NHTI
Concord's Community College

Guide for Portfolio Assessment

Elements of a Portfolio to Replace a Course

1. Copy of Application Form

2. Table of Contents

3. Resume

4. Brief autobiography, including experiences in the portfolio and educational goals

   <u>The experiences</u> referenced can be any of the following related to the course:

Full- or part-time jobs	*Travel*
Volunteer work	*Hobbies and recreational activities*
Independent creative pursuits	*Community activities*
Training or in-service programs	*Military service*
Cultural and artistic experiences	*Organizational memberships*

5. For each course objective/outcome:
   - Statement of course outcome
   - Reflection (1-2 pp) on experiential learning: What? So what? Now what? (see information later in guide)
   - Documentation of related experiences

   <u>The documentation</u> must include direct and indirect elements for course credit.

   Direct documentation examples
   - *Samples of work – project reports, writing, art, recordings, websites, code, resources created*
   - *Photographs can be used with clear labeling and explanation.*
   - *Licenses and certifications*
   - *Notes taken in training; outlines or material from training programs*

   Indirect documentation examples

   Letters of verification
   - *Programs from a performance*
   - *Articles about events or work*
   - *Performance evaluations*

6. Annotated bibliography: reading, study, and resources that contributed to related knowledge

Application Form: Intent to Submit Portfolio for Course Credit

This form enables a matriculated student to give official notice of the intent to replace a course with credit by portfolio assessment. The faculty member below must currently teach the course for which credit is requested. This professor will be available to mentor the student as needed during portfolio development and assess the completed portfolio.

Signatures of the department head and VP of Academic Affairs indicate the college has recognized the potential merit of a student's portfolio goal. **The signatures do not guarantee that credit will be awarded once the portfolio has been developed.**

Credit will be earned based on whether or not the evidence and reflections in the portfolio prove the prior learning is college-level, current, and matches the outcomes of a particular course.

A student must meet with the department head and additional professor to discuss how the prior learning might match the course objectives. At the conclusion of the meeting, the student submits this form for each course for which credit is desired.

The nonrefundable assessment fee is due to the Bursar after completion of this meeting and form.

Name:_____________________________________ Student ID Number:___________________________

NHTI Course Name and Number:____

Degree Program:____

Address:____

Phone:______________________________________ Email:_____________________________________

The rest of this form is for completion in the meeting. Signatures indicate approval to proceed.

PLEASE ATTACH:

A. A list of all course objectives / learning outcomes from the syllabus (provided by faculty)
B. Student's current resume, including related experience

Date:_____________________________ Student Signature:______________________________________

Date:_____________________________ Department Head Signature:______________________________

Date:_____________________________ Faculty Signature:______________________________________

The department will forward this form to Academic Affairs.

Date:_____________________________ VP of Academic Affairs:_________________________________

If approval to proceed is granted, the portfolio should be submitted to the faculty within a semester.

Anticipated Date of Portfolio Completion:____

Payment Form: Portfolio for Course Credit

To be completed by the student:

Name:_____________________________________ Student ID Number:___________________________

NHTI Course Name and Number:____

Degree Program:____

Address:____

Phone:______________________________________ Email:______________________________________

To be completed by Bursar's Office:

FEE PAID: $_______________ Bursar Office Staff Signature:_____________________________________

The student should deliver proof of payment to the faculty member overseeing the portfolio before proceeding with portfolio development and consultation.

Assessment Form: Portfolio for Course Credit

The student completes the top part of this form.

To be completed by the student:

Name:____________________________________ Student ID Number:__________________________

NHTI Course Name and Number:____

Degree Program:____

Address:____

Phone:_____________________________________ Email:____________________________________

To be completed by Bursar's Office:

FEE PAID: $______________ Bursar Office Staff Signature:___________________________________

The student meets again with the relevant academic department head, submitting this form and the portfolio. This should be within a semester of the initial discussion and prior application.

