**Portfolios for learning, advising, and assessment**

Presented by Geoff Gilbert, on behalf of the Department of Comparative Literature and English. June 2017.

In this report, the work of which was supported by a grant from the Mellon foundation, we consider and assess the history of our use of portfolios in the Department of Comparative Literature and English.

**Introduction: The portfolio process in the department**

All senior students who are candidates for a BA in Comparative Literature, Literary Studies and the Creative Arts, and Creative Writing (Creative Writing track and Creative Arts track), must enrol in the 1-credit course, CL4075: ‘Portfolio’, graded Credit/no-Credit. The work for CL4075 is done independently by the student, under the guidance of their academic advisor. (for the course syllabus, see appendix 1).

The student assembles a choice of at least 5 substantial pieces of work, from at least 5 classes which counted towards their major. They may choose to present more work, from their major classes, or from other classes outside the major, if they help to demonstrate the characteristic shape of their work. The choice of essays is the responsibility of the student, but choosing also presents an occasion for discussion with their academic advisor. Ideally, that conversation, in one form or another, begins when the student considers or declares a major, and thus enters the department. A student might be helped to ask the following questions throughout their career at AUP: when I choose a course, what are my reasons for choosing it? which skills do I hope to acquire? How will my existing interests and passions be developed through this course? How does it relate to my overall goals as a student, or for a career? And when I write essays or do other exercises for a course, how do they bridge the external demands of the course and my own development and expression?

The portfolio is completed by a cover essay of 6-10 pages, which reflects on the contents of the portfolio. Students are provided with the major Learning Outcomes prior to the construction of the portfolio, but are not required to articulate their account of their learning directly in relation to those goals. Again, while the essay is absolutely the property of the student, the construction of the portfolio cover essay is a key occasion for conversation with the advisor.

The portfolios are read by a panel of volunteers from the faculty. It has been the case that between 6 and 10 faculty members have volunteered each semester. They read all of the portfolios, and complete a basic rubric, on which they judge whether satisfaction of each of the major Learning Outcomes has been demonstrated in the portfolio. Summary and discussion of the results of this process over 6 years is given below. Where time allows, faculty then meet to discuss our evaluation of the students’ portfolios, decide whether students have passed the CL4075 Portfolio course, and plan questions for the public presentations. Students are informed at this stage whether they have passed the course or not; students who have not completed the exercise satisfactorily are given the opportunity to re-write or re-think their portfolio.

At the public presentation, each student is given 5-10 minutes to present themselves and their portfolio to an audience of faculty and students. They then respond to questions from the audience (which may ask for clarification, may make suggestions about resources for future careers or graduate work, or engage conceptual issues raised). The event is partly social and celebratory, and partly critical, and functions to socialize ideas about learning throughout the department (it is particularly useful for first- and second-year students).

**1. Why did we introduce the Portfolio?**

In Spring-Fall 2009, we re-designed the Comparative Literature major and introduced a new major in Literary Studies and Creative Arts (which was approved by the curriculum committee in Spring 2010). The old major had a fairly substantial traditional core (four survey courses, covering the historical development of British Literature and one other European literature, and a Literary Theory and Criticism course), which had been designed to prepare students for graduate study. Our new major offered very much more liberty of course selection to students, in order that a larger range of professional and post-graduate trajectories could be accommodated. We also wished to respond to a desire on the part of many students to integrate creative and critical work. And we felt that there were better ways of using the relatively small course budget for the department to serve our majors, students who are minoring in the department, and students taking our courses as electives.

This greater degree of choice and flexibility meant, perhaps, that intentional sequencing of courses became a matter for students and their advisors, rather than being deeply built in to the structure of the curriculum.

Thus **the first aim of the portfolio process** was to encourage the narration of relations among courses and ideas and skills and bodies of knowledge, and thus the construction and expression of **intentional learning**. That narrated intention is supplemented by a reflexive moment, and tested through the identification of evidence. This is a personal process, which is developed in dialogue with the advisor, and then shared socially through the department.

