

## Designing the Portfolio

CoTers develop design ideas for their Portfolios in many ways, certainly through the feedback they get from CoT Seminar colleagues and faculty coordinators on some of their early submissions and from examining the Portfolios of more experienced CoTers. As you design your Portfolio, we recommend that you consider how best to respond to four central issues: who your **audience** will be, what **form** will best communicate who you are as a teacher to that audience, the **level of clarity** you can develop to communicate your ideas, and the **submission procedures** the faculty asks that you follow at several points during your tenure in CoT.

### Audience

Your Portfolio *is* your Portfolio but it also needs to communicate who you are and what you have accomplished to others. CoTers sometimes assume that their faculty coordinator is their only audience. That person will probably come to know you better than anyone else in the School of Education; consequently, the burden of portraying your capabilities to that person is small. Your Seminar leader also knows the program and its concept of a Portfolio very well. Others who may read your Portfolio do not have that perspective. We recommend that you consider at least two, and possibly four other audiences as you present your information.

- **The Second Reader.** Once your faculty coordinator approves all 30 of your Expectations he or she will forward the Portfolio to another faculty coordinator who will act as a second reader. (Both faculty members must approve the Portfolio for you to be licensed.) The second reader obviously knows the program quite well but may not know you. Present your materials in a manner that allows another person to get to know you.
- **A School Principal or Hiring Committee.** We recommend that you consider making your Portfolio available to someone who is considering hiring you as a teacher. Some CoTers develop a condensed version of their whole Portfolio, what is often called a presentation portfolio for this purpose. Assume that these people not only do not know you, but also do not know the program. CoT, itself, has been a major selling point for many CoTers when they have interviewed for teaching positions. People who don't know the program need to know more about an Expectation than just its title. (More on this point below.)
- **The Induction Portfolio.** Indiana's new licensing standards will require all beginning teachers to develop what is being called an induction portfolio in their first two years of teaching. It will require a teacher to develop a curriculum unit, teach it, evaluate his or her students' learning, evaluate the entire experience and reflect on its merits. These materials will comprise a portfolio which is submitted to a trained evaluator who will then judge whether the teacher merits a permanent teaching license. The CoT Portfolio is a much more comprehensive document than the induction portfolio, and we think it will be very good preparation for accomplishing the latter. As this new licensing requirement becomes clearer we will probably align parts of our Portfolio to prepare you even better for the induction process, but we already anticipate that some of the units you build for the CoT Portfolio may become pilot trials of the materials you decide to use for your induction portfolio.
- **National Board Certification.** A growing movement in the country is the development of national teacher certification. When accomplished it indicates that a teacher has achieved what might be called master teacher status. The idea is only a few years old—only 64 teachers in Indiana now hold national board certification—but some school districts are already beginning to develop a new column on their salary schedules to reward teachers who accomplish this standard. National board certification involves passing content examinations, being evaluated as you teach, and constructing a portfolio. CoT alumni who continue to maintain their Portfolio after graduation should have a

tremendous head start on that segment of this very demanding process.

## Form

CoTers have presented their evidence in a number of forms. The faculty asks that you consider the transportability of your Portfolio in your design. Please design it so that it may be carried in one hand. Please try to keep the weight below 25 pounds. We recommend that you avoid plastic sleeves, except for odd-sized items or valued materials that you wish to protect. (Extensive use of sleeves is both environmentally damaging and doubles the weight of the Portfolio.) Please do not include textbooks, manuals, journals, or curriculum guides unless you are the author. Please label video and audio tapes, and cue them to the proper place for viewing or listening. Please put your name on the outside of your Portfolio. Try to keep all pages of a single piece of evidence together by stapling them (minimize the use of paper clips).

The forms that have been used include:

- The “box.” By far, the most popular form has been the hanging file box, containing 30 (or a few more) hanging file folders, each labeled for a specific Expectation.
- Looseleaf notebook(s). Students have used from one to five. One, even if it is a large one, seems to get overstuffed and becomes very hard to manipulate. Several reduces the Portfolio’s capability of being carried in one hand.
- CD disks. Several students have converted their materials into HTML or digitized files and presented their evidence on one CD. Besides being extremely convenient to transport, it becomes an easy manner for you to leave a copy of the Portfolio for others to inspect and learn from. CDs have included audio recorded segments, video clips (for example, of a vocal recital), and scanned documents.

## Level of Clarity

The friendlier that you can make the reading of your Portfolio the more favorable the impression it will make on your various audiences.

- Particularly for readers who are strangers to the program, please develop a standardized format for an introductory page to each of your 30 Expectations. The number and title of the Expectation, its statement, and its rationale are all basic information that will help an outside evaluator understand the context of your evidence. We also recommend that the format allows you to list and annotate the evidence you’re offering, the context in which it was acquired, and why you think it is appropriate to this Expectation. We can provide you with an electronic file of a format like this if you’d like a starting place from which you can adapt your own page, or you are free to develop a format on your own. These 30 introductory pages may make a good start of a briefer presentation portfolio which might be what you use in job hunting.
- Evidence is often used for more than one Expectation. If it consists of a page or two, simply providing a second copy under the second Expectation works just fine. For bulkier items a common procedure is to cross-reference the material in the second folder. In such cases, we recommend that you add the cross-referencing information to the annotated list on your introductory page. For example, in the section that contains the evidence you might write, “Also used as evidence in **N.n: Expectation 2.**” Then, in the annotated list for **N.n: Expectation 2**, you can write, “This evidence will be found under **N.n: Expectation 1.**”

## Procedural Matters

- Portfolios are submitted at least once a semester for faculty feedback. You need to complete at least one Expectation every semester that you are in the program. If you are a full time teacher working on a limited license, you need to complete at least five Expectations each semester.
- You need to have completed at least ten Expectations to register for student teaching.
- You need to have completed at least 20 Expectations before commencing student teaching.
- Portfolios can be submitted at any time for faculty evaluation with the exception of August. **August is Portfolio free month.** Feedback may take as much as three weeks.
- When you are resubmitting your Portfolio, please make clear which Expectations you have changed since your last submission so that faculty can evaluate the changes and respond appropriately.
- When you submit your Portfolio, for what may be the final evaluation, please include an extra, full set of the summary pages for all 30 Expectations. (If you've used the CD format please make a copy of the disk instead.) We will keep these in our files and make them available to state auditors when they inspect the program for re-accreditation.