

# ABLE Resource Center Network: *Perspectives*

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Supporting the  
ABLE system to enhance  
student achievement

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## Quarterly News and Information from Your Resource Center Network

### ABLE Evaluation Design Project/OSU

#### Portfolio Assessment: An Overview

*Traci Lepicki, Research Specialist*

According to *Connecting Policy and Practice: A Guide to the Revised ABLE Portfolio System*, portfolio assessment is used to gauge a student's accomplishments and progress toward goals. While standardized testing provides an assessment snapshot at a particular point in time, portfolio assessment is woven throughout learning and teaching.

Portfolio assessment consists of two main activities: building the portfolio and reviewing it. Building the portfolio consists of the creating and selecting student work. Reviewing the portfolio consists of judging and reflecting on the body of student work to determine next steps for learning and teaching.

#### Building the Portfolio

**Creating Student Work:** While planning instruction, it is necessary to define the learning outcome for the student and to define how to assess student performance. A student's work provides a tangible piece that shows the teacher how well the student understands concepts and applies them. When you, as the

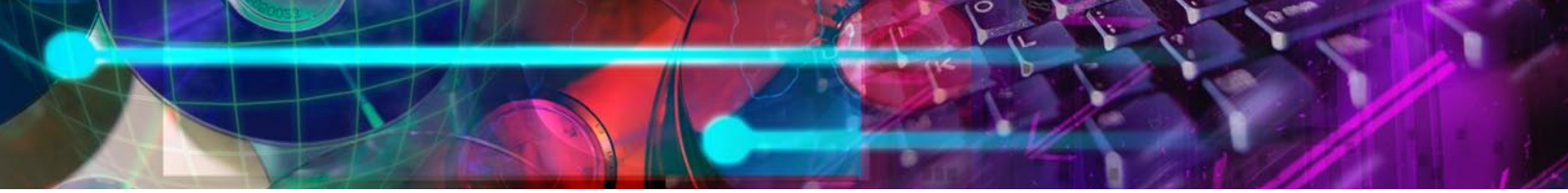
teacher, define an assignment, consider the following questions:

- How will I judge the student's knowledge and skills based on this assignment?
- What will the student's performance/answers tell me about his/her understanding?
- What changes will I make to my instruction based on the student's performance?

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# Portfolio Assessment: An Overview

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**Selecting Student Work:** The portfolio process is a collaborative effort between the student and teacher. And, students are asked to take an active role in picking the pieces to include in the portfolio. The key is for the student to take responsibility for selecting the pieces to include and to think about the choices. For example, you may ask the student to write a few sentences about why the pieces are included in the portfolio and what they show about the student’s learning.

## Reviewing the Portfolio

**Judging Student Work:** At regular intervals it is important to review the portfolio by judging the selected pieces in relation to each other. Here, assessment is focused on evaluating how the student has progressed toward his/her goals by comparing early work with later work to see changes over time given more practice and instruction. Again, actively involving the student is crucial. For example, the following table presents how the same question can be repeated so that the student looks forward (while generating work), looks at the present (while selecting work), and looks back (while judging work) over the course of learning.

<p><b>Generating Work</b></p> <p><i>What will my work show about what I’ve learned and can do?</i></p>
<p><b>Selecting Work</b></p> <p><i>What does this work show about what I’ve learned and can do?</i></p>
<p><b>Judging Work</b></p> <p><i>As examples of my work, do these pieces show what I thought they would about my learning when I created them? If not, what more is needed to show what I’ve learned and can do?</i></p>

**Reflecting on Student Work:** After judging work, it is important to reflect on the work. This last step in portfolio assessment allows students and teachers to think about what to do next. Here, you should reflect on the impact of your instruction and make adjustments, as needed. Consider the following questions:

- What work can I assign to reinforce and extend the student’s learning?
- What instruction is now needed to move the student closer to his/her goals?