**The second aim of the portfolio process** is an extension of this first aim. Students are asked – within their cover essay and in the public presentation – to **imagine larger frames, individual and collective, for the narrative they construct** than those provided by the discipline or the individual course. How will their own academic profile fit into a professional or creative life beyond the university? How does it reflect historical processes, or cultural practices? Again, the function of this second aim can be personal – how have I grown and developed? – or conceptual – what kind of thinker am I? – or it can be professional – how can my interests relate to the world of work? The public presentation allows the possibilities developed by individual students to be shared with students at an earlier stage in their studies. We hope that the sharing of accounts of learning will be generative.

**The third function of the portfolio process**, attendant on the first two, is **to shape and inform advising**. As the department becomes critically aware of the kinds of narrative produced by students, and as advisors recognize consciously that students will move towards the portfolio, advisors can help students gradually build in elements of the work of the portfolio to their conversations and to their choice of courses.

**The fourth function of the portfolio process** is to serve as the focus for our **assessment of student learning in the majors**. AUP began to get serious about Student Learning Outcomes Assessment in the years after 2008. We wanted to develop a departmental centerpiece for assessment that honored the kinds of values and methods that we teach in our classes, and which would promote interesting engagement in learning for students *and* for faculty. An analysis of the literature on portfolio use for leaning and for assessment of learning, **section 2 below**, has helped us to understand the stakes and the complexity of this approach. NB: Our Assessment Report does focus on the portfolio process; this work is supplemented by occasional exploration of other measures (student evaluations, alumni outcomes, and focused investigation of the work in particular classes), often in response to our interpretation of elements of the portfolios.

**The final**, and perhaps the most important **function of the process** is to **give students a document to take forward from AUP**, in which they have been asked to describe, on the basis of evidence, what their university career has been about, and to own and to defend that description. This document might form a foundation for graduate student application, personal statements, job interviews, and conversations with charming strangers.

**2. Scholarly Literature on the use of Portfolios**

A brief survey of literature on the use of portfolios (see annotated bibliography below, appendix 3) was completed by student worker, Michelle Lynch, in discussion with Geoff Gilbert. The literature is various and finally inconclusive – because its focus is multiple (use of portfolios within individual courses; use of portfolios in disciplines which do not resemble ours; use of portfolios for employers; the pros and cons of different electronic formats for portfolios). However, we were able to develop a series of notions from the literature which have helped to shape our exploration of our own process. These are:

* The use of portfolios in ways similar to ours encourages metacognition and reflection (Miller and Morgaine 2009 Tancey 2009), which can be communicated to (Batson 2010), and valuable for, employers (Sewell and Horn n.d., Clark and Eynon 2009).
* Portfolio use like ours encourages engagement in the learning process (Costa 1991, Yorke 2003, Yanvey 2009), which can be communicated throughout the faculty and student body (Klenowski, Askew and Carnell 2006)
* Portfolio use can provide data for reliable summative assessment (Diller 2008), although this is only shown to work for more structured majors (Hamp-Lyons and Condon 1993), and requires intensive management of student work towards the portfolio (Baume 2001), or even re-structuring of teaching in order to feed the portfolio assessment (Moimoto 2006). Others suggest that extracting reliable and comparable data from portfolio use is difficult (Gillespie 1996) or impossible (Shavelson 2009) to produce. The kinds of templates which appear to produce reliable and comparable summative assessment may *reduce* engagement in learning (Baeten 2008, Stocks and Trevitt 2008), without which the portfolio process becomes an empty task for students, and fails (Yancey 2009).

We have thus chosen to imagine our assessment process – insofar as it is focused on the portfolio (we do supplement the portfolio with exploration of other measures) – as follows:

* Assessment is primarily formative within a series of longer-term goals that extend beyond AUP. That is, we are finally more interested in using assessment to help students (individually, and as a collective) succeed in relation to their own goals than we are in assessing whether they have succeeded in meeting ours. However, the shared and socialised statement of individual student learning goals will cumulatively feed into our longer-term understanding and re-formulation of the key Learning Outcomes for the major.
* Insofar as we do need to provide a summative assessment of whether students have satisfied departmental learning goals, we imagine this as an act of interpretation on the part of faculty (in their reading of the portfolio as a whole in the light of the Learning Outcomes), rather than part of the role of students in constructing the portfolio. See the ‘Summative Departmental Assessment of SLO’ below for a summary and discussion of the results of this process. We prefer to allow students to present material which may not be compelling evidence for *our* goals than to risk their alienation from the process.
* However, over time and through the socialisation of the portfolio process, the real learning goals may emerge and become part of the habitus or common sense of students in the department, and thus appear as an element of the portfolio. The ‘Summative Departmental Assessment of SLO’ provides some evidence that this has happened (significantly fewer students presented no evidence of satisfaction of the Learning Outcomes in 2014-16 than in 2011-13).
* Our reading of the portfolios and the cover essays should offer an occasion for consideration of our stated learning goals, and should be the basis for discussion of curricular revision.

