline the remainder of Cranton's (1989) common characteristics of adult learners.

1. Since adults have chosen to learn, they will have specific goals and will expect the instructional situation to be relevant to their needs. (Discussed above.)
2. Adult learners bring a wide variety of experiences to the table and learning is best facilitated when the instruction is related to these experiences.
3. Many adult learners have concrete, immediate goals and will have little patience for what the instructor believes is important for them.
4. Generally, adult learners prefer to be self-directed. They want to find activities and ways of doing things that relate to their goals.
5. Adults may have rigid values, opinions, or behaviours which leads the instructor to be more of a facilitator rather than that of formal authority or expert.

And, as Cranton (1989) notes, "if a general rule were to be stated, it would be that a variety of methods and materials should be planned so that different individuals with different preferences and abilities would feel satisfied with some aspects of the situation" (p. 35).

Finally, teaching strategies must be considered so as to effectively disseminate knowledge to expert learners within the professional development framework. Cranton (1998) describes different learning goals and the type of knowledge to be transmitted. Teaching strategies are dependent on the type of knowledge to be gained by participants. Cranton outlines three types of knowledge: instructor-centred, facilitative, and reformist. The teaching strategies chosen to coincide with the above types of knowledge are: lecture and demonstration; group

work and discussion; and reflective writing. A summary of teaching strategies, developed by Wilcox (2010) and based on Cranton's work can be found in Appendix A.

Hence, the structure of the workshop will involve the teachers in "creatively shaping the professional development activities and strategies in partnership with others" (Nelson & Slavit, 2007, p. 24). The teacher will be the agent of change and not a passive instrument through which improvement of teaching and learning occurs. The processes and activities of the following workshop are designed to enhance the professional knowledge and skills of educators through the use of evidence-based techniques, so that they might, in-turn, improve student learning (see Guskey, 2000).

The literature informed the design and structure of the workshop in multiple ways. Professional development literature has influenced the design and structure of the workshop to include time for collaboration. Educators will spend time working through questions they have about portfolios on three separate occasions during the day. Thus their learning about the assessment tool will reflect their own classroom realities and make the learning more relevant and meaningful. In the same vein, research on adult learners has informed the workshop as while educators jointly determine their learning goals for the session and select real-life portfolio assessment issues to work through, many of Cranton's (1989) common characteristics of adult learners are addressed. For example, characteristics one and three are taken into account with collaborative goal setting. The goals of the learners will be clear from the outset of the workshop and so the instructional situation might then be more relevant to their needs. Moreover, the structure of the workshop incorporates time for educators to explore their goals more thoroughly, maintaining relevancy, but also taking into consideration that the workshop is not about what the instructor thinks. The group exploration time also supports the adult learners' preference to be

self-directed. Finally, times of self-direction will support the leader's role as facilitator, which also appeals to adult learners.

Literature on portfolio assessment has directly informed the workshop content. A foundation will be set with a brief historical overview of the method. The overview will also include definitions, purposes and types, and will consider portfolio assessments philosophical underpinnings. Also influenced by research, the workshop content includes a discussion of validity and ways in which validity might be improved upon. For example, participants will view information pertaining to the cognitive processes used while scoring portfolios (Herman et al., 1998) and will be informed of the literature's focus on setting specific criteria for the tool and for each artifact included.

Chapter Three: The Workshop

The proposed workshop model of professional learning falls within the category of training – the most common professional learning model (Guskey, 2000). The workshop model is beneficial because it is compact, does not require many resources, and thus is the “most efficient and cost-effective” (p. 23). A significant limitation of the workshop model is that it may only be a one day professional development opportunity based on school administrator/board support, resources, facilitator availability/connectedness to board, etc. In addition, workshops can be difficult to facilitate based on the different levels of expertise in the room (Guskey, 2000).

While the workshop model might be less effective because it is one time in nature, it is a form of professional development that is more likely to be funded by a school board because it is cost-effective. Thus the potential for the provision of more professional development opportunity exists. If the workshop is deemed successful by a board and valued, then there may be opportunity for follow through after the workshop has taken place.

In an effort to mitigate the difficulties associated with facilitating a group with individuals with different levels of expertise, I have included a great deal of time for group work. Participants might interact to problem-solve some of their questions, challenges and issues with portfolios so as to learn from each others’ thinking and strengths.

Workshop Plan

This section on the workshop plan has been modeled after Wilcox’s (2011) outline for how to plan teaching and learning (see also Appendix B).

The workshop includes two major components: instruction and group work. The day will begin with collaborative goal setting so as to foster a collegial and effective professional development

experience. A foundational overview of the tool will then be provided so that all involved might have similar understandings when communicating their thinking. Next, each group of educators will come to agreement on one challenge or question they have regarding portfolio assessment that they would like to explore throughout the remainder of the day. Information regarding issues of validity, decision that need to be made, and steps to implementation will be presented and interspersed with time for groups to further explore their question or issue. Finally, time for reflection will be provided so that educators might consolidate their learning for future use. Please see the workshop plan and outline below.

It is my hope that through the workshop educators might see the potential of portfolio assessment, that educators might leave with some answers to their questions, that new knowledge might be gained and deeper understandings formulated, and that educators might feel better prepared to address assessment in their classrooms and schools.

Title

Understanding Portfolio Assessment

Overarching Goals

This workshop will:

- Educate teachers, school administrators, and other stakeholders in education.
- Provide an effective professional development opportunity.
- Support the choice of appropriate assessment tools and techniques.

Specific Goals

This workshop will:

- Be relevant to school and classroom realities.
- Support collaborative questioning, exploration, and collegiality.
- Help educators identify if portfolio assessment is appropriate for their students.
- Help educators use portfolio assessment reliably so that they can make more valid inferences re: student achievement from portfolio results.