For students, reflection may take the form of ongoing learning diaries or reflection forms—activities that encourage students to develop thoughtful learning habits and responsibility for their classroom experiences. You may suggest that the student answer a few reflection questions at the end of each portfolio review cycle. Examples include:

- How does what I learned through these assignments connect to my life?
- What do I need to learn next to move me closer to my goals?

Ultimately, portfolio assessment is intended to increase student and teacher collaboration throughout the learning and teaching process. Perhaps most importantly, portfolio assessment is designed to promote student ownership of learning and pride in accomplishments.

## Source:

**Connecting Policy and Practice: A Guide to the Revised ABLÉ Portfolio System**

<http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=966&ContentID=16072&Content=16183>

# Ohio Literacy Resource Center Technology, Math and Family Literacy

## Standards-Based Portfolios: An Educational Tool

*Judy Franks, Literacy Projects Coordinator*

The intent of the ABLE Portfolio System is to be a workable standards-based educational tool to help students and teachers gauge learning and target instruction. Standards function to help teachers focus on the critical areas students need for future success. The standards provide educators with guidelines for curriculum and teaching and with a focus on clear expectations for all students to achieve. Our portfolio system uses standards as the framework for teachers and students to establish criteria and judge each piece of evidence collected.

To begin this process, we need to use the results of the student's diagnostic testing to build the criteria for student work. For example, suppose the results of the TABE test show that the student has missed questions about topic and supporting sentences, transitioning, making choices about adjectives and adverb usage, capitalization and punctuation. This leads the teacher to choose benchmark 3.4.4 *developing multiple paragraphs with a controlling main idea, topic sentences and supporting sentences containing specific, relevant details and examples* as the starting point for instruction. She could create a checklist with the components of the writing standard that includes these concepts.

**Standard Name** Convey Ideas in Writing  
**Date** Context Narrative Writing

	Not Yet	Some Evidence
Engages reader		
Creates Organizing Structure		
Main idea		
Topic sentence		
Supporting sentence		
Transitions		
Grammatical Structures		
Chooses adjectives		
Chooses adverbs		
Writing Conventions		
Capitalization		
Punctuation		
Seeks feedback		

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# Ohio Literacy Resource Center Technology, Math and Family Literacy

## Standards-Based Portfolios: An Educational Tool *continued from page 3*

This list is only a representation of the complete list of benchmarks that serve as the framework for lesson development. The teacher chooses to focus instruction for this student (and possibly other students who have tested similarly) around the above identified concepts. For a narrative writing sample, the teacher is concerned about how the writer considers the audience and encourages the student to include feedback as part of the writing process.

Merely collecting assignments is not enough to show improvement in the student's work. For a standards-based portfolio to be meaningful, a checklist or scoring guide, also known as a rubric, should accompany the student's work to indicate whether or not the student meets the standard. The checklist in the above example includes qualifiers such as "not yet" or "some evidence" which provides information for the next steps of instruction.

Rubrics often contain verbal descriptors and/or numerical scales for each criterion. An example for *Main idea* – taken from the chart on page 3 – might look like this.

Main idea Writing will have a focus or develop a main idea related to the purpose			
	Beginning	Developing	Competent
The writing is focused on one topic.	The paragraph is related to the topic. The topic or main idea is somewhat clear.	Most paragraphs are related to the topic. The topic and main idea are clearly focused.	All paragraphs have a clearly stated main idea that relates to the topic.

The teacher and student discuss the work samples, compare them to previous samples to see progress and choose the appropriate pieces of evidence to show student achievement. This checklist can be attached to each piece of work to be chosen to include in the portfolio to show progress or mastery.

Remember these steps when selecting a standards-based portfolio entry:

1. Select the standard based on the student's goal and diagnostic testing.
2. Determine the assignment and evidence necessary to meet the standard.
3. Use a criteria or descriptor checklist to guide students in the process.
4. Develop a rubric or score sheet to describe the levels students need to achieve to make progress.