**3. Summative Departmental Assessment of SLO based on the portfolios**

The table below offers an extremely concise quantitative reduction of faculty assessment of the evidence provided in the portfolios for whether the learning goals (LG) of the two majors (Comparative Literature and Literary Studies and Creative Arts) have been achieved (D=demonstrated achievement of learning goal; F=demonstrated failure *fully* to master learning goal; ND=the evidence presented in the portfolio does not allow us to assess whether the learning goal has been achieved or not).

Between Spring 2011 and Fall 2014, we used 13 learning goals. From Spring 2015, we compressed those goals to 5 broader goals, which encompassed the original formulations. We felt that a broader range of categories was sufficient to focus analysis of the portfolios and to stimulate appropriate discussion.

**Learning goals (2011-14)**

1. Students will be able to explore and reflect critically on works of literature

2. Students will be able to describe and analyze their formal features

3. Students will be able to consider their historical, geographical, and generic contexts.

4. Students will demonstrate appropriate knowledge of traditional and recent methods in literary scholarship (only for CL majors).

5. Students will be able to analyze and interpret individual literary texts.

6. Students will be able to make enlightening connections with other works, in the light of responsible and informed awareness of national and other traditions and of cultural and linguistic diversity.

7. Honors students will have the capacity to write about literary texts written in three languages.

8. In the context of their liberal arts education, students will relate their work on literature to the methods and contents of other disciplines.

9. Students will develop skills in professional writing in the cultural sphere.

10. The culture of the department encourages students to show intellectual ambition, creativity, and imagination, and to develop and articulate a personal focus for their study.

11. Students will have the written skills to be able to express all of the above clearly and elegantly.

12. Students will improve their skills in their chosen field of creative production (literature, drama, or fine arts) (LCA majors only)

13. Students will demonstrate the capacity to interpret and evaluate their own creative production in the light of their academic study. (LCA majors only)

**Learning Outcomes (CL and LCA) 2015-present**

1. Critical Reading: students will be able to explore, analyze, and reflect critically on major works of world literature, philosophy, and criticism across a wide range of genres and time periods.

2. Writing: students will be able to express themselves creatively, clearly, coherently, and elegantly in order to produce effective writing in different genres.

3. Comparison and Contextualization: students will be able to analyze their readings within their historical, geographical, and generic contexts to make enlightening connections with other works on the basis of responsible and informed awareness of cultural and linguistic diversity. Students of Comparative Literature will be able to demonstrate knowledge of traditional and recent methods in literary scholarship.

4. Languages and Linguistics: Students will be able to read and write about works in different languages.

5. Interdisciplinary exploration: Students will be able to relate their work to the methods and contents of other disciplines.

6. Professional Production and Publication: Students will develop skills in professional writing in the cultural sphere, showing intellectual ambition, creativity, and imagination; they will develop a personal focus for their chosen field of production, demonstrating the capacity to interpret and evaluate it in the light of their academic study.

The goals map on to one another as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Current learning goals | Learning goals up to Spring 2014 |
| 1. Critical Reading | 1, 2, 5 |
| 2. Writing | 10, 11, 13 |
| 3. Comparison and Contextualization | 3, 6 |
| 4. Languages and Linguistics | 4 |
| 5. Interdisciplinary exploration | 8 |
| 6. Professional Production and Publication | 9, 12 |

