



Using a Portfolio in a Middle School English Class

by

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I became a junior high/high school English teacher in the 1970s, when we learned to teach in the “traditional” way. That meant we taught several subject areas in English: spelling, grammar, vocabulary, literature, and writing. Rarely did we connect these subjects for the students. I left teaching for five years, then returned to a middle school and then to a very traditional high school where I heard constant complaints about the whole language approach to reading and writing. During that time, I took a graduate course on whole language for elementary teachers. This course was my epiphany. For the first time I understood how important it was to make connections among all aspects of the language when teaching students to become readers and writers. Since the whole language philosophy truly had meaning for me, it was only natural that I should be drawn to authentic assessment in the form of portfolios.

OUR MIDDLE SCHOOL LITERACY PORTFOLIO

My return to middle school teaching in the Lawrence School District coincided with the English department’s commitment to create a reading–writing portfolio for seventh and eighth graders. Simultaneously, the elementary schools were developing their own version of a reading and writing portfolio. The middle school portfolio project was a wonderful collaborative experience, which brought cohesiveness to a department consisting of both new and experienced teachers of English and reading. We approached our task knowing it was a work in progress being created by those implementing it. We began with writing a definition and

goals, partly to get going, but also knowing that we had to face a concerned and vocal group of parents who needed to be kept informed. (See Figures 3–1 and 3–2.)

Our initial intent was to replace the final exam in English with a portfolio project that would reflect a full year's worth of work. Once we had our goals established, we were able to create the activities necessary to implement the portfolio and to create the learning experiences that would enable students to reach our goals. We wanted to include and emphasize a great deal of student self-analysis in both reading and writing, which was both appropriate and necessary for the young adolescent students with whom we worked.

The department had decided to use a plain, light-blue folder for the portfolio to distinguish it from the everyday, yellow working folders that students were already using for work in progress. I encouraged the students to doodle on the yellow one and emphasized the importance of maintaining the blue portfolio as something special. My students also traced a large shield on the front of their blue folders where they put their names, one word to describe themselves, and a drawing that revealed something of who they are. In addition, the students completed lengthy reading and writing inventories.

The English Department decided that portfolio assessment would coincide with each of the four, ten-week marking periods that occur throughout the year. Before each marking period, the students would update their portfolios by completing standard forms (questionnaires, goal sheets, etc.) accompanied by selected work samples. I did not have the students identify their initial goals for reading and writing until the first ten-week assessment. I thought it was important for me to know the ability level of each of my students so I could better assist them in establishing appropriate goals.

DEVELOPING SELF-EVALUATION IN STUDENTS

An issue that has often been raised by teachers is whether students in the seventh and eighth grades are developmentally capable of doing the kind of self-evaluation we ask of them in port-

Your portfolio in reading and writing will contain long-term projects that you have created, reflected upon, and revised. As musicians and artists have working portfolios that they change and reevaluate, you will also assess the work you have collected. Therefore, your folder is called a portfolio assessment.

Your goal in creating a portfolio is to take responsibility in thoughtfully judging your own work. Guidance will come from your teachers and your peers.

Many methods will be used to assess your progress and improvement. An important one will be models of excellent writing. In addition, your teachers and your classmates will rely upon reading logs, writing samples, discussion groups, group projects, and other reading–writing activities in which you will all work together as a community of learners.

All aspects of the writing process will be used in your writing. In the end, the sample pieces that your portfolio contains will be selected by you and your teachers as you conference throughout the school year.

FIGURE 3–1 Definition of portfolio assessment (*Source:* Lawrence Middle School)

Reading Goals

Each student will be encouraged to

- Read self-selected books, magazines, and newspapers for leisure.
- Exercise responsibility in reading independently.
- Read quality and appropriate literature.
- Read a variety of literature: nonfiction, fiction, poetry, narrative, biography, etc.
- Demonstrate understanding of literature by writing and speaking.
- Discuss meanings of literature in individual and group conferences.
- Gain values from literature.
- Appreciate and enjoy literature.

Writing Goals

Each student will be encouraged to

- Write according to a model presented by the teacher.
- Write for a variety of purposes: to express self, narrate, describe, explain, persuade.
- Write in many subject areas.
- Use standard written English for spelling, sentence structure, agreement, and other grammatical structures.
- Become aware of varied audiences.
- Use research to support both creative and expository writing.
- Write coherent, organized pieces.
- Use writing process techniques, such as note taking, revising, editing, and peer conferencing.
- Develop personal criteria and standards for effective writing.

