Developing Your Professional Portfolio

WHAT IS A PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO

- ❑ A professional portfolio is an organized collection of relevant documents and artifacts that showcases your talents, most relevant skills, and charts your professional growth.

- ❑ A professional portfolio can be created and used for any discipline or profession (teaching, art, research, nursing, journalism, etc.)

- ❑ Your portfolio may "live" in two phases:
  - ✓ A Personal Working Portfolio – very comprehensive and detailed
  - ✓ A Professional Presentation Portfolio – tailored from your Working Portfolio to suit a specific need

WHY SHOULD I CREATE ONE?

- ❑ The process of creating a portfolio enables you to demonstrate examples of your qualifications.   It should be seen as an extension of your résumé or curriculum vitae – not a replacement.

- ❑ It helps you determine who you are, what your life goals and philosophies are, what you do best, and how you wish to present yourself and your work to a targeted audience.

- ❑ It can also serve as a valuable tool to assess your professional development, interview effectively, navigate career transitions and track your professional growth.

PORTFOLIO COMPONENTS

- ❑ Professional Portfolios are as individual as we each are – so no two will be the same

- ❑ Primary components typically include, but are not limited to:

- o **Cover**

- o **Table of contents**

- o **Introduction** – who you are, what your professionals interests are, your goals and/or philosophies

- o **Credentials** - such as your resume, transcripts, references, stellar evaluations

- o **Leadership Highlights**

- o **Research or Project Outcomes** – papers authored, articles written, important presentations

- o **Teamwork or Collaboration Projects** – highlighting YOUR work and contribution

- o *Honors/Awards*

WHERE DO I START?

Step One: Collection of Data

This is a continual process. Identify and collect evidence of your skills and experiences from:
- o Activities
- o Study Abroad Experiences
- o Employment
- o Courses
- o Training
- o Hobbies
- o Community Service Projects
- o School Projects
- o Volunteer Work

❑ Gear your collection process towards finding examples of your work that best represent who you are.

❑ Be thoughtful as you go about your daily assignments and think about how you can demonstrate your role, tasks, and activities performed.

❑ Since you are collecting items for your "working" portfolio, include a variety of items that are relevant, shows who you are as a leader, demonstrates outcomes (how a problem was solved), and showcases your drive and initiative.

❑ Your collection process can be very comprehensive and include many documents. However, you should focus on **quality** and not quantity.
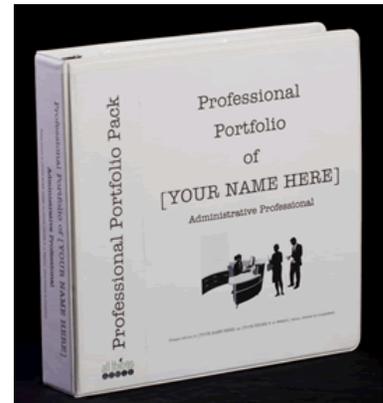
Step Two: Sorting

Now it's time to organize your collection of data.

- ❑ Take some time to think about how you wish to tell your story. Analyze your target audience (this can be tailored in your "presentation portfolio")

- ❑ Organize your collection into your selected categories:
  - o Cover
  - o Table of contents
  - o Introduction
  - o Credentials
  - o Leadership Highlights
  - o Research or Project Outcomes
  - o Teamwork or Collaboration Projects
  - o Honors/Awards

- ❑ As you collect items and organize them, filter those things that are important representation of your work, but do not clearly fit into a category. Keep them in a file box or binder in case you need it in the future.

- ❑ Be sure you have permission to utilize any proprietary information.