# Northeast Resource Center ESOL

## Portfolio: ESOL

*Christina Theuerling, Coordinator*

Language learning encompasses four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) but one skill is not learned independent of another. Language skills are receptive and productive. Listening, a receptive skill, precedes speaking, a productive skill. Similarly, reading, also receptive, precedes the productive writing skill. Therefore, no one skill should be taught in isolation. It is simply good practice in ESOL. Furthermore, it makes sense to teach and track progress in either listening and speaking, or reading and writing.

Student portfolios contain information that can help guide instruction, but ultimately should reflect what happens in the classroom. Student portfolios are the documentation of students' goals and individual plans. It shows how the students achieve the goals using standards and benchmarks by providing examples of success or student work.

Tracking student work can seem overwhelming and sometimes impossible especially if you are documenting the listening/speaking skills. Below are some examples of student work that could be included in the portfolio. These examples show improvement in listening and speaking (L/S) skills and reading and writing (R/W) skills.

- **L/S:** Individualized cassette tapes from the beginning and end of year showing improvement, student-generated tongue twisters, practice sentences from *On Speaking and Cultural Terms*, speeches, dictations/cloze, songs, chants, dialogues

OR

- **R/W:** Class readings, a book read to a child, a letter, a poem, an essay, journals, a completed form

It is important to keep in mind that student work should align with the standardized test that is used to assess progress in a particular skill(s). For example, if you're using BEST Plus because the student's goal is to improve the listening and speaking skills, then the portfolio would show student work on listening and speaking. Alternately, if BEST Literacy or CASAS is used to assess the student's goal of reading and/or writing, the portfolio should contain student work on reading and writing skills.

Teachers can maximize portfolio time in the classroom by having students involved in the process. Students can choose their own work to add and in turn gain a sense of ownership for their portfolio. This activity helps students reflect on their work, chart their progress with the standards and self-assess their progress. Ultimately, it will help students stay on track with their language learning goals.

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# Central/Southeast Resource Center Special Populations

## The Portfolio Process: A Path to Developing Self-Advocacy Skills

*Sharon Reynolds, Director*

A significant number of ABLE students have some type of learning disability. A small percentage of these students have a diagnosis. The students who have a diagnosis may or may not be aware of the accommodations to which they are entitled under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Rehabilitation Act - Section 504. It is up to the ABLE staff to help these students to understand their rights and to advocate for the accommodations. Some examples of accommodations are a scribe, a notetaker, recorded materials, and extra time.

Many ABLE students struggle with a learning disability because they do not have a diagnosis. Although these students are not officially protected under the current laws, it is in their best interest for instructors to openly discuss learning difficulties and disabilities with all of their students. This helps the students understand how small changes can remove barriers to learning and level the playing field for all students.

Some simple adaptations that instructors can make for all students working on their portfolio include:

Environmental changes: reduce distractions, alter lighting, allow music via headphones.

Instructional changes: include written steps (if giving oral directions), provide opportunities to learn in at least three modalities (senses).

Material modifications: increase the size of print by using a copier, use overlays, use magnifier strips, print on colored paper.

Many ABLE teachers are using adaptations in their classes everyday. Student reflection is central to the usefulness of the portfolio process. A valuable exercise for students using adaptations is to reflect on how a selected piece of work was accomplished. Some questions to prompt reflection are:

- What adaptations were used to complete this project?
- Were the adaptations helpful? Why? Why not?
- Did some adaptation only work on certain types of projects?
- How might these adaptations be used outside of the classroom?

The questions can be adapted for those ABLE students who use accommodations. For these students, the portfolio process can be a way to learn about their strengths and challenges. It also increases the awareness of the accommodations most useful to them.

Use the portfolio process as a structured opportunity for students to reflect on their learning, their strengths and weaknesses and what adaptations or accommodations help to remove barriers. Through this process students will develop self-awareness and the ability to speak with knowledge and confidence about the accommodations to which they are entitled and to the adaptations which help them learn. Your students will benefit from this ability to self-advocate while they are with you and after they leave your program.

