

Portfolio Implementation: Lessons Learned

Understandings and Basic Principles

- **The correlates that researchers associate with effective schools are the same ones that must be associated with the Graduation Portfolio** (strong leadership, high expectations, warm climate, feedback on performance, positive re-enforcement, collaborative decision making, etc.)
- **The so-called “*New Basics*” are integral strands of the fabric of portfolio** (Numerical Literacy, Technological Literacy, communication across the curriculum, critical and creative thinking, independent learning, along with personal/social skills)
- **Outstanding ‘professional practice’ in education is directly transferable and indeed needs to be applied to the portfolio development process.** (instruction/learning, assessment components, etc.)
- **Don’t be afraid to take some risks.... Realizing also that significant learning and deeper understanding evolves from mistakes made along the way. Portfolio is an evolutionary process!**

Communication

- **Comprehensive efforts to educate all partner groups associated with the Graduation Portfolio Program will pay significant dividends in support of the implementation process.**

The Structure

- **The delivery model and implementation approach must work to support the existing infrastructure, mission and vision for a school. It is important however to think outside the box, to use the flexibility afforded by the Graduation Portfolio Program and to make it work for your school.**
- **Ideally, regular, ongoing and scheduled student support will bring many benefits.**
- **The education of and entire staff involvement in support of the portfolio program should be a goal for all schools.**
- **Dedicated staffing is required for success of the portfolio program.**

Staff Engagement

- The Portfolio Program must be put into the context of the ‘bigger picture’ of education..... starting with the Ministry Mission statement, then followed by local mission statements and ‘Graduate’ profiles. The responsibilities of educators are clearly visible through this approach.
- We need to be supportive of all educators in terms of “what and how much is on their plates” and therefore need to demonstrate the ability to align needs and interests such that they support desired outcomes. The teaching of reflective skills across the curriculum (as directed by IRP’s) in a coordinated fashion would bring significant support to the portfolio process and also support each teachers classroom environment.
- The portfolio can be a key integrative device within a school that helps to connect all stakeholders (social responsibility, technology, school goals, academics). School Planning Councils, PACs should recognize the parental inclusion/awareness opportunities are significant.

The Teaching of Portfolio!

- Teaching students specific skills related to ‘portfolio’ is absolutely essential. In particular, students need to be taught how to identify attributes of quality portfolio ‘evidence’. They need to be taught reflective skills and similarly require skill development for successful portfolio presentation.
- All teaching staff have the ability, and in most cases (via IRP’s) the direction to teach the ‘reflective’ skills required to support portfolio success. Reflection time and the transition to a written reflection statement arguably are the most powerful components of the entire portfolio process. Powerful not only in the context of student growth but also as an educational tool for all educators across all disciplines.
- Portfolios positively support the social/emotional development of students (self esteem, confidence, etc.) and the portfolio process also affords many opportunities to identify, track and assess progress; progress not only of the student, but of schools and their ability to successfully attain mission statements, graduate profiles or even collective agreements.