- Facilitate educators' feelings of self-efficacy in their use of portfolio assessment.
- Facilitate reflective practice.

Intended Outcomes

This workshop will:

- Support student success.
- Support educator self-efficacy.
- Help educators to continue to be reflective of their practice.

Sequencing

The workshop is sequenced in a logical order with collaborative goal-setting, then a discussion of the historical underpinnings of portfolio assessment as used in the education system. In this way, participants might begin by establishing connections with their colleagues that will foster some trust for further discussions – a necessity for further collaborative exploration – and building a foundation in the topic area. From there, and with a contextual understanding of the background of portfolio assessment, participants might begin designing their own portfolio assessment scenarios based on their own realities. Inquiry will then be interspersed with short lecture/demonstration periods that consider issues of reliability and validity, decision-making regarding implementation, and steps to implementation. Participants (1) will not be overwhelmed by information; and (2) will have the opportunity to address their own questions and concerns with regards to portfolio assessment in their schools and classrooms to begin to integrate new information into their existing schemas, and share their knowledge with others.

The workshop has been designed and organized to give enough time to cover all material and incorporate time for collaboration within a typical workday structure. In addition, the one day structure will likely make the workshop easier to market as individuals who will prefer to take only one day away from the workplace. Finally, two breaks and an hour long lunch break

will provide opportunity for participants to network and cultivate relationship outside of the structure of the workshop, and might serve as an important support system.

Instructional Strategies/Roles

This is an information/skill building workshop. Thus it is my role as leader to share and demonstrate the information that I have spent a great deal of time researching, and that I have presented on one other occasion for a group of 80 Bachelor of Education students. During times of group work and discussion, I will lead and facilitate the session. The third teaching strategy discussed by Cranton (1998), and a significant part of the collaborative inquiry framework, is that of reflective writing with the aim of discovering emancipatory knowledge. (Please see Appendix A for a more thorough breakdown of the above strategies). To these, I have added two successful strategies that I use frequently in my own teaching and that educators within the local school boards will be familiar with: Think-Pair-Share and Gallery Walks. The Think-Pair-Share technique is one used to support effective group work. Through thinking to oneself before sharing with a partner, individuals are able to “warm-up” their thinking and collect their thoughts. By sharing with a partner before sharing with the larger group, individuals experience self-efficacy and the confidence to then share with the larger group. Gallery Walks have also been a successful strategy in my teaching practice. Having groups work together on an idea that then needs to be displayed in some form – most likely with chart paper and markers in the workshop context – brings the group closer together as they work to create a logical display of their thinking. Additionally, Gallery Walks are an excellent way to let learners take over, taking the focus off of the instructor. Finally, Gallery Walks enable participants to get up and walk around the room to view the work of others in a safe way, learning from others’ thinking while stretching their legs and waking up their bodies and minds.

Assessment

There will not be a formal assessment of participants' learning through the session. Informal assessments based on questions asked will occur primarily to re-negotiate instruction to better support learner needs. Finally, a feedback/evaluation form will be collected from participants at the session's end so as to improve upon workshop delivery in future. Please see Appendix D for the feedback/evaluation form.

Session Resources

There are several PowerPoint slides for the workshop with each slide typically representing one idea. The first two slides are introductory and the next two pertaining to the creation, setting and sharing of goals. Slides five through nine set a foundation for understanding the basics of portfolio assessment. Slide 11 is a break from instruction and signals time for the creation of group questions regarding portfolio assessment. Steps in the decision-making process and issues of validity are addressed throughout slides 12-22. The remaining slides provide time for group exploration, sharing and reflection. The PowerPoint slides and speaking notes for the workshop can be found in Appedix C.

Table 1.

Workshop Outline

Time	Activity Description	Instructional Strategy/Role	Materials/Power Point Slide
8:00-8:20	Housekeeping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Agenda • Washrooms • Questions? 	Role: Leader/Facilitator	Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda – handout • Slides – handout • Mini-notebooks for reflections Slide Numbers: 1, 2
8:20-8:50	Collaborative goal setting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do we want to learn? • What are some of our expectations for the session? • Share workshop goals - compare/contrast the two sets of goals 	Instructional Strategy: Think-Pair-Share Role: Facilitator	Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chart paper • Markers • Tape Slide Number: 3, 4
8:50-9:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical background of portfolio assessment as used in education 	Instructional Strategy: Lecture/demonstration Role: Lecturer	Slide Numbers: 5-7
9:15-10:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions • Types • Purposes 	Instructional Strategies: Lecture/demonstration and discussion Role: Lecturer/Facilitator	Slide Numbers: 8-9
10:00-10:20	BREAK		
	Collaborative Questioning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some of the challenges/issues that surround the use of portfolio assessment in your schools/classrooms? 	Instructional Strategy: Group work and discussion, and Gallery walk Role: Leader/Facilitator	Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chart paper • Markers • Tape Slide Number: 11
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision-making 	Instructional Strategy: Lecture/demonstration Role: Lecturer	Slide Numbers: 12-16
12:00-1:00	LUNCH		
1:00-1:40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues of reliability and validity • Steps to 	Instructional Strategy: Lecture/demonstration	Slide Numbers: 18-22

	implementation	Role: Lecturer	
1:40-2:40	Collaborative Exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How might some of the decision making processes, technical issues, and steps to implementation be considered in your own contexts? 	Instructional Strategy: Group work and discussion, and Gallery walk Role: Facilitator	Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chart paper Markers Tape Slide Number: 23
2:40-3:00	BREAK		
3:00-3:30	Group Sharing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do we see as some of the strengths of portfolio assessment? What do we see as some of the weaknesses of portfolio assessment? 	Instructional Strategy: Group work and discussion Role: Facilitator	Slide Numbers: 25-29
3:00-3:30	Reflection	Instructional Strategy: Reflective writing Role: Facilitator	Materials: Mini-notebooks Slide Number: 30
3:30-4:00	Wrap up Questions Feedback/Evaluation	Role: Leader/Facilitator	Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback/Evaluation Form Slide Numbers: 31-35

