**DIGITAL PORTFOLIOS**

**THE BASICS**

**Premise:**

Often when I think of assessment, I forget that it's not designed for the teacher. Ultimately, if I want students to become self-directed learners, I need an assessment method that includes student-selected work along with student self-reflections.

From my experience, the best method for authenticity is a portfolio. I love the idea of students curating their own work and sharing what they have learned in the journey of learning. Besides, the act of creating a portfolio becomes a transferrable skill that students can use with future creative endeavors.

For this type of portfolio, I encourage students to think the product and the process with a lens of growth and mastery. Students also look at what they learned along the way and what future steps they want to take.

**Time Frame:**

I have found that 3-5 class periods tend to work well. I prefer taking a whole week if it is a yearlong class and taking three days (combining page #1 with #4 and #5) for a semester-long course.

**Favorite Site:**

I prefer using Weebly because of the ease of adding media. However, this could work just as easily with Wix, Google Sites or customized WordPress.

**COMPONENTS**

**Page #1: Home**

The goal of a home page is to introduce who you are, along with the purpose of the portfolio. The following are a few things you might want to include:

* A photo or snippet of one of your works
* A short description of who you are including a few of your interests
* A list of skills you have gained in this field or subject
* A description of the purpose of the portfolio (showing your growth and your best work).
* A short description of your learning journey. What projects did you do? Who did you work with?

**Page #2: Growth**

Begin an introduction sharing how you have grown from the start of the course to the end of the course. Afterward, select at least two before and after examples (a total of four). The following questions might help guide you:

* Why does this newer work represent an area of growth for you? Cite specific examples of how you have improved.
* What were the hardest areas for you to master and why?
* In general, how has your work changed from the start to the finish?
* What obstacles did you face? How did you get past those obstacles?
* Which standard or standards does this work connect to? In what ways does it prove you grew in this standard?

**Page #3: Best Work**

Begin an introduction sharing what part of this course or subject you are currently excelling in. Afterward, select your top three examples of your best work. The following questions might help guide you:

* Why is this an example of your best work?
* What aspects of this work make you feel proud? What makes this work stand out?
* Which standard or standards does this work connect to? In what ways does it prove you are exceeding the standard?
* Did you find this work to be easy or hard to do? Why is that?
* What skills did you use in order to create this? In what ways can you build upon these skills in the future?

**Page #4: What I Learned**

Begin with an introduction of some of the basic skills you have learned. If possible, cite specific standards and your level of mastery. The following questions might help you along the way:

* What problems did you solve along the way?
* What skills have you learned? How can you apply these to other subjects?
* What concepts did you figure out?
* How did you contribute to group projects? What were your roles? What collaborative skills did you learn along the way?
* What did you learn about yourself in the process?

**Page #5: Next Steps**

Share with your audience what you plan to do next. The following questions might help you along the way:

* What are some areas that are still weaknesses for you? What will you do to continue to grow in these areas?
* What future goals do you have connected to this subject or topic? List the goals and keep them specific.
* How do you plan to use this in life? Cite actual examples.

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