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Ensure Portfolios Provide Evidence of Mastery

David Beach, PhD; Associate Undergraduate Writing Coordinator; Department of English; West Virginia University [00:00:15] Your final portfolio will be your polished, professional work of what you've done during the semester.

David Beach, PhD [00:00:23] In our writing program, we use the portfolio approach and that means that 70 percent of the final grade is based on the writing in the final portfolio. This is high-stakes, but we help students achieve that portfolio by working on it piecemeal throughout the entire semester.

David Beach, PhD [00:00:42] So at two points in the semester, at mid-term and the final, you will submit a portfolio of your work. And you can see that the percentage is relatively high of your final grade, but I don't want that to scare you because what we're doing throughout the semester is you're working on discrete assignments, you're getting useful feedback, which you can apply to your papers to make it stronger both for me and from each other, and hopefully from the writing studio. You'll be able to apply that feedback to make your work stronger.

David Beach, PhD [00:01:11] And then we look at the portfolio as holistic work. What has the student learned in this 15-week period about writing, research, and argumentation?

David Beach, PhD [00:01:21] Let's take a look at some of the key words in that rubric. It will demonstrate originality, and initiative, and rhetorical sophistication that go well beyond the course requirements. A portfolio at this level is composed of well-edited text of different genres. All consistently show a clear and connected sense of audience purpose and development. The writer is able to analyze his or her own writing, reflect on it, and revise, rewrite accordingly. The writer takes risk that work, and the work is uniformly excellent.

Juanita Williams; Instructor; Cosmetology Services Education Center (CSEC); Fayetteville Technical Community College [00:01:58] The portfolio will be a wide variety of techniques that they have learned. That they can do, that they're comfortable with. Their best. And it's a variety. It's not all color. It's not all hairstyling. It's not all hair cutting. It's a combination. It's nails, it's makeup. It's, it's, it's styling. It's all kinds of styling. So I do, I do give them a guideline in what I'm expecting. At least 10 before and after. 10 before, 10 after pictures, at least. But the portfolio is good, especially electronically now, because people want to see what they can do. In that kind... If they put their best out there, they feel good about that, and they'll be able to show that if they go on an interview.

Kelly Lester, MFA; Director; Center for Faculty Development; The University of Southern Mississippi [00:02:36] I incorporate portfolios into my grading in several ways. As a program, we have an introduction course in which students build the portfolio as part of the course, and all the assignments leading up to the portfolio are built into that portfolio. Another way that I use portfolios is in helping students keep track of assignments that build into a larger assignment. So, for instance, if they have a... they're working towards a final thesis. Then within the portfolio, they are submitting assignments like a research question, an annotated bibliography, a project proposal or process that they're gonna go through. And then as a program, we have different benchmarks throughout the curriculum that students submit, and then they're checked by their advisors.

Juanita Williams [00:03:27] I do grade the portfolio. I give them a rubric for everything that they do, so they'll know what I'm looking for. Does it have all the artifacts in there that I'm asking for? Does it have... is it neat? The spelling? All that is important. You know, you do the theory part. You put your resume together, you put your... all the documentations that you need for the portfolio and then we can work on the pitches when you get to the practical, hands-on part of it.

Kelly Lester, MFA; Director; Center for Faculty Development; The University of Southern Mississippi [00:03:50] I grade portfolios in the beginning by ensuring that the guidelines are clear and that each category is articulate. So there are different steps the portfolio. Maybe making sure that there are certain headings, that it's got a visual



appeal, that it's got some key components to it. And then from there it starts to look at content, so there may be different categories of looking at, at a portfolio. Did you, for ease, did you complete the assignment and include all of the nuggets? And then what was the content of those? And then what are my expectations as the instructor for those content places should be articulated.

Ireland; Student; The University of Southern Mississippi [00:04:28] So the benefit of completing a big portfolio assignment at the end is that we were able to look at every single assignment we had done, which was about, about eight or nine in the entire semester and see, oh, at the beginning of that assignment, and at the end of this assignment, my writing had gotten better and my skills had gotten better. And Dr. Lester's feedback that she gave me, I was able to implement. And in this last assignment, it showed. And I'm, even in my writing my thesis now, even though I don't have Dr. Lester, I go back to her comments and I look and I see, OK, she said this. So when I'm writing the thesis now, I can implement those skills as well.

David Beach, PhD [00:05:01] I think especially in writing, and there's a lot of research about this both and writing classes and in other classes as well, when the assessment is based on a semester's worth of work, which has been revised and edited and polished, the grades tend to be a little bit more higher than average, and that's because the focus is on feedback and revision.

Kelly Lester, MFA [00:05:25] In portfolios, for me, there's a lot of different things that allows them to see their own growth. If they go back and you can invite reflection, there go back and read your first assignment, where are you now? What did you learn from Point A to F and now from F to Z? So where you have those checkpoints for them. And then it also becomes this tangible thing that students can update.

Brittany; Student; The University of Southern Mississippi [00:05:48] In the professional world, I would definitely use a portfolio kind of like a resume to show the experience that I've had and the creations that have come from that experience so that somebody can really take a deep dive into who I am and what I have to offer.