Chapter Four: Conclusion

Assessment literature suggests that the selection of appropriate assessment methods has the potential to aid in the improvement of student performance (e.g., Andrade, 2010; Crooks, 1988; McMillan, Hellsten, & Klinger, 2010). In light of the knowledge that assessment can be a challenge to administer and the potential positive effects that suitably chosen assessment techniques and systems can have on student achievement, how might educators be best supported in their selection and use of such techniques and systems?

To add to the above quandary, Ontario Ministry of Education directives also make explicit recommendations regarding types of assessments to be used. This project discussed specifically the ministry's call for the use of portfolio assessment in OSSLC classrooms and special education contexts. The ministry purports that portfolios support the documentation of growth in reading and writing skills, that portfolios help provide continuous communication to parents and students about achievement, that portfolios are important when planning for and as an accommodation for students with special education needs, and that teachers should obtain assessment through a variety of means including portfolios. The Ontario Ministry of Education's rationale for the use of portfolios as an assessment tool is little more than a list of assertions without justification. In considering again the question posed above, it seems that ministry documentation might not best support educators in their selection and use of appropriate assessment techniques and systems. The documentation does not provide clear explanations as to what the process of providing continuous communication to parents and students, for example, might look like nor does the documentation attempt to explain the benefits of that process.

To further complicate the issue, anecdotal evidence suggests that portfolio assessment is not used in all OSSLC classrooms as recommended by ministry documentation, and that portfolio use took on many different forms. It seems that educators to whom the ministry has suggested the use of portfolio assessment are not clear on how best to use it and that they have not been supported in their selection and use of the technique. And so, in light of the above tensions; in an effort to synthesize questions, ideas, information, practice, and research; and in an effort to share information with others this project was created.

In an effort to provide sound, research-based workshop material and recommendations and next steps, this project reviewed research literature on assessment for learning so as to navigate more easily the literature on portfolio use in the and classroom and its limitations. So as to understand the Ontario Ministry of Education's potential rationale for suggesting portfolios, research pertaining to struggling learners who might find themselves in alternative-style courses and programs was also considered. Finally, literature related to effective professional development and adult learners was investigated so as to design and structure a workshop that participants would find relevant and meaningful.

Recommendations

As Ontario Ministry of Education recommendations are not fully expanded upon, I have included some that might be considered.

First, the purpose of using the portfolio as an assessment method should be known and easily articulated. If the purpose cannot be easily articulated then it is likely not an assessment technique that makes sense to use. Knowledge of purpose will also help to determine what type of portfolio will be used. Finally, all remaining decisions will extend from the purpose.

Second, explicit and detailed criteria for both what is to be included in the portfolio and what is deemed a successful performance should be understood by the educator before she introduces the assessment method to students. In the introduction of the method, the purpose for its use should be made clear as should all criteria. In this way, students understand what is expected of them and are more involved in the process of their learning, and information gleaned from the assessment will support more valid inferences regarding student performance.

Next, examples of what success – and perhaps non-success – “looks” like should be shared with students so as to support the knowledge that work produced has been done so by the student and not the educator. When models are shared with students, instruction has the potential to become more focused and meaningful, and students are provided with the necessary tools to demonstrate the requested skills successfully. Like teaching a lay-up in basketball, skills must be modeled in an organized fashion so that students might feel the confidence and self-efficacy needed to complete what has been asked of them. Modeling and providing models might also serve to mitigate the common validity question of “Whose work is it anyway?” and the issue of fairness in scoring.

Finally, scoring of portfolios should take into consideration the criteria deemed successful for each performance and not score based on comparison of work between students. Suggestions such as scoring the same piece from each portfolio before moving onto the next piece have been made so as to reduce the loss of focus that might result from moving through and scoring the variety of pieces in a portfolio. Other research-based recommendations include scoring portfolio components as they are added to the portfolio. This technique might work best with portfolios that are used to work through a process like that of writing. Process-oriented tasks typically require feedback – an essential component of any assessment and evaluation program

as research indicates that feedback is most meaningful to students – while working step-by-step through various drafts and versions of the product. Feedback also has the potential to be exceptionally valuable to struggling learners who typically do not experience academic success for various reasons. As such, feedback can re-focus the learning from performance to growth. Finally, feedback has the capability to support the process of self-reflection regarding learning.

In considering the above recommendations, portfolio assessment has the potential to be exceedingly valuable in the demonstration of process-oriented performances and to re-focus learning through feedback. In OSSLC contexts, portfolios might be used only to document achievement in writing skills throughout the course with continual and consistent feedback and reflection on work.

It is my hope that through the workshop educators might see the potential of portfolio assessment, that educators might leave with some answers to their questions, that new knowledge might be gained and deeper understandings formulated, and that educators might feel better prepared to address assessment in their classrooms and schools. Additionally, I hope that students in OSSLC classrooms feel empowered as they demonstrate their knowledge, focus on their strengths, and improve upon their weakness with the help of a tool that has proven technical rigor when carefully constructed and explicitly defined.