To be completed by the faculty member conducting the assessment:

I have assessed the student's portfolio and recommend the addition of the following course to the student's NHTI transcript:

Course Abbreviation and Number:_____________

Course Title:____

Faculty Name (Print):____

Faculty Signature:______________________________________Date:____________________________

Department Head Signature:_______________________________Date:___________________________

Faculty submit this form and the portfolio to the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

I authorize the awarding of credit.

VPAA Signature:____ Date:___________________________

The VPAA office submits this form to the Registrar for the posting of credit on a student's record.

Prior Learning: An Introduction

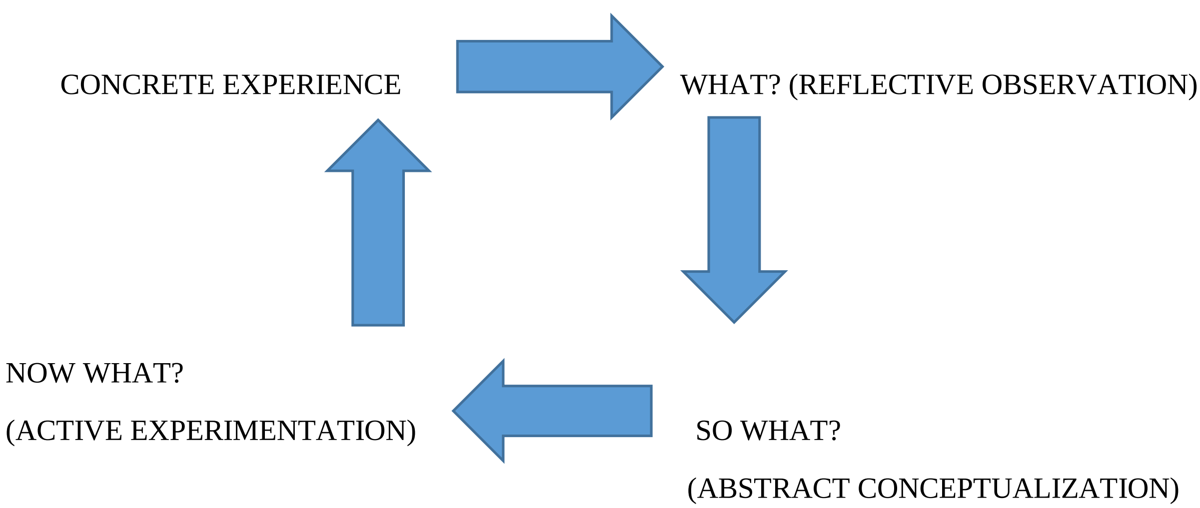
We had the experience but missed the meaning. – T.S. Eliot, The Dry Salvages

Portfolio assessment is a process that enables students to demonstrate prior learning of college-level material based on appropriate experiences outside the classroom. While learning within a classroom often includes abstract thought and theory, not all outside experiences involve these elements.

A challenge to students requesting portfolio assessment is to provide material that demonstrates an appropriate balance between theoretical learning and practical application. In other words, it is not sufficient merely to prove one “did” something well.

Learning occurs from REFLECTION about what we do. Why was that action successful? What outcomes might have occurred if we had chosen a different strategy? What might we do differently in the future based on what we have learned from our experience and from the experts? Who are the leaders in the field and what are their contributions?

Kolb’s Cycle of Experiential Education shows real learning as a continuous circle of concrete experience, recollection, abstraction and generalization, and experimentation resulting in intentional new experiences. *Experiential learning is not just experience.*



This is the core of reflection: *what* actually happened, *so what* was meaningful, *now what* will I do with it. Successful portfolio assessment requires that students reflect on their experiences to satisfy the learning outcomes of a course. It is the student’s responsibility, in conversation with relevant faculty, to identify each course for which to document experiences and demonstrate learning. A portfolio is not an easy way to earn credits, but rather a rigorous process that enables students, through careful reflection and curated proof, to show they have completed a particular course’s objectives. The following information explains the organization of a sound portfolio.

