

EVALUATION FOR STUDENT LIBRARY MEDIA ASSISTANTS

Student portfolios, a compilation of work gathered across grading periods, semesters, or years for the purpose of demonstrating progress,¹ are a natural evaluation tool for the High School Library Media Assistant Curriculum. Laden with the potential for the use of a variety of information and formats, student portfolios automatically include many of the instructional components of the school library media assistants' curriculum.

Regardless of the format chosen (electronic or hard copy) for portfolio compilation and display, a few general characteristics are relevant:

- Portfolios include written, reflective responses by students, and, usually, teachers, regarding selected entries.
- Portfolio selections represent evidence of student performance on a range of performance-based, instructionally appropriate tasks, over time.
- Portfolios represent an exhibition of a student's best work, as determined by the student.²

Thus the implications for the Middle School and High School Library Media Assistant Curricula are numerous:

- While a great deal of freedom exists for students to choose their own assessment products, the school library media coordinator has a responsibility to organize the actual course in such a way that students understand expectations and are exposed to the greatest number of positive educational experiences while serving as a library media assistant.
- The portfolio format offers an opportunity for independent learning and responsibility, as well as cooperative, small group experiences.
- Portfolios encourage school library media coordinators to develop meaningful higher-order thinking skills opportunities while providing for the day-to-day organizational tasks that allow a school library media center to operate efficiently.
- Student reflection as to the reasons for choosing particular portfolio products, as well as his or her knowledge growth over the extent of the course, is a vital component of the evaluation. Likewise, a media coordinator's reflection and assessment of the individual's products determines the course's success and the student's grade.

A library media assistant's portfolio can include, but is certainly not limited to:

- Helpsheets for use of the media center's electronic and print reference resources
- Video or audiotapes of news programs, book reviews, etc.,
- Multimedia tutorial on the use of the media center
- Examples of student-designed and generated media center materials (bulletin boards, displays, pathfinders, etc)
- Examinations and self assessments
- Bibliographies listing all library resources on a topic
- Media coordinator observations and anecdotal entries
- Journal writings of ongoing experiences
- A reflection paper on the reasons for choosing items for the portfolio
- Grades for shelf-reading, periodical filing, etc.
- Log of equipment that the student has cleaned and inventoried

Obviously, this is a cursory discussion of portfolio evaluation and how it fits into the library media assistant curriculum. A bibliography is included so that school library media coordinators may learn more about this method of assessment. Please note that most of the articles look at portfolios in general and language arts in particular. The concepts and ideas shared in these articles will be useful, however, in developing a strategy for portfolio assessment that meets the needs of individual school library media centers.

¹ Bauer, Norman J. "Instructional Designs: Portfolios and the Pursuit of Authentic Assessment." A paper presented at the Spring Conference of the New York State Association of Teacher Educators, April 29-30,1993. ED363638.

² Cox, Keni-Brayton. "Portfolios in Action: A Study of Two Classrooms with Implications for Reform." A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Atlanta Georgia, April 12-16,1993. ED359204.

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