Final Reflections

The creation of this project has been a valuable process and privileged time for me. Being afforded the opportunity to spend time with my ideas and mould them into something that made sense to me was invaluable. This project is a reflection of that effort – the effort to synthesize multiple seemingly diverse ideas, interests, passions, educational theories, and research-based

practices in a meaningful way that might also offer clarity to support me and others, and to help me understand what is important to me. Ultimately, the creation of this project has been about and has taught me the importance of evolution.

It has been a pleasure to experience the evolution of not only my own work, but that of others. The lesson that discovery is a process, and one that is continually in flux, was needed, and affirmed what I have come to realize as recently as the beginning of my Master of Education program, that I need to slow down and be content with the journey. How much sweeter life is. That is not to say that I have mastered the art of slowing down in any way, but rather am more at ease with it. I have often found myself saying that being in graduate school is like a marathon, not a race.

More than learning to enjoy the learning, my graduate work brought me to a place of being comfortable with not knowing everything, and being confident that that is not what students need. I was certainly comfortable admitting that I did not know the answer to a question before I began my graduate work, but the past two years have served to boost my self-efficacy as I have become more efficient in the synthesis of research and ideas. The cognitive load is so much less.

Finally, while my initial rationale for pursuing graduate work was rather pragmatic, i.e. job and career aspirations, my final reflections indicate to me that upon completion of my degree and my current non-stable job and career prospects – that the process has given me more than pragmatic returns. My graduate work has instilled in me a continued desire to learn; confidence in my ability to do many jobs, and to do them well; and that through failure I will succeed as I continue to pursue opportunities to improve upon my practice and myself.

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Appendix A: Teaching Strategies

Instructor-Centred	Facilitative	Reformist	
Kind of knowledge gained	Instrumental knowledge and technical skills	Communicative knowledge	Emancipatory knowledge
Sample learning goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to encounter the principles, concepts, theories and ideas of a subject • to gain theoretical and factual information; to know it “well”, through use/application • to learn basic skills required for particular tasks/jobs; to learn these skills “well” through performance/practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to gain an intersubjective understanding of self, others and our social world • to understand the nature of society and its institutions • to understand what others mean and to make ourselves understood at an individual and societal level • through interaction with others, build and gain knowledge of social norms, values, ideals, political and educational systems, and cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to learn to think of oneself, to question, to take responsibility for one’s own learning, to learn how to learn • to examine existing knowledge, social systems, and personal lives with a critical eye • to gain self-knowledge and freedom from constraints • to become an autonomous, self-directed, lifelong learner • to foster personal and social change
Sample methods	Lecture, demonstration, problem-based learning, experimental learning	Group work, group projects, discussion, role-playing, simulations, games	Critical incidents, dialogue journals, role-playing, group projects, discussion groups, field and clinical experience
Role of teacher	To “provide”, “deliver”, “transmit” information; to plan learning experiences that help learners gain the required information or skills	To coordinate, manage learning experiences; to guide, help learners	To challenge, question, and stimulate critical reflection
Communication patterns	From teacher to students	Between students and teacher and between students	Between students and teacher and between students
Assessment strategy	Objectively-rated	Subjectively-rated	Learner self-assessment

Developed by Susan Wilcox, Queen’s University (2010). Based on Cranton (1998).

Appendix B:

Planning for Teaching and Learning

1. Philosophy

What is your personal philosophy/approach to education and your motivation for engaging in this educational activity? What is the underlying philosophy and the purpose of the program?

2. Learners

Who are the potential participants? What are their characteristics? What are their learning needs and interests?

3. Goals and objectives

What knowledge, skills, and attitudes/values do you expect learners to have as a result of this learning experience?

4. Sequencing

In what order will topics be addressed?

5. Instructional strategies

What methods and materials will be used to help learners meet the learning goals?

6. Evaluating learning

How will learning be assessed? How will you know that participants have met (or progressed towards) the learning goals?

7. Evaluating the program

How will you assess the effectiveness of the instructional plan?

Developed by Susan Wilcox, Queen's University, 2011

Appendix C:
Portfolio Assessment Speaking Notes and Slides



Abstract

Portfolios are a popular mode of assessment, self-presentation, and self-reflection in many fields. In education, portfolios can be valuable in the assessment for learning and assessment of learning processes. Learn how to design and implement portfolios in your classroom in a way that informs instruction.

Slide 2: Welcome + Housekeeping

Welcome!

- Introductions and Housekeeping
 - Introductions
 - Agenda
 - Washrooms
 - Questions?

Slide 3-4: Collaborative Goal Setting + Comparative Goals/Outcomes

Collaborative Goal Setting

- What do we want to learn?
- What are some of our expectations for the session?
- Think – Pair – Share



My Hopes For You/This Workshop Will:

Overarching Goals:

- Educate teachers, school administrators, and other stakeholders in education.
- Provide an effective professional development opportunity.
- Support the choice of appropriate assessment tools and techniques.

Specific Goals:

- Be relevant to school and classroom realities.
- Support collaborative inquiry, exploration, and collegiality.
- Help educators identify if portfolio assessment is appropriate for their students.
- Help educators use portfolio assessment reliably so that they can make more valid inferences re: student achievement from portfolio results.
- Facilitate educators' feelings of self-efficacy in their use of portfolio assessment.
- Facilitate reflective practice.

Intended Outcomes:

- Support student success.
- Support educator self-efficacy.
- Help educators to continue to be reflective of their practice.