Kolb, D.A. (1984). “Experiential learning experience as a source of learning and development.” New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Sample Outcome and Reflection

[towards Group Counseling course credit]

1. Discuss how mindfulness assists one in the role and function of a group leader.

Last summer, I worked 20 hours a week at Step Up to Wellness, completely focused on group counseling. The groups took place in a large room with a large long table and chairs surrounding it. I sat in and participated as an assistant counselor in groups aged 18 to elderly. They faced a variety of mental illnesses and were there to learn healthy coping skills and strategies to deal with symptoms, emotions, and stress.

I sat in on all the group sessions (check-in group, structured group, recreation group). While sitting in on these groups I helped plan activities, assisted clients with questions, and watched how each different group leader runs the groups while contributing my own thoughts and questions.

That's the "what." "So what" did this have to do with my own mindfulness? I realized early on – after a couple incidents of rushing in and carrying my own stress with me – that my unspoken positive or negative energy made the whole session go more positively or negatively. I began conducting a breath meditation in my car for a few minutes before entering the building. The clients seemed to feed off my state of being calm and positive, even if I wasn't saying anything.

In more concrete actions, I knew one thing I had to be aware of and work on was the tone of my voice, meaning mostly that I have trouble speaking loudly. In a room full of people I learned to talk louder and a little slower than normal so that the clients can better hear what I am saying. I also think that the practice of steadying my voice, speaking as to how everyone can hear me, and slowing my speech helped me feel more confident when talking to the clients because I stumble on my words less and seem more professional.

I also learned to be mindful and open about what each client needed, especially nonverbally. I could feel when eye contact was appropriate and how to non-verbally respond to specific clients. Some clients feel anxiety from eye contact and shut down, so I learned quickly to respond to them with head nods and limited eye contact. There are other clients that made eye contact with me instead of the head leader, and when this happened I know I can give them full eye contact, head nods, and a smile if the conversation fits.

"Now what" am I taking with me from this experience? Since multiple clients thanked me verbally for being there and listening, even in sessions where I spoke little, I know now that my fully-present presence is a powerful therapeutic tool. When I do take a more active role – as the head of a group - I know to be strong in my volume while calm in my speed and tone, and be open to whatever words, metaphors, questions, summations, are best for particular clients in particular moments.

[Related direct and indirect documentation must follow.]

Letters of Verification

Letters can be used to corroborate any type of activity and are usually one key form of indirect documentation. Since letters occupy an important role in the documentation process, use the guidelines listed below.

Students may wish to copy this information and present it, along with the relevant course outcomes, to the people who are being asked to write letters. Students also should make clear that this is a letter of verification, not a letter of recommendation. Writers should have observed the work and learning for which academic credit is sought.

Guidelines

- The author must indicate knowledge of the student, and knowledge of the learning outcomes for which the student wishes to receive prior learning credit.

- The letter should be written on official letterhead, if available, of the company or organization with which the author is or was associated.

- The content of the letter should focus on the duties, responsibilities, tasks, and activities that contributed to the learning experience under consideration. The letter should say who, what, when, why, where, and for how long.

- The letter should state clearly the nature of the relationship between author and student. Family members, friends, and ministers are not good sources as they may be biased and may not have firsthand knowledge of the learning.

Sample

October 23, 2017

To NHTI:

I have been (student's) immediate supervisor at Local PC Solutions for the past two years. Her position involves, among other things, assembly and disassembly of customers' laptops and desktop computers, software installation, hardware repair, and extensive troubleshooting. She has independently resolved hundreds issues related to Windows, Linux, Macs and PCs.

(Student) has a knowledge of the fundamentals of operating systems as well as an understanding of the specifics of the tasks above, which I believe is greater than or equal to that of a student completing the PC Hardware and Software course at NHTI.

Sincerely,

(Name)
Owner, Local PC Solutions

Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography of resources that contributed relevant knowledge: books and articles – and people – should be included in each portfolio. Annotated means that sources are identified in enough detail for someone unfamiliar with the material to find them in a library or online, and explained such that the personal learning from each source is clear. Included below is *part* of the bibliography of an adult student seeking credit for a music course.

Jones, Steve. Drummer in the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Interviewed: December 19, 2012.