Reading–Writing Goals

Each student will be encouraged to

- Write meaningful responses to literature.
- Write creatively by following models of excellent literature.
- Participate in self-assessment of reading and writing.

FIGURE 3–2 Reading and writing goals for middle school students

folio assessment. At the middle school level, adolescents are becoming more insightful and certainly are capable of moving from literal to analytic and figurative thinking. For example, these students are better able to understand the purpose of hyperbole in a short story than are younger students. They learn to ask probing questions about a piece of literature that usually leads to making connections to their own lives. This analysis is then applied to their own writ-

ing. I am always amazed at the ability of students to rise to the occasion when given the opportunity. The students need discussion with the teacher and their peers to use analytic skills, and they are very good at recognizing their own weaknesses. Since the portfolio is private and shared only with the student and the teacher, students can be open and honest. The best students sometimes need more incentive to find challenging goals, but through conferences, they find appropriate areas to work on. At the beginning of the year, the students struggle with accomplishment of goals, but by the third marking period, I can ask the student, "Can you now see the progress that you have made this year?" They usually smile brightly because they see before them obvious improvement. Their hard work has paid off.

I presented the concept of the first ten-week assessment very seriously and formally to my students. For writing, students selected from their yellow, working folders the piece of writing that they thought best exhibited their accomplishments for the first marking period. They were asked to analyze the piece by writing about why they chose it, what was good about it, and where improvements could be made (see Figure 3-3).

TEN-WEEK WRITING ASSESSMENT

Select the piece of writing from the past ten weeks that you feel belongs in your portfolio. Review your writing goals. Following your teacher's guidelines, explain with specific references to the piece of writing why it should be included. You may want to consider why it was chosen and how well you have met your goals.

I picked my Time Travel story because I enjoyed writing. The reason I enjoyed it is because I wrote that I went back in time to when my father was about my age. I had it so that I found a picture of my father when he was my age and I was transported to that time. I said we got along and what we did. What I liked alot about the story is that I said I saw how his life was when was a boy.

FIGURE 3-3 Sample of the first 10-week writing assessment form completed by a seventh-grade student

Name _____

WHAT I DO WELL IN WRITING

DATE

11/22/94 *good vocabulary*
proper grammar
creative ideas
good descriptions

WHAT I'M WORKING ON IN WRITING

DATE

11/22/94 *more dialogue*
verb usage with "lay"

FIGURE 3-4 Writing goals sheet completed by a seventh-grade student

I gave several examples and allowed students to discuss their work before they began to write. This turned out to be fairly easy for the students because writing is concrete, and I routinely provided each student with an analytic narrative for each of their papers that had been submitted. In these analyses, I used comments like, "You did a nice job of . . ." and "You need to work on. . ." These comments were stapled to the students' papers, dated, and placed in the portfolio. Then the students filled out a goal sheet for writing. It asked them to describe what they did well in writing and what they were going to work on to improve their writing for the next ten weeks (see Figure 3-4).

The students also evaluated their reading skills to set their goals in reading for the next marking period. This was more difficult for them to accomplish and required more discussion. I asked them to refer to a literature discussion sheet we used after a lively discussion had taken place about a novel, short story, or play read in class. I explained to the students that in seventh and eighth grades I look for higher level interpretation and wanted them to show both literal and figurative understanding. On the literature discussion sheet, the students listed the piece discussed, an important idea brought up by another student, and their contribution, if any, to the discussion (see Figure 3-5).

This evaluation activity provided opportunities to share thoughts about literature. Students were expected to draw conclusions, compare one work with another, and recognize literary terms. The students also completed a form in which they listed all that they read in school and at home. I emphasized the importance of having a book to read at all times. While I only require one outside reading assignment per marking period, those students who finish in a few days are expected to select another book. By compiling and reviewing this information, the students were equipped to recognize their strengths and weaknesses. I strongly recommended that the weak readers make a commitment to read fifteen minutes each night at home, and this became an attainable goal for many. The very good readers were expected to read more than the required assignments.

NAME Susan DATE _____

TITLE OF BOOK DISCUSSED The Homecoming

LITERATURE DISCUSSION

1. How much did you participate in the discussion today?
 about the right amount too much not at all too little

2. What was an important contribution you made to the discussion?

3. What was an important idea expressed by someone else in the group during the discussion? (Identify the person and tell what he or she said.)
John said that the voice of the storekeeper was like Dickey's mother's voice. It was important because that means they're getting close to their grandma's house.