Slides 5-7: Background

Background

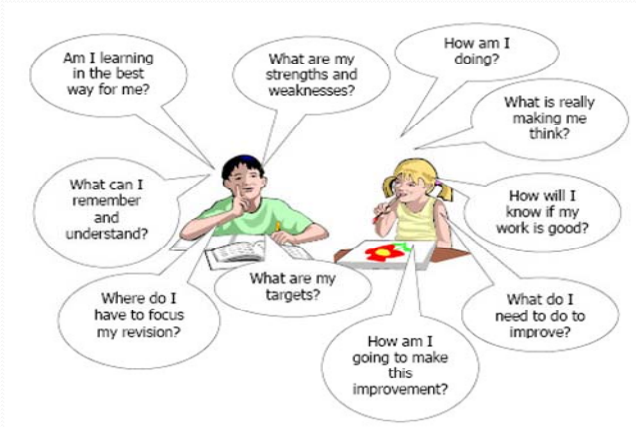


• **Constructivist Learning Theories –**

“Children learn by interacting in their environment as active agents who build, or construct, personal understandings of their experiences” (Shaklee et al., 1997, p. 11).

- The Canadian Context
- In Ontario
- **Question:** Where have you seen portfolios used and why were they used

Assessment for Learning: Alternative (Authentic) Assessment → Portfolio



kidimini@wordpress.com

Background: Assessment for/as/of Learning:

- learning goals and criteria are defined in a curriculum map
- teacher uses inferences from students to direct teaching
- Clear and timely feedback to students:
 - in relation to the goals
 - where they need to go next
 - ways to get there
- Constructivist Learning Theories: Dewey, Piaget, Vygotsky, Kohlberg – “children learn by interacting in their environment as active agents who build, or construct, personal understandings of their experiences” (Shaklee, 1997, p. 11).
 - active meaning making
 - where diagnostic comes into play as well as scaffolding

- Assessment for/as/of Learning → Alternative (Authentic) Assessment → Portfolio
 - Why we might value portfolio assessment and other *authentic/performance* assessments - notions founded in most current teaching philosophies
- Canadian Context: 1980's and British Columbian legislation – student-centered curriculum
 - Becomes “big” in 80's
 - Focus on students – written into policy documents – serious
- In Ontario: Linked to support of students with special educational needs in Ontario in both Ministry of Education Curriculum and *Growing Success* documents
- **Question:** Where have you seen portfolios used and why were they used?

Slide 8-9: Definitions and Types

Selected Definitions



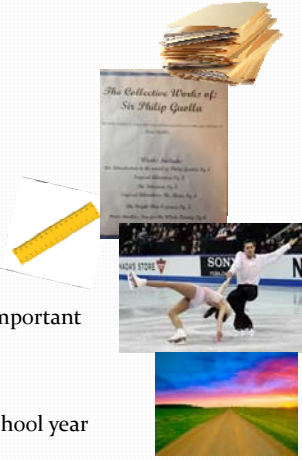
“a purposeful collection of student work that tells the story of the student’s effort, progress, or achievement in (a) given area(s)” (Arter & Spandel, 1992)

“prepared with a particular audience in mind,” “are selective,” and “call for judgments” (Calfee & Freedman, 1996)

“a purposeful collection of student work that illustrates efforts, progress, and achievement in one or more areas [over time] ...must include: student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of self-reflection” (Barret, 2005)

Types of Portfolios

- **Working Folders**
 - a place to hold student work
- **Showcase Portfolios**
 - what has the student learned?
- **Growth Portfolios**
 - detail student improvement over time
- **Process Portfolios**
 - document student's process through an important authentic performance
- **Cumulative Portfolios**
 - student's best work over more than one school year



(Taylor & Nolen, 2008)

Have them read definitions to/for themselves

- “a purposeful collection of student work that tells the story of the student’s effort, progress, or achievement in (a) given area(s)” (Arter & Spandel, 1992)
 - One of first definitions for research purposes
- “prepared with a particular audience in mind,” “are selective,” and “call for judgments” (Calfee & Freedman, 1996)
- “a purposeful collection of student work that illustrates efforts, progress, and achievement in one or more areas [over time]. The collection must include: student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of self-reflection” (The Northwest Evaluation Association cited in Barret, 2005)
- **Question:** What do all of the definitions have in common?
 - *purposeful* and *collection*
 - The purpose of the portfolio will dictate the degree to which these characteristics are evidenced.
- **Question:** Why might we use a portfolio as an assessment?

Types (Taylor & Nolen, 2008)

- Working Folders – a place to hold student work
- Showcase Portfolios – what has the student learned?
 - What does he know?
 - What is he able to do?
 - Showcase portfolios provide the opportunity to teach students what counts as good work within the subject area.
- Growth Portfolios – detail student improvement over time
 - Particularly important for struggling learners
 - Give students a concrete picture of improvement – rather than average across the work – mastery focus – not about simply achieving the mark, but rather learning the skill and/or strategy
- Process Portfolios – document students process through an important authentic performance
 - Different than Growth because not focused on the improvement, but rather the steps taken to accomplish a task – i.e. might not include multiple tries of the same performance with extensive feedback
- Cumulative Portfolios – show students best work over more than one school year
- **Question:** What should be involved in the decision making process?

Slide 10: BREAK

15 Minute Break

**Slide 11: Collaborative Exploration**

Collaborative Exploration



- What are some of the challenges/issues that surround the use of portfolio assessment in your schools/classrooms?

Slide 12-16: Decision Making (Shaklee et al., 1997)

Decision Making (Shaklee et al., 1997)

Decision 1: What are the purposes?

Decision 2: Who are the stakeholders?

Decision 3: What should be assessed?

Design, Implementation, and Management Decisions:

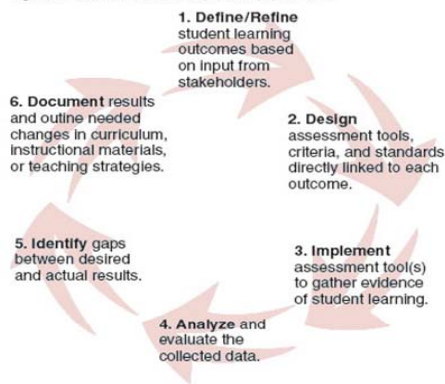
- **Decision 1:** What are the purposes? - based on type
 - What will it look like? – binder, box, digital, cover page, etc.
 - What type of portfolio will it be? – working folder, growth portfolio, etc.