> Steve Jones was interviewed as a personal resource on December 19, 2012, after the Christmas concert. Mr. Jones described his own training. He listened to a two-minute recording of my own playing and invited me to practice with a group of Birmingham musicians. He commented on my rhythm, tempo, wrist action, etc. He also agreed to a series of twelve advanced lessons, which we undertook beginning on January 13, 2013.

Podemski, Benjamin. *Podemski's Standard Snare Drum Method*, Melville, New York: Belwin Mills, 1940.

> This book is the most technical book, musically speaking, that I studied. It contains a complete music vocabulary and exercises with examples employing the musical terms. It taught note values and note groupings. This book was the most important resource for my sight-reading development. The information contained in this book still applies today, and is used to instruct drum students. I use this book as a reference whenever I don't recognize terms in music. I have used this book as a warm-up tool prior to playing for pit orchestras in theatre performances. It helps prepare my mind for the reading the kinds of charts used in these shows.

Portfolio Checklist

Aspects of Portfolio	**Absent or inappropriate.**	**Acceptable for college credit.**
Table of Contents		
Resume		
Brief Autobiography and Educational Goals Statement		
All Course Outcomes Stated		
Reflection Written for Each Outcome		
Direct Documentation for Each Outcome		
Indirect Documentation for Each Outcome		
Annotated Bibliography		

The ideal organization of the heart of the portfolio is [outcome, reflection, documentation], [next outcome, reflection, documentation]… some documentation may be recopied.

In some special cases, lengthy pieces of documentation – such as a long case study previously completed for addiction counseling – could be tied to multiple course objectives without being recopied for each outcome. In such cases, this long direct documentation should be annotated with color-coding, notes, subtitles, or other clear links to each individual outcome represented.

Process Checklist for Faculty

1. Is the student matriculated into a degree program?
2. Has the student received and read this packet?
3. Has the student received your course outcomes?
4. Has the student presented a resume to you and completed the initial meeting?
5. Has the student provided you with proof of payment?
6. Has the student communicated progress on the portfolio as needed?
7. Has the student completed the final meeting with you and the department head?
8. Has the assessment form been completed and submitted to Academic Affairs?

Overall Process

1. A student must be matriculated into a degree program at NHTI, and not have failed the course.

2. The student will have an initial, informal conversation with faculty or staff about prior learning that matches a given course. The faculty or staff member directs the student to this packet, and to schedule an extensive meeting with the relevant department head.

3. The department head prepares for this formal meeting by
   (a) printing a list of the course's learning outcomes, and
   (b) arranging for another faculty member to attend, generally a current professor of the course.

   The student prepares for this meeting by updating and printing their resume.

4. *Within the first two weeks of a semester*, the initial formal meeting occurs. During the meeting, the department head, faculty, and student should carefully go through
   (a) This packet, and
   (b) ALL learning outcomes of the course.

   For each learning outcome, the conversation centers on whether the student has enough prior learning experience to write a reflection about that outcome, as well as sufficient documentation from those experiences.

   The faculty and student discuss potential sorts of documentation for each course outcome. For example, a programming outcome may need past written code, while a digital photography outcome may be demonstrated with printed photographs.

5. If it is agreed that a portfolio is worth pursing, the student and faculty should sign the application form and each keep a copy with the relevant attachments. The department sends a copy to Academic Affairs for approval. The student pays the $225 fee to the Bursar's Office and gives or sends an image of the payment form to faculty.

6. The student writes and compiles the portfolio, consulting with the relevant professor as needed.

7. When the portfolio is complete, the student schedules a final meeting with the department head.

8. *Before the exam week of the same semester*, this final meeting occurs. With the department head and faculty member present, the student submits the assessment form and completed portfolio. The faculty look through the portfolio with the student to ask clarifying questions and confirm completion, using the checklist. However, this is NOT an oral exam. Credit will be granted based on portfolio contents only.

9. *Before the end of exam week*, the department completes the assessment form and submits it and the portfolio, to Academic Affairs. If the portfolio is inadequate, AA notifies the student. If it's approved, the VPAA will direct the Registrar to post the course on the student's transcript. There will be no grade, but rather an "EXP" notation for experiential credit. Courses noted as such are *not transferrable*, but count towards degree completion at NHTI.