FIGURE 3-5 Literature discussion worksheet completed by a seventh-grade student

In an age when students spend many hours watching television and playing video games, we teachers must help create a desire to choose to read and write. However, changing attitudes at this age can be a hard battle. Figure 3-6 contains the self-reflections of a seventh-grade student about literacy written at the end of the school year.

We decided to use a portfolio conference in place of a traditional, final English exam. To replace the final exam, the portfolio had to be comprehensive and represent the multifaceted activities in our English curriculum. Before the final portfolio conference, each student in class wrote two analytical essays, one for reading and one for writing. In these essays students developed answers to questions we posed that required them to analyze their growth over the year (see Figure 3-7).

To complete the questionnaire in Figure 3-6, the students reviewed their portfolios with particular emphasis on the ten-week assessments they had worked on throughout the year. This review was quite labor intensive. In June, all English teachers were released from class for four to five days to meet individually with every student for a formal conference. In a sense, the students had to defend their portfolio during the conference and verbalize their achievements over the course of a year.

Next we had to grapple with the issue of grading the portfolios. We needed to design a rubric that would translate the work accomplished by the student into a numerical grade based on a 100-point scale. The portfolio grade would count as 10% of the student's final average for the course. We first determined that reading and writing would be equal: 50 points each. From there, we looked at our goals for the students and created a list to value

I do not see myself as a reader. The reason why I do not see myself as a reader is because I do not like reading a lot. I feel that it is not very exciting, especially the boring stories. I like the exciting stories. Because there is so much excitement. With the boring stories I fall asleep. But I do read, I read 4 times a week. At the beginning I did not read at all. Because I felt it was boring, boring, borrrriinnnggg. But now I know that it is important for me. The reason why is because in case you need it when you become an adult and your child wants you to read to them and you do not know how to read, what will you do. You have nothing to do.

I do not see myself as a writer at all. The reason why is because I do not like to write. I think it is boring, and I know that it is. In the beginning I felt the same way. I think that it is not very important in life. But I can be wrong...

FIGURE 3-6 Self-reflections on reading and writing by a seventh-grade student at the end of the school year

Read everything in your portfolio thoughtfully. Answer the following questions carefully and specifically. Using your answers as a guide, write a final essay for your portfolio which creates a portrait of yourself as a reader and a writer. Conclude with a paragraph evaluating your strengths and goals as a reader and writer as you prepare to enter a new grade in the fall.

1. What do you notice when you look at your earlier work?

When I look at my earlier work I notice I have progressed in my usage of words. My writings seem to flow better now, which leads me to believe I can describe and explain concepts now much better and with a clearer understanding of the topic myself.

2. How do you think your writing has changed?

I have progressed in my usage of words. My writings seem to flow better now and I can grasp what I am writing about better.

3. What do you know now that you didn't know before?

I can write with tense better now I also can understand that longer stories aren't always better if a short story captures what you wanted to say.

4. At what points did you discover something new about your writing?

As I was reading over my portfolio I realized my writings are getting more adult-like and are very well put.

5. How do the changes you see in your writing affect the way you see yourself as a writer?

I see myself as a committed writer who is always trying to get a concept across to my audience.

6. In what ways do you think your reading has influenced your writing?

It gives me ideas and shows me what a good story looks like. It also shows me how to express myself to my readers.

7. Are you reading more now than you did at the beginning of the year?

I think so. This is so because summer is coming and I know I will have a lot more time for free reading.

8. How consistently do you read assigned material (in and out of class) in English and other subjects?

I always read all of my assigned material. It helps because I know what we're talking about in class.

9. How well have you met your reading goals?

I have met my reading goals. I have read short stories, novels, newspapers, magazines and that accomplishes most of my goals that have to do with reading variety.

10. What new goals do you have for yourself in reading and writing?

I would like to read more classical literature and write a non-fiction story.

FIGURE 3-7 Questions used to prepare students for their final portfolio conference: Completed by a seventh-grade student

each item. For writing, we designated five items worth up to 10 points each, and for reading we had ten items worth up to 5 points each, based on the quality of the students' work. This system seemed logical when we designed it, but we later found it did not clearly reflect what the students actually did. By going through each item and assigning the points, we found that the grades were lower than we felt the students deserved. Constant adjustment was required to make the scale fair and representative of our priorities.