**Table: satisfaction of SLOs**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | S/F 11 | | | S/F 12 | | | S/F 13 | | | S/F 14 | | | S/F 15 | | | S/F 16 | | |
| LG | D | F | ND | D | F | ND | D | F | ND | D | F | ND | D | F | ND | D | F | ND |
| 1 | 9 | 1 |  | 5 |  | 1 | 10 | 3 | 1 | 5 |  |  | 4 |  | 1 | 12 |  |  |
| 2 | 9 |  | 1 | 5 | 1 |  | 14 | 2 |  | 5 |  |  | 5 |  |  | 12 |  |  |
| 3 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 5 |  | 1 | 11 | 2 | 1 | 5 |  |  | 3 | 1 | 1 | 11 | 1 |  |
| 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 5 |  |  | 4 |  | 1 | 10 | 1 | 1 |
| 5 | 9 |  | 1 | 3 |  | 3 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 5 |  |  | 5 |  |  | 11 |  | 1 |
| 6 | 4 |  | 6 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 5 |  | 9 | 4 |  | 1 | 4 | 1 |  | 10 |  | 2 |

**Brief discussion**

First, the process does seem to allow us to see where students are not achieving our learning goals. The portfolios did allow us to see, for example, that basic analytical and critical skills (learning goal 1) were absent in 3 students in the 2013 year. And it allows us to see that we are weaker in producing students who can work in several languages than we would like to be. This finding should be set against the sense that we appear to have satisfied ourselves that the learning goals in general have been met.

Second, the tendency of students not to provide evidence in their portfolios for whether they have met some of the learning goals has decreased (that is, while in 2011 and 2013 significant numbers of students produced portfolios which did not allow us to tell whether they had ‘developed skills in professional writing in the cultural sphere’, almost all students in from 2014-2016 did).

**4. What do students write about when they write about learning?**

This section comprises a brief qualitative analysis of the cover essays (each between 6 and 10 pages in length) from the 60 portfolios collected and archived, over 12 semesters (up to Fall 2016). It identifies the kinds of comments students make about their learning process in the department. There is no attempt to base findings in a quantitative reduction of the essays, for three reasons. First, we have produced a quantitative analysis of the evidence for satisfaction of learning goals above. Second, as noted above, we leave students free to write about their learning in any way they choose; our aim here is to learn from that openness. Third, my own training is in producing reliable and responsible representation, formalization, and analysis of written text.

Many students describe **the value of the portfolio exercise** itself. One noted that ‘I’d like to take a moment to consider the self-reflective nature of this exercise and how happy I am for it. Over the past weeks, it’s forced me to think about what I’m doing at all and why I care so much about writing and art on a larger scale.’ Another described the result of the process as critical metacognition: ‘By assembling select pieces of work that I have produced during the past two years, I have been able to distinguish what my intellectual and personal goals were and how well I have achieved them.’ Others found themselves learning lessons or becoming aware of having learned: ‘On a technical level I was surprised to review my earlier works, for they were not in MLA format and did not cite their sources correctly’; others found that the exercise helped them to make sense of a program of study which has been hurried: ‘I sometimes can't help but feel I rushed through my studies. In this portrait of myself I’m hoping to conclude things and achieve closure.’ Perhaps the most generally powerful formulation of the value of the process is stated by another student: ‘My experience of University has been the quintessential prototype of not being able to connect the dots while looking forward, but only when looking back.’

I’ll give a sense of the comments under three general categories – (a) contexts for learning, (b) contents of learning, and (c) the experience of learning. Almost all students made comments which belong to all of these categories, but different styles of portfolio tended to favor one over the others.

**a. contexts for learning**

Students regularly describe the moment of seeing – through **the example of particular professors** – the possibility in learning. An extreme version of this is where one student read the work of one of our faculty, and found that it ‘unlocked my ability to participate in this academic conversation’. As they note: ‘Here was an academic paper that was full of research and historical facts...that also had a *soul*. … It reads almost a work of fiction. [X] made a place for the mysterious, the theatrical, the spiritual, the *creative* in an academic paper’. Another student noted that they argued against their own and the professor’s position, just in order to see whether they could construct a compelling argument against the strength of that professor, and for the pleasure of the critique they would receive. Most students note that they have felt challenged by the quality of the professors, but also supported by them. A good number of students also mentioned the role and quality of visitors invited to the classroom, which reassured them that their learning was connected to a network of the highest quality.