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# *Southwest Resource Center* Reading and Writing

## Portfolio: Student Writing and the ABLE Portfolio System

*Kathy Knall, Researcher/Trainer*

Student writing lends itself particularly well to the ABLE Portfolio System when students and teachers work collaboratively to target and build needed skills. The teacher may set parameters around the types of writing samples for the portfolio based on the learning outcomes in the curriculum and on students' goals; then the teacher can work with students to select the specific writing pieces to include. Building a writing portfolio can help even the most reluctant writers find pleasure and success in writing.

### Why Should Adult Learners Include Writing Samples in Portfolios?

- Portfolios ask adults to think about the kinds of writing they want and need to compose.
- Portfolios encourage students to widen the scope of their writing while focusing on what makes writing effective.
- Portfolios build a body of writing that may be used as a model for future writing and that students may take with them to enhance their personal and professional lives.

### What Does a Portfolio Look Like?

No two portfolios will look alike. Students' skill levels and goals will determine the shape of their portfolios. The best examples of student writing at a particular point in the teaching/learning cycle might go into the portfolio along with pieces in which students consider how they are developing

as writers. From the teacher's point of view, portfolios are an opportunity to evaluate students' current skills as well as their progress over time. By comparing writing samples completed at an earlier time, writing samples demonstrate what students have learned, what they can do, and what instruction is still needed.

### Discussing the Portfolio with Students

Setting aside time to talk with your students individually about their writing is an important part of the portfolio process. Try to get students to open up with questions such as:

- Why did you select this piece?
- Why is this piece of writing important to you?
- Where did you get this idea?
- What was the easiest/hardest part when writing this piece?
- Tell me about one new thing that you have learned about writing.
- How can I help you with this?

When students and teachers have meaningful conversations about writing, the focus turns to the writer rather than the writing (the product). This is part of the path that leads toward student growth.

Because portfolios bring together a number of writings and ask students to reflect on what they have written, writers can see how they have changed and grown. It is the combination of writing, talking about writing, and thinking about writing that allows students to celebrate progress and plan for future writing.

### Sources:

*Adult Writing Portfolios: Writing Matters* by Anne Greenwell.

*Jefferson County Public Schools, Kentucky Department for Workforce Development*

*Advanced Education and Employment: Curriculum Guides* <http://www.aee.gov.sk.ca/>

*Portfolio Process Web site* [www.gesnrecit.qc.ca/Portfolio/port\\_eng.htm](http://www.gesnrecit.qc.ca/Portfolio/port_eng.htm)

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# **Northwest Resource Center Assessment and Workplace Education**

## **Portfolio: Workplace Education**

*Jody Angelone, Director*

Workplace Education is defined in the Ohio ABLÉ Workplace Education Resource Guide as, “Education services offered in collaboration with business, industry, government and/or labor for the purpose of improving the productivity of the workforce through improvement of literacy skills.”

Education services include those activities designed to improve the work-related basic education and literacy skill levels of workers that are offered to business, industry, government and/or labor by an Ohio Department of Education-funded ABLÉ service provider. Such services seek to increase an individual’s ability to, “Read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job” [(Adult Education and Family Literacy Act: Section 203(12)]. These services would parallel similar services provided by any ABLÉ program to individuals seeking assistance with basic skills, ESOL, family literacy or GED preparation. The Workplace Education services have the added feature of being conducted within the context of the workplace.

The workplace education portfolio should follow the ABLÉ Workplace Education Model, within the Ohio Performance Accountability System (O-PAS). The workplace education model was designed to meet both the needs and requirements of the collaborative partner and the education

provider. Ohio ABLÉ has empowered its workplace education programs to be creative and flexible in designing, delivering and reporting workplace education services. A sample workplace portfolio should include:

- Pre-assessment (standardized)\*
- Individual registration forms
- Course Learning Plan/Course Outline\*
- Monitoring Progress\*
- Post-assessment (standardized)\*
- Evaluation (student, program, employer)
- Program employer goal(s)
- Copy of training agreement
- Individual Job Profile
- Attendance

\* Mandatory Items

When the local program and the employer work together to develop training for the employees, there is a better understanding of how each agency works. This can only create a stronger partnership between the program and the employer.

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