Ultimately, the portfolio provides a wonderful portrait of the student. By having to do much self-reflection, the students learn about themselves and their progress. They look beyond the surface at their strengths and weaknesses as readers and writers. The teacher then assists the student in improving. My students honestly enjoy the process of evaluating their reading and writing. They are truly enthusiastic about sharing their thoughts and willing to help each other. Nothing is more rewarding than seeing one student eagerly, but kindly, offer suggestions to another student.

USING PORTFOLIOS FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY PROJECTS

In our middle school, the seventh grade is organized into three four-subject area teams: English, mathematics, science, and social studies. This organizational plan provides a wonderful learning experience in an interdisciplinary research unit called *I-Search* (Zorfass et al., 1991). This is a six-week research project in which all four teachers provide lessons for selecting a topic, seeking information from different sources, composing questions and conducting an interview, writing a paper, and providing a bibliography. Each team is given a general content focus; last year our topic was technology. The themes are interesting to the students and provide diverse possibilities for research. Each student selects a particular issue that evolves from the general topic. In our technology theme, for example, some students investigated special effects in movies and computer modems. Each subject teacher contributes to the general topic with appropriate lessons from her discipline. There is even a math component that requires students to find statistics or do a survey and then graph the results in their final research paper. The project has five required written parts: *My Questions*, *My Search Process*, *What I Have Learned*, *What This Means to Me*, and *References*. Although this is an independent research project, the students spend much time conferencing collaboratively. Students are wonderful about offering suggestions to each other for sources relating to their topic.

The project is integrated into our curriculum, and the research activities are shared by all four teachers in a way that allows our regular instruction to continue. The students do not work on this in every class every day during the six weeks of the project. We have devised an equitable schedule for the team. In English, for example, I did a science fiction unit that coincided with our technology focus. The books I chose were selected so that even the students with poor reading ability in my modified English class read much of the same literature as those in other classes.

Planning is the key to a successful *I-Search* project. Immersing the students in the topic is the first major step, which can be accomplished in different ways. Some teams take field trips, others have experts come to visit the class. Our speakers have included a former Air Force general from the College of Aeronautics, a cardiologist, a DNA expert, and an ortho-

tist prosthetist. We also used high-interest videotapes on topics such as roller coasters and telecommunications to spark student interest in those areas. From there, we guide students to select a researchable topic. Students learn about the various research sources in the school library and how to take notes. This instruction is primarily undertaken by the librarians, science, and social studies teachers. As the English teacher, my job is primarily to assist students in writing an informative, organized, reflective research paper. I emphasize the importance of putting the information into their own words and tell them that I expect to “hear *their* voices as I read their papers.” The students must cite their sources in a bibliography at the end of the paper. Two important parts of the students’ paper include “My Search Process,” where the students explain how they did their research, and “What This Means to Me,” where the students relate how studying the topic affected them personally. The students keep a log of information and reflection while engaged in research, often writing about what frustrated them and when they made a breakthrough. Figure 3–8 is an excerpt from a student’s “What This Means to Me” section of his research paper about the use of lasers.

All of these tasks—which require a great deal of reading, organizing, and writing, as well as introspective analysis of the research process—fit beautifully with the portfolio process. Since so much time is invested during one marking period on this project, the final paper is included in the portfolio because students have created something that they value.

The portfolio is also helpful for creating cohesiveness within the instructional team. For example, during The I-Search project, all four subject teachers focus on writing that will be contained in the students’ portfolios. Students are reminded that reading and writing done in subject area classes are appropriate for inclusion in their portfolios, especially as we try to reinforce teaching reading and writing in all subject areas.

EVALUATING OUR FIRST YEAR

At the end of the first year of portfolio assessment, the department planned for several days of summer curriculum work to evaluate the process, discuss our experiences, and make necessary adjustments. Originally, the portfolio activities were identical for seventh and eighth grades. During our evaluation, I voiced my concern that the seventh graders might complain the following year that “we have already done this!” The initial reading–writing inventories were also too long and repetitive, and we decided to revise them. This eliminated the problem of the eighth graders having to answer the same questions. We combined and eliminated questions to make the reflective questions more purposeful for the students (see Figures 3–9 to 3–13).

We currently do not differentiate between seventh- and eighth-grade portfolios. Of course, the experience will vary each year when students work with different teachers.