- **Decision 2:** Who are the stakeholders? Who should be involved?
 - Processes invest in the development of relationships . . .
 - Place for peer assessment . . .
 - Self-evaluation
 - Have professionals come in and share their use of portfolio

- **Decision 3:** What should be assessed? What do I need to know?
 - Wolfgang and Wolfgang (1992) – data gathering on a continuum from open (open response, short answer, essay response, creative/choice-based) to closed (multiple choice, fill in the blank, true/false, final answer in a Math question)
 - open tends to be more authentic

Instruction-Feedback-Assessment Loop

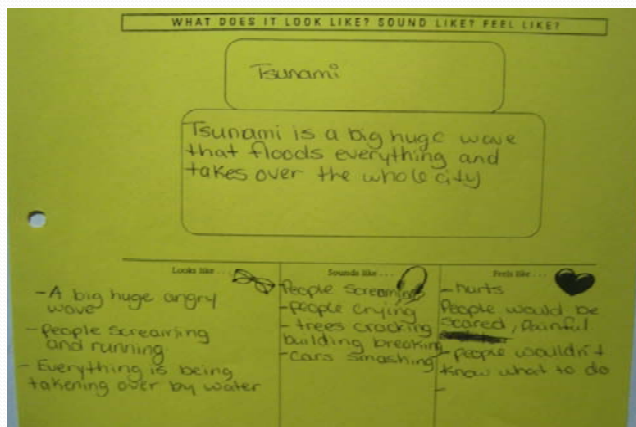
Figure 2 The Assessment Implementation Cycle



- Essential part of the cycle is considering the information you've gathered from assessment about what your students have learned and not stopping there, but rather about trying to identify and fill in the gaps.

Decision 3 – Open, Formative

Decision 3 – Open, Formative



- Example of an open task, so the student was able to describe the word *tsunami* in her own words and multiple correct responses
- Also a formative task informing the reading strategy of *visualizing* before the final assessment of reading strategies as a whole

Decision Making Continued

Decision Making Continued

Decision 4: How will the assessment be accomplished?

Decision 5: What decisions can I make from the portfolio?

Decision 6: How do I make the portfolio process an ongoing, consistent process that informs curriculum and instruction?

- **Decision 4:** How will the assessment be accomplished? When will it all take place?
 - Important to have a timeline for data gathering, what will the physical portfolio look like, will you have observation templates, etc.
- **Decision 5:** What decisions can I make from these portfolios? When is it a portfolio?
 - “Contents should convey what the student has been doing, should be formative and summative, should inform instruction, may have multiple purposes, and should demonstrate progress” (54).
 - Should be purposeful based on the type chosen and should be evaluated as a whole at the end of its journey
- **Decision 6:** How do I make the portfolio process an ongoing, consistent process that informs curriculum and instruction?
 - Curriculum-instruction-assessment loop

Decision 5 – Summative

Criteria	Guiding Questions	Level 4 - Thorough	Level 3 - Considerable	Level 2 - Somewhat	Level 1 - Limited
Knowledge and Understanding	<p>Can I list my preferences for the ways I read and write best in order to be successful?</p> <p>Can I explain how I edit my work?</p> <p>Can I explain how reading and writing will be important for my success in grade 11 and 12 and in the workplace?</p>	the student			
Thinking	<p>Can I explain how my reading and writing has improved over the semester?</p> <p>Can I find proof from my writing folder, binder and reading folder to demonstrate my growth in reading and writing?</p> <p>Can I talk about what I still need to work on with my reading and writing skills?</p>	the student			
Communication	<p>Have I conducted myself in a professional manner throughout this interview?</p>				

Slide 17: LUNCH

One Hour Lunch Break



Slide 18: Technical Challenges

Technical Challenges

- **Definitions –**

- **Reliability:** Are the scores consistent or stable? Does a student demonstrate the same level of achievement on other types of assessment?
- **Validity:** What do the scores mean? Am I able to make valid inferences re: student achievement from the scores?
 - Validity can also refer to fairness and impact.

- **Definitions –**

- **Reliability:** Are the scores consistent or stable? Does a student demonstrate the same level of achievement on other types of assessment?
- **Validity:** What do the scores mean? Am I able to make valid inferences re: student achievement from the scores?
 - Validity can also refer to fairness and impact.

Slide 19: Technical Challenges Continued

Technical Challenges Continued

- Some Decision Making Processes/Steps to Implementation will support Reliability and Validity – i.e. Establishing Criteria or Standards for Assessment and Determining Sources of Evidence
 - “Ultimately, however, in order to provide for a broader and more credible picture of the student’s development, other stakeholders should be included in the process” (Shaklee, 1997, p. 70).
-
- Some Decision Making Processes/Steps to Implementation will support Reliability and Validity – i.e. Establishing Criteria or Standards for Assessment and Determining Sources of Evidence,
 - “Ultimately, however, in order to provide for a broader and more credible picture of the student’s development, other stakeholders should be included in the process” (Shaklee, 1997, p. 70).