This key context is supplemented by **the quality of the other students**, and the **atmosphere of collaboration** in classes. One student, who returned to study for a degree at AUP twenty years after their first literature BA noted that ‘the vast majority of my classmates would have embarrassed the student that I was during my first degree, twenty years ago. The level of discourse and understanding that my fellow students bring to the classroom, day after day, amazes me.’ The space for collaborative projects with other students was appreciated: ‘When it came time to work on projects for the class, I was fortunate to find other students who wanted to go above and beyond and create a short film that would showcase what we learned from the course as well as our individual abilities’. The attentive presence of other strong students is particularly valuable in the creative writing workshops. One student noted that this forced her to be serious about her writing. ‘I never knew for certain whether my writing really registered, if my meaning got across. In the workshop setting, there were no doubts. Comments on my work were not always positive, as well they shouldn't have been—memorably, one classmate told me in the most supportive way possible that he hated my book—but they were always perceptive. My classmates caught everything.’ The quality and intensity of discussion in and beyond the classroom was seen to set difficult goals for a paper in the class: ‘when sitting in a classroom and discussing a work of fiction with a professor and his or her students, one can freely expand on an idea and watch it evolve two or three times before realizing that its opposite may also be true. It is the creative aspect of the discussions had in the Comparative Literature classroom, along with the constant fluctuation of what is being discussed, which ultimately causes me to feel afraid when it comes to writing a comparative research paper.’ Many students also noted the value of **class visits within Paris and beyond**, which expanded the space of the classroom and helped them to feel at home in Paris and Europe, and introduced them to other fields and forms of cultural production.

**b. contents of learning**

Of course, substantial parts of the portfolio cover essay described particular ‘contents’ of learning – skills and bodies of knowledge that students valued highly, or which appeared to us when reading the essays to be highly valuable. Some students name or instance the pleasure of developing **good strong basic core disciplinary skills**: ‘my academic writing has grown in the past year. I have been able to construct essays that provide clear analysis, and in the correct format, which I do not think I was able to do so comprehensively before’; or note improvements in those skills since the earlier essays in the portfolio: ‘While I found that my paper, overall, followed a clear, logical route, beginning with defining difference, and then building on it to bring up more complex questions, there are sections in which my logic doesn’t quite hold up. In addition, because I’m returning to this paper after quite some time, there are some terms that I do not define in the paper and, therefore, I don’t understand, now.’ Others note that they have now developed the skills which would have allowed their earlier work to improve: ‘Although in general, all the analysis is acute and interconnected, it doesn’t seem as if it is guided by one underlying thesis, rather it acts as a close reading and study of the text, and is imprecise in its goal. The novel’s political substance could have had benefited from [the use of] formal concepts such as Dialectical Materialism’.

Others name their belief in the value of the discipline in a less technical way: ‘literature can open up a glimpse into the most uncharted spaces of human experience – spaces to which we must gain access in order to understand what it means to be human, in all the complexity, contradiction, disgust, and tenderness that such a portrait deserves’. Most students feel that they have developed **substantial breadth of knowledge**, and are proud that they have explored widely. This breadth is expressed by one student in terms of traditional areas: ‘From what I can remember I have studied ancient Greek literature, Arabic literature, German Romantic literature, modernist expat literature, medieval and Italian literature, Elizabethan plays, Renaissance literature, feminist literature, and now political literature.’ That breadth is felt to be part of the character of the degree and the university: ‘The international aspect that I was hoping for, was evident both in the content of the course and the classroom. In Comparative Literature, I have studied texts from all over the world, exploring varying genres and types of text.’ It is interesting that this breadth feels personal, as though students have been able to construct it as well as receive it: one describes ‘my focused examination of the works of specific authors, over a wide-ranging historical period and spanning various literary and poetic traditions. I have attempted to engage in comprehensive analyses of the treatment of the female subject in both contemporary and Medieval texts of European literature, exploring the tensions between femininity and other prevalent social forces in various literary contexts –including twentieth century German-language fiction and nineteenth century Spanish works –and to familiarize myself with major texts of Slavic literature through an examination of several works of Dostoevsky.’ Another describes the work of their senior thesis, which focuses the skills and knowledge acquired over years at AUP towards questions vital for their survival: ‘can one truly reach spirituality without a written word? […] Or would it possible for me as a Muslim women to be a Muslim without the Quran itself.’