The English Department’s other major area of concern was redoing the rubric for the final evaluation. Even though a checklist-style rubric can be quite useful, it was not effective for our purpose. We brainstormed and developed one with four levels of achievement: excellent, good, satisfactory, and needs improvement (see Figure 3–14).

For each level, we listed specific criteria and developed a chart that allowed us to differentiate between grades on a 100-point scale depending on the number of successfully completed criteria. We used this rubric in June to determine 50% of the students’ final exam grades. I believe it made grading the portfolio more reflective of the students’ actual performance throughout the year.

On Lasers in Ophthalmology

I think that over the period of time that we did our research I have improved a lot compared to the way I used to go about doing research. I have learned about many new resources where to get information. So now that I have learned about new references I will be able to make terrific reports for the years to come.

For me there is one thing that means the most to me. It is how the ophthalmologist perform the laser surgery... It is so interesting how they must go about the surgery and that they may do it differently for each patient. Also the doctor has to be so accurate at where they are aiming the laser so that they don't mess up. If the patient moves or sneezes that can really ruin the surgery. With any little mistake it can really affect the surgery and this shows me that being an ophthalmologist and having to perform laser surgery is a really difficult job.

FIGURE 3-8 "What This Means to Me" section from an I-Search Project on lasers in ophthalmology

1. Tell us about a book that you have read over this summer or at the end of the school year that you couldn't put down. What was there in the book that held your interest? Tell about it.

2. Do you find reading difficult at times? Do you find it difficult because you don't know word meanings or because you can't concentrate on the material because you are in a hurry or preoccupied? Try to explain exactly why reading can be difficult.

3. Why is being able to read well important to you?

FIGURE 3–9 Student inventory: Reading survey—preliminary

DEVELOPING PARENT SUPPORT

An important issue that arises when making the transition to new teaching methods, especially assessment, includes how to present the innovations to parents. We work in a district where the parents are concerned and vocal; they want to be included in decision making. Therefore, we drafted a letter to the parents that included portfolio definitions and goals, as well as an explanation about replacing the traditional final exam with the portfolio. At first, there was no reaction, but later in the year, we met with the PTA to discuss the issue of final exams. At this meeting, we encountered some resistance from parents who wanted their children to have a timed testing experience in reading and writing. However, we managed to stand by our original plans to use the portfolio as a replacement for the exam. We also explained to parents that the Preliminary Competency Tests in reading and writing are given to all eighth graders as part of the statewide assessment. In the early 1980s, the New York State Education Department instituted the Regents Competency Tests, given to students at the end of high school. No student can graduate without passing these minimum ability tests. To determine if a student is likely to pass the competency tests or needs remediation in the areas of reading or writing, a preliminary test is administered during eighth grade. Therefore, students who are likely to have difficulty with the high school tests

1. What have you read and reacted to in reading that has made you feel proud of your reading ability?

2. How has reading helped you learn about yourself?

3. Does your mind wander when you read? Do you forget what you have just read? If so, why do you suppose this happens? Does it have anything to do with the topic or type of material you are reading?

FIGURE 3–11 Student inventory: Reading survey 2

1. How has reading helped you understand why people feel or act the way they do?

2. What do the kinds of books you read tell someone about you?

3. How has your reading improved since September?

FIGURE 3–12 Student inventory: Reading survey 3

Name: _____ Date: _____

Teacher: _____ Grade: _____

1. a. Do you remember how old you were when you first started to write?

b. What kind of writing did you do at the beginning?
2. a. For what reasons do people write?

b. Are there any additional reasons that motivated you to write?
3. What do you think a good writer needs to do in order to write well?
4. How does your teacher decide which pieces of writing are the good ones? What standards does your teacher use?
5. At this time in your life, what kinds of writing do you like to do? (poetry, narrative essays, persuasive, descriptive, short stories, articles, etc.)
6. a. Do you think you write about certain topics more than others?

b. Would you like to vary the topics you write about? Why do you or don't you?
7. How do you feel about revising, editing, or changing a piece of writing?
8. Who or what has influenced your writing? (parent, teacher, author, peer) How?

FIGURE 3–13 Student inventory: Writing survey

9. a. Do you like to have others read your writing? Who?

b. How do you react to criticism?

10. a. What makes writing pleasant for you? Why?

b. What makes writing sometimes unpleasant for you? Why?