Slide 20-21: Map of the Technical Territory of Portfolio Assessment (Table) and Cognitive Processes Used in Scoring

Herman and Winters (1994), p. 50

Figure 1
A Map of the Technical Territory of Portfolio Assessment

Technical Issue:	Data Needed to Assure Quality
Reliability Are the scores consistent or stable?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Scorer or rater agreement ■ Interrater consistency ■ Score stability for the same student on different occasions ■ Score stability of papers/entries given different contexts or "portfolio sets" in which a portfolio is scored ■ Score consistency across "like" tasks
Validity What do the scores mean?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What are the scoring criteria based upon (what standards, what definition of "excellence")? ■ How were tasks selected? What view of "achievement" do the portfolio contents present?
Do inferences from the scores lead to accurate decisions about students? programs? schools?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Are the scores diagnostic? When students score "high," what can be said about their performance? What standards are met? What other things do students know or can they do? How do we know? ■ When students score "low," what directions for improving performance do the scores provide? How do we know that the diagnosis will lead to improved performance? ■ Is the assessment fair? Are portfolios a disadvantage to any group of students? If so, how? ■ What are the consequences of portfolio use on individual students? programs? schools? Do results lead to improvement in students and programs?

Heller et. al (1998), p. 8

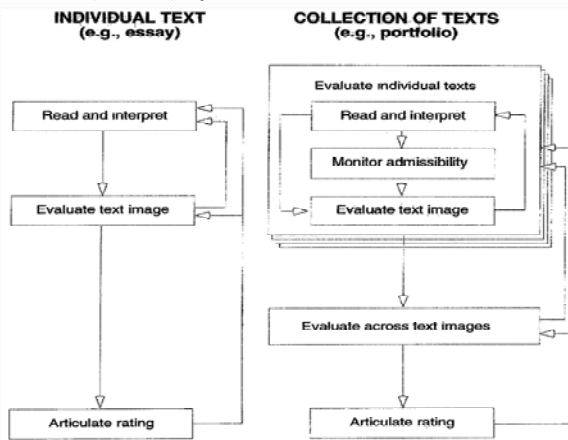


FIGURE 1 Cognitive processes involved in rating individual essays and portfolios.

Slide 22: Steps to Implementation



Steps To Implementation

- 1) Establish Criteria
- 2) Consult with Stakeholders
- 3) Create a Timeline
- 4) Collect Evidence
- 5) Make Decisions
- 6) Conference /Report



Step 1: Establish *criteria* or *standards* for assessment

- Are the standards/criteria observable and appropriate to the age/grade/content areas of the students to be assessed

Step 2: Inform various stakeholders

- Including stakeholders helps to provide a broader and more credible picture of student development

Step 3: Establish your timeline

- Map it out! Create a visual.

Step 4: Collect evidence

- All should have a purpose towards the goal and be a representative sample

Step 5: Transform evidence into decisions

- With a criteria driven template

Step 6: Conference (if a part of the design) and Report

(Step 7: Collect exemplars)

Slide 23: Collaborative Exploration

Time for Some More Exploration!

- How might some of the decision making processes, technical issues, and steps to implementation be considered in your own contexts?



Slide 24: BREAK

20 Minute Break



Slide 25: Group Sharing/Consolidation

Group Sharing/Consolidation

**Slide 26: Strengths (Blank)****Slide 27: Strengths**


Strengths

- Motivation and mastery learning (Abrami & Barrett, 2005)
- Intentional learning – students involved **and** integrated with classroom instruction (Herman, Gearhart, & Baker, 1993)
- Self-regulation and awareness of own strengths and weaknesses (Valencia & Calfee, 1991)
- Preserve complexity of cognitive skills being assessed (Simon & Forgette-Giroux, 2000)
- Construct validity because portfolios measure what they are supposed to – authentic (Anderson & Bachor, 1998)
- Have potential to serve a number of assessment needs and student needs simultaneously (Herman, Gearhart, & Baker, 1993, p. 202)

- Motivation and mastery learning (Abrami & Barrett, 2005; Hall & Hewitt-Gervais, 2000, Simon & Forgette-Giroux, 2000; Stiggins, 2001)
- Intentional learning – students involved and integrated with classroom instruction (Herman, Gearhart, & Baker, 1993)
- Self-regulation and awareness of own strengths and weaknesses (Herman, Gearhart, & Baker, 1993; Valencia & Calfee, 1991)
- Preserve complexity of cognitive skills being assessed (Herman, Gearhart, & Baker, 1993; Resnick, 1992; Simon & Forgette-Giroux, 2000)
- Construct validity because portfolios measure what they are supposed to – authentic (Anderson & Bachor, 1998; Herman, Gearhart, & Baker, 1993)
- Have potential to serve a number of assessment needs and student needs simultaneously (Herman, Gearhart, & Baker, 1993)
 - “potential to provide a more equitable and a more sensitive portrait of students’ strengths and weaknesses” (Herman, Gearhart, & Baker, 1993, p. 202)
 - Portfolio assessment might mimic an effective intervention strategy (Munby, 2003).

Slide 28: Weaknesses (Blank)

Slide 29: Weaknesses



Weaknesses

- Technical base for scoring weak; e.g. portfolio scores higher than scores on standardized assessments (Herman, Gearhart, & Baker, 1993; Herman & Winters, 1994)
- Multiple evaluation processes required to rate; e.g. Read and interpret, evaluate text image, and articulate rating (Heller, Sheingold, & Myford, 1998)
- Fairness: whose work is it? (Herman & Winters, 1994); e.g. lower achieving students had higher scores (Webb, 1993)
- Feasibility – burdensome? (Herman & Winters, 1994; Simon & Forgette-Giroux, 2000)