ASSEMBLING

- ❑ Traditional portfolios may be assembled in a 3-ring binder, with dividers and clear sheet protectors

- ❑ You will need a fluid product that will allow you to store and remove as needed, relevant work samples

- ❑ Group similar items together and remember to lead each section with your strengths. The goal is to quickly be able to find key skill examples when presenting.
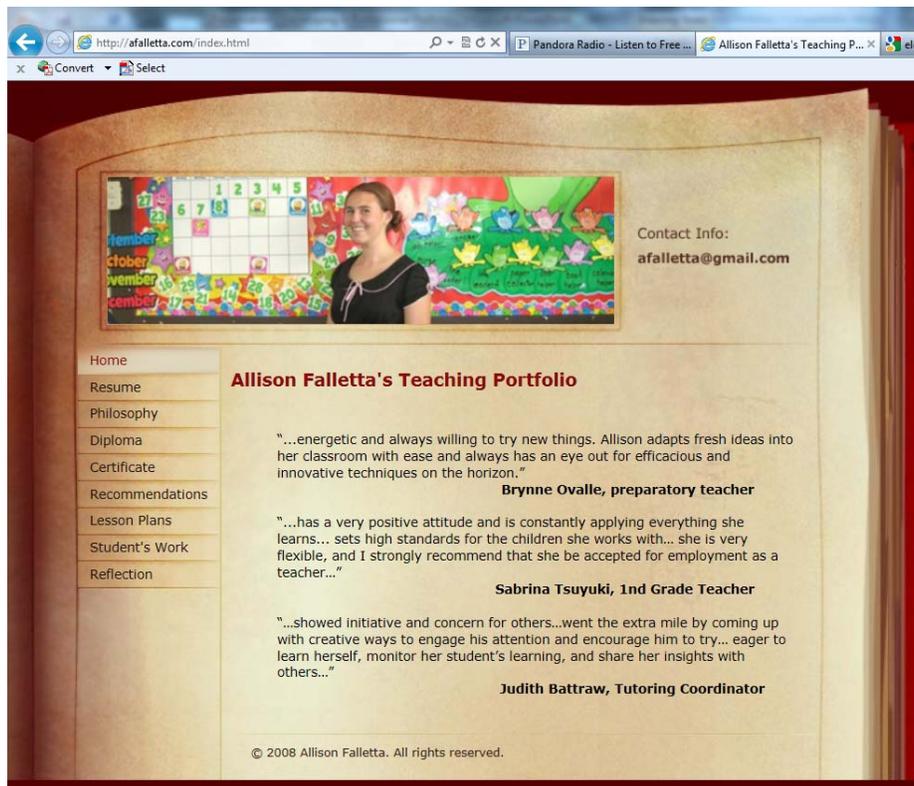

In assembling a traditional portfolio:

- ❑ Create sections with dividers or tabs.

- ❑ Clear sheet protectors may be used to protect documents.

- ❑ Use high quality payer for layout designs when tailoring for presentation.

Make it professional and visually appealing, but remember – it should not look like a scrapbook.

ePORTFOLIO

INTERVIEWING

How Do I Make It Work For Me?

- ❑ The best portfolio will not help you if you do not use it know how to properly use it.

- ❑ The most effective method is to use the portfolio to enhance your presentation of skills during an interview

- ❑ Know your portfolio so that you are able to quickly refer to good examples that will substantiate your demonstration of skills during an interview.

How to use the portfolio during an interview:

- ❑ Do not hand the interviewer your portfolio at the beginning of an interview – unless it is requested. Remember it is an extension of who you are and should be used as an enhancement tool.

- ❑ You want to first establish a rapport with the interviewer, and then utilize the portfolio no more than 3-5 times throughout the interview. DO NOT OVERUSE! The focus should be on you and not your portfolio.

- ❑ Respond to the question you are asked and provide a specific example.

- ❑ Inform the interviewer that you have an example to share and remove the item from your portfolio and pass to the interviewer.

- ❑ Explain the relevance of the document to the example you have shared.

- ❑ Place the items back in your portfolio at the end of the interview.

- ❑ Do not leave your portfolio behind, unless you have created a mini- tailored presentation portfolio that has been created solely for the interviewer.

REMEMBER…

- ❑ A professional portfolio is a valuable creative tool that can be utilized throughout your professional journey to highlight the best of you!

- ❑ Remember it is an extension of who you are and allows other to see you as multi-dimensional.

It's never too early or too late to begin. Start today!