Breadth of knowledge, in terms of historical and generic scope, meets something international. Many students discuss the **opening** of **the question of language** that their courses have enabled. One notes that, to fulfil the honors requirement, for some courses ‘the reading of primary texts, research and the actual paper was done in Spanish.’ This particular challenge opened to a more general engagement with language: ‘as a student of languages, as well as of literatures, I have been able to profit from the multilingual opportunities obtained through my studies, by writing in Spanish, reading in French, and using Latin, German, Italian, etc. in my work. This is something that I wish to continue pursuing, and for which these essays have already set a solid groundwork.’ Engagement with language is seen as a technical tool: ‘Being able to read sections of it in the original Greek gave me the ability to see nuances of words and indirect references to previous concepts that are untranslatable into English, and thereby understand Aristotle’s ideas with more precision that I had before’. And engagement with translation is understood to have other effects and values: ‘I realized – or rather *saw* – that every act of reading is an act of translation, as well as every act of writing, whether it is in one's mother tongue or a foreign language. I have also come to value this sense of foreign, respect it and take it into account, whether it is in my personal experience of it or my literary one.’ This has helped students in relation to their ‘native’ languages: ‘I discovered what French literature was, or rather what it was not when I both started to learn it taught in another language and when I discovered literature from other countries’. And it has allowed some students to reconcile a wish for freedom and self expression with an interest in rigor. ‘AUP’s program worked perfectly for me. I have never been a big fan of rules: from my bedroom to my writing, from my hair to my thoughts, I had always marginalized rules to the claustrophobic category of limits. Now, in literature and in culture, I can see them as a possibility, … the doors of the meaning towards the world. Since my English was a problem when at first I arrived at AUP, my interest in language, and in all the ontological questions connected to it, increased; frustration has been a useful engine.’

The role of **creativity** in our classes, and the relation between creative and critical modes, was commented on by many students. One student puts this very succinctly: ‘my experience with words has included analyzing others’ and arranging my own. While these two processes are independent of each other, I have, over the course of my academic journey, learned to hybridize the two; reading and critical thinking about established literary texts has undoubtedly inspired my own work as a creative writer, and a proclivity for creative writing has made me more interested in and critical of other authors’ writing.’ The degree does not seem to have hindered creativity in these students: ‘Creative writing has been my passion since a very young age, but also my way of making sense of the fast-changing, international world I have always lived in. It did not surprise me, then, when upon entering The American University of Paris, I quickly found that studying Comparative Literature did not only propel my creative writing forward, but made me think a great deal more about the importance of literature’. For others, under the influence of others around them, creativity was added to their repertoire while here: ‘I have reflected a lot about my methods of learning about the world. In the past, … I pursued my interests like a collector intent on creating a portfolio not of my own work, but of things that inspired me in some way, in the hope that soon this inventory would act as a springboard to my own ideas. Around me, however, there were people who – unlike me – did not seem to have erected a barrier between the act of gathering inspiration and the act of creating. Slowly, I began to change my attitude – I could continue to compile my lexicon of influences, but without the attendant feeling that I was not ready to create anything, myself.’ And several students noted that the value of thoughtful creative work was personal as well as academic: ‘I had an extremely difficult year on a personal level, with the loss of my grandmother and several major health issues, and the kind of writing I began to do … helped me to access a deeper understanding of the difficult nature of the human condition than I had been exposed to in my previous studies’.

Alongside the integration of critical and creative work, **movement between disciplines and media** was cited as an important practice for a student of literature. One student notes that ‘my study of painting has benefited my writing, because I notice more, and in better detail, and am then able to reproduce it in words, rather than on a canvas’; another found that a ‘creative internship’ at Robuchon’s patisserie helped to clarify what ‘creative art’ was, and to vitalise the student’s ambitions. These comments are fairly typical of the way that students imagined interdisciplinary work: ‘I feel that my critical eye, one born out of philosophical argumentation, and my literary analyses contributed to this study of cinematic language and technique. In this way, both philosophy and literature prepped me for such a different kind of study’.