- Technical base for scoring weak (Herman, Gearhart, & Baker, 1993; Herman & Winters, 1994)
 - Scores a function of raters themselves (Heller, Sheingold, & Myford, 1998)
 - e.g. portfolio scores higher than scores on Standard Assessments – Is the classroom work higher quality or raters perceived involved work as more competent?
 - Are scores generalizable and do they correspond to other indicators of the same performance? (Herman, Gearhart, & Baker, 1993) – Are there multiple types of assessments within the portfolio measuring the same construct(s)?
- Multiple evaluation processes required to rate
 - E.g. Read and interpret, evaluate text image, and articulate rating (Heller, Sheingold, & Myford, 1998)
- Fairness: whose work is it? (Herman & Winters, 1994)
 - E.g. “substantial differences in students’ performances when judged on the basis of cooperative group work compared with individual work.” – lower achieving students had higher scores (Webb, 1993)
- Feasibility – burdensome? (Herman & Winters, 1994; Simon & Forgette-Giroux, 2000)

Slide 30: Reflection

Reflection



Slide 31: Conclusions

Conclusions

- They are not generic, nor should they be (Valencia & Calfee, 1991)
- “clearly articulated criteria, effective training, and rubrics that reflect shared experience, common values, and a deep understanding of student performance (Herman & Winters, 1994)

- They are not generic, nor should they be (Valencia & Calfee, 1991)
- “clearly articulated criteria, effective training, and rubrics that reflect shared experience, common values, and a deep understanding of student performance (Herman & Winters, 1994)

Slide 32: Wrap Up

Wrap Up

- Questions?
- Feedback
- Evaluation

Slides 33-34: Reference Slides

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Appendix D:

Portfolio Workshop Feedback Form

In future I hope to provide this seminar to other learners. In order to improve the teaching, I would appreciate your feedback. This feedback is anonymous and you do not need to provide your name unless you would like to be contacted. If you have any questions, please contact me, Beth Pero, at bethpero@yahoo.ca. Please leave the form in the basket at the front of the room. Thank You.

1. The length of the seminar was:

1 (too short) 2 3 4 5 6 7 (too long)

2. The goals of the presentation were clear.

1 (not at all) 2 3 4 5 6 7 (very clear)

3. The material was understandable.

1 (not at all) 2 3 4 5 6 7 (always)

4. The material was relevant.

1 (not at all) 2 3 4 5 6 7 (very much)

5. I felt comfortable to ask a question.

1 (not at all) 2 3 4 5 6 7 (very much)

6. The instructors provided sufficient time for questions.

1 (not at all) 2 3 4 5 6 7 (lots of time)

7. I plan to use a portfolio for my students

1 (never) 2 3 4 5 6 7 (always)

8. Overall satisfaction with seminar

1 (poor) 2 3 4 5 6 7 (excellent)

Please add any comments below:

Appendix E:

Feedback from Pilot Workshop

Question	# of 1s	# of 2s	# of 3s	# of 4s	# of 5s
The length of the seminar was	2	9	19	2	0
The goals of the presentation were clear	0	2	3	17	12
The material was understandable	0	0	5	20	8
The material was relevant	0	2	6	16	10
I felt comfortable to ask a question	0	1	10	11	10
The instructors provided sufficient time for questions	1	6	7	10	8
I plan to use a portfolio for my student	0	1	8	19	7
Overall satisfaction with seminar	0	3	9	16	6

- When people from the floor contribute please repeat what they said.
- Some great ideas. Would have loved separate P/J - I/S workshop throughout. Also, would like to eliminate audience participation - with only 20 mins/25 mins it takes to long to listen to questions and feedback from the crowd. Would be easier to just present the information and allow for questions at the end.
- The seminars all were to short to get into anything in depth and give us more information and practical application of ideas.
- In this short amount of time given I wouldn't take the time to include audience participation - I would take the full 25 mins to deliver the important facts/information.
- Less theory/definitions, more practical steps for implementation (2nd half of the presentation was great, very helpful.)
- I thought this was about teaching portfolios not student portfolios. Woops! Not clear in title but it was good anyways.
- A longer presentation time would have been better
- I hadn't thought about portfolios for assessment in a long time, so thanks for the reminder!

- Needs more time to really dive into portfolios.
- Excellent work! I like how you spent time to demonstrate how portfolio assessment addresses intervention assessment options. I also like that portfolio assessment encourages the development of a growth mindset.
- Would have appreciated longer session.
- Check tech beforehand, more examples for different disciplines, make people sit down in front.
- Used different classes for examples to demonstrate how it can be used in different situations which appeals to broader audience rather than just specific class.
- Good job allowing discussion of both strengths and weaknesses rather than only one.
- I feel that I was not able to write down all the information on the slides – which is important to me and it would be helpful if these slideshows were pasted on D2L or somewhere accessible.
- Wish these were longer.
- Seemed rushed because of the limited time available.
- Not very good probing questions.
- I'm very intrigued by the research supporting portfolios.
- Very thoughtful to bring in exemplar's of student portfolios.
- A next step could be to condense your presentation to focus on your most important points in this very short amount of time.
- Thank you for covering this very relevant topic.
- Maybe providing a handout with resources and main information from the PowerPoint.
- Would like to see more portfolio examples for I/S.
- I feel like this was about what a portfolio is which many of us already know. I was hoping it would tackle specific in-depth assessment challenges relating to portfolios!
- Portfolios are an example of assessment as learning not of learning.

- I have experience using portfolios as a student and a teacher but this workshop presented a range of uses for portfolios and raised good points to be aware of in relation to assessment which I found very useful. Great overview of the topic – very clear and practical. Thanks for sharing!
- Very basic introduction to portfolios. I would have liked a more advanced workshop. I don't think this is not to most people. Otherwise, excellent.
- Very clear, PowerPoint was organized and helpful (just the right amount on the slides), applicable for all grades, how can you use this for certain subjects? More advanced would be great!