FIGURE 3–13, *(continued)*

We did stress to the parents the amount of work required by the student to complete all aspects of the portfolio and how important it is for students to become more conscious of their strengths and weaknesses as readers and writers. We shared our philosophy that it is more valuable for the students to use correct spelling and to have good vocabularies than it is to merely answer test questions. Our curriculum does emphasize basic skills, and students are taught on an as-needed basis in minilessons throughout the year. I emphasize that only through self-awareness can a student internalize literacy goals.

PORTFOLIOS IN THE FUTURE

The trend in English education today has been moving away from skills and drills toward whole language—integrating the language arts, using literacy skills in all subject areas, focusing on quality literature appropriate for today’s adolescents, and using writing process. In New York State, we have the Compact for Learning, which is a philosophical and practical statement that attempts to bring education into the twenty-first century. How can we best prepare our students for a world that is changing? Recently, I worked with a committee of language arts teachers to develop outcome-based language arts activities for grades 12, 8, and 4. This resulted in yearlong projects of complex activities that included reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Our work is still in progress, and the new curriculum is far different from the language arts and English curricula of the past that often emphasized mechanics without establishing meaningful applications. I recently presented our school’s use of the I-Search project at the New York State Middle Schools convention, emphasizing the interdisciplinary nature of the project and how it integrated math, science, and technology standards with a heavy focus on literacy learning. This caught the attention of a representative of the New York State Education Department. She was eager to hear how we incorporated the standards into our activities. The department has made a commitment to eventually mandate exit-level portfolios for all students, which would include work from all

<i>Type of Work</i>	<i>Criteria for Excellent (Level 4)</i>	<i>Criteria for Good (Level 3)</i>	<i>Criteria for Satisfactory (Minimally Acceptable) (Level 2)</i>	<i>Criteria for Needs Improvement (Level 1)</i>
Ten-week assessment of writing goals	Consistently Selects challenging goals Assesses and works toward goals Makes appropriate writ- ing selections Shows superior growth in self-assessment	Often Selects challenging goals Assesses and works toward goals Makes appropriate writ- ing selections Shows superior growth in self-assessment	Sometimes Selects challenging goals Assesses and works toward goals Makes appropriate writ- ing selections Shows growth in self- assessment	Rarely Selects challenging goals Assesses and works toward goals Makes appropriate writ- ing selections Shows growth in self- assessment
Writing survey/ writing samples	Consistently Completes all surveys Evaluates writing strengths and weak- nesses Uses standard written English Shows creativity	Often Completes surveys Evaluates writing strengths and weak- nesses Uses standard written English Shows creativity	Sometimes Completes surveys Evaluates writing strengths and weak- nesses Uses standard written English Shows creativity	Rarely Completes surveys Evaluates writing strengths and weak- nesses Uses standard written English Shows creativity
Reading survey/ outside reading/ reading choices	Consistently Completes all surveys Evaluates reading strengths and weak- nesses Reads outside of class Shows understanding of literature	Often Completes surveys Evaluates reading strengths and weak- nesses Reads outside of class Shows understanding of literature	Sometimes Completes surveys Evaluates reading strengths and weak- nesses Reads outside of class Shows understanding of literature	Rarely Completes surveys Evaluates reading strengths and weak- nesses Reads outside of class Shows understanding of literature
Classwork/ speaking/ listening	Consistently Participates in all class activities Listens to others and reacts appropriately Speaks clearly and prop- erly	Often Participates in class activities Listens to others and reacts appropriately Speaks clearly and prop- erly	Sometimes Participates in class activities Listens to others and reacts appropriately Speaks clearly and prop- erly	Rarely Participates in class activities Listens to others and reacts appropriately Speaks clearly and prop- erly
Final essay/ final conference	Thoroughly prepares for essay/conference Clearly supports attain- ment of reading/writing goals	Actively prepares for essay/conference Generally supports attainment of reading/ writing goals	Minimally prepares for essay/conference Minimally supports attain- ment of reading/writing goals	Barely prepares for essay/conference Does not support attain- ment of reading/writing goals

FIGURE 3–14 Middle school portfolio rubric (*Source:* Lawrence Middle School)

subject areas. It looks as if the portfolio will grow in application and use, and I am delighted that we have had the opportunity to create a portfolio process that is meaningful to us and to our students.

REFERENCE

Zorfass, J., Morocco, C., Persky, S., Remz, A., Nichols, J., & Warger, C. (1991). *I-search unit*. Newtown, MA: Education Development Center.