**c. the experience of learning**

Student accounts of the contents of their learning should direct our construction of curricula. Student accounts of the experience of learning may also feed into our curricular design, but also into our discussions of teaching styles and modes. Students commented regularly on the role of a sense of **challenge** in their learning. This is always positive: ‘One of my favorite things about studying literature is that feeling of being challenged, a feeling that has unavoidably accompanied me throughout my studies for this degree.’ The challenge is sometimes provided by quantity of work (‘I have read more books in the last year than I would have thought possible and have written plenty of essays to accompany them’), sometimes by the difficulty of analytical work demanded (‘my final research paper for the class Literary Theory and Criticism, is the most challenging and most important work I have produced up until this point. To start from the beginning, the class itself marked a second wind in my education. I had become disillusioned with the canonical course my studies had taken and felt as though I was going through degree seeking motions. … I have never written on such a difficult and dense topic but I have also never written on a subject that has interested me more’), and sometimes by the skills required (‘each and every paper took a series of rewrites. I even had reached the level where I was so desperate about my level of English that I went to Professor X and Y in tears, feeling that my English was not developing. I spent many hours in their offices and the Writing Lab rewriting and going through my papers line by line. … I am very determined by the time I graduate … to be able to write as a native English speaker’). The sense that challenge is positive is doubled by the anxiety which comes with installing endless self-critique.

The experience of meeting challenges is, in many places, articulated with particular *moments* of learning, where **previously successful habits and methods are left behind**. One student makes a comprehensive general statement of this: ‘When I think about studying comparative literature at AUP, it is impossible for me to link it with any other educational experience I have had. When I learnt that knowledge is not a building but a city, my horizontal experience became much wiser. … When I first arrived at AUP, I wanted to start with the matters I felt more comfortable with, and I thought my background in ancient literature was pretty good and complete. I realized that completeness is not a suitable word to apply to culture.’ The loosing of moorings is clearly unsettling for some students, informing an experience that goes well beyond the classroom: ‘Each new class unloaded on me a new way of considering everything. My education has been bewildering, wrenching me from idea to idea, with simultaneous life experience. There has been no boundary distinguishing my education and real life’; for another: ‘Throughout the three years I have spent at AUP, I have learnt to confront my fear of change, and to find in the lack of direction or organization a fruitful state of self-confrontation, innovation and, ultimately, happiness.’ For the majority of student portfolios, that unsettling process has become a pleasure: ‘The only way I could ultimately [understand fundamental academic questions] was to destroy previously held unhelpful beliefs. I really only hit my strides in my final year, and even now I do still feel like I am just getting started. Our discipline is vast and fascinating and this undergraduate degree is only the beginning of what I hope will be a lifetime of healthy intellectual and philosophical destruction.’ Or, for another, ‘Re-reading this piece I saw my academic structures and rules begin to loosen and my mind open to the possibility of new forms and methods of analysis that felt uncomfortable, and vital in that discomfort. As Professor X so eloquently put it, “We don’t know what we’re interested in, we discover it through writing.”’

The experience – of meeting challenges and abandoning old habits – is one of **developing autonomy**. We think this is the clearest emergent theme in the portfolio essays, for critical and creative writers alike. Autonomy is articulated with freedom of exploration and with the work of expression. One student noted that ‘studying in Saudi Arabia for three years, gave me the feeling that I could not deeply explore the richness of literature owing to the hugely conservative culture practiced in that country. For the reason that, there are certain concepts that could not be effectively approached such as sexuality, philosophy and religion. Luckily, Paris does not seem to be bound in the restrictive culture and customs. Therefore, it affords the much needed opportunity to study literature further.’ That basic freedom is organized through the work of reading and writing into a constructive autonomy: ‘I understood that reading and writing do not disconnect me from the world; on the contrary they help me to live everything with major intensity. The consciousness that everything I think, I do and I perceive can become matter and be written is able to make me very caring and imaginative about life’. Many students suggest that the kinds of challenge set at AUP have translated into a more ‘authentic’ form of autonomy: ‘I have kept a journal since I was 6, and have written papers in school, but I am only now beginning what feels like the “real writing” that I have been wanting to do for my whole life’. This appears to work indifferently between critical and creative production, perhaps because students see the department as not making strong distinctions between these modes. One student ‘would never have seen myself in majoring in Literary Studies and the Creative Arts (started as a Finance major) – it all sort of happened on a whim. […] I was told my writing was subpar. I felt as though I had a lot to say, but I couldn’t seem to find the right words to express myself. I had always been much more visual, and I felt I wanted to have more creative liberty inside the seemingly rigid and daunting ‘essay structure.’ After four years here, I can say this has all changed – I feel as though I’ve been given great liberty with my productions, made things I can say I’m proud of. Enough. On a larger scale, something clicked my freshman year: I accepted that phenomenology was at the base of everything we do. I realized that writing was the same as making a dance, painting a picture, or writing a score. And life, like art in all forms, is not what we imagine it to be, but rather a complex series of abstract shapes of different tones being puzzled together to create an image – a mosaic, if you will.’ For others, the power of free and informed and autonomous thought turns back onto the conditions of their lives: ‘I would relate my focus on war, which was only noticed during the collection of my portfolio, to the events that took place in my country. It plays a big part of my everyday life […]. Therefore, I find it very interesting to read and write about war from a literary point of view. War is the main reason I am here.’

**4. public discussion of our work on the portfolio process**

As part of the Mellon-funded project, the work was presented publicly for discussion on three occasions: at an event organised by the Teaching and Learning Center on 1 February 2017, at a meeting of the council of Chairs on 12 April 2017, and as one of the workshops on assessment on 17 May 2017. We hoped that this public dissemination would help us to reflect on our own practices, but also we were open to see whether elements of our experience could be useful to other departments, and what kinds of challenges and opportunities would be involved in introducing portfolios in different disciplines and in departments with other characteristics.

Feedback on our own processes has been incorporated into the report above. Below, we register briefly some key thoughts that emerged in discussion, about (a) the challenges involved in introducing portfolios for other major disciplines, (b) how to scale the portfolio process for larger departments, and (c) the role of the portfolio in the advising process, and whether academic units other than departments and majors might use the portfolio process.

1. The telos of portfolios in literature is particularly open and variable. Where majors have a more rigid structure, students might be asked to include specified pieces of work from key courses, in which key learning objectives are necessarily faced. This might make the process of assessment more straightforward (grades for the submitted work might replace re-reading for assessment). We also noted that it is obvious that certain kinds of work ‘fit’ in a portfolio more easily than others – no portfolio can be a complete record of learning and its products. However, for some disciplines, students might be encouraged to include accounts of learning experiences – oral presentations, study trips, experiences – which sit outside the basic requirements (see also the discussion of general education in section 4 (c) below)

The writing of the cover-essay may also vary with disciplines: some disciplines might ask that the portfolio be focused towards a professional objective (the cover essay might approach more closely the language one would use in a job interview, for example). Cover essays might take strategic, marketing, creative, or other forms relevant to the disciplines.

Perhaps the most interesting comment here was on the disciplinary nature of reflexivity itself – students in the humanities often understand reflexivity as a wrestling with the nature of subjectivity in relation to learning, as a process of internalisation and then of the analytical objectification of the internal. This need not be the case in all disciplines. In the social sciences, for example, we might expect the material collected in the portfolio to be seen as data for analysis according to the logic of the discipline.

1. In CL/EN we have a relatively small number of graduating students (around 10 per semester). Thus, many members of faculty can feasibly read the entirety of their portfolios, and discuss them together. Our major advisors are able to consult carefully with students as they construct the portfolios. This may not be possible for departments with larger numbers of graduating students and where advisors have larger numbers of advisees.

Students are happy to be relatively autonomous in the construction of their accounts of their own learning, as long as the anticipation of judgement is reasonable, and the guidelines are clear. It might be possible for larger departments to run a workshop for the portfolio, in which models and possibilities and techniques and formats are discussed. It was suggested that group work, in some disciplines, where students worked to analyse one another’s portfolios, would be appropriate. It is not absolutely necessary that the portfolios be carefully read by several members of faculty *if* the kinds of work collected have been selected to demonstrate satisfaction of particular learning objectives.

The public presentation of the portfolios (in our department this takes the form of a 10-minute presentation with discussion) might be legitimately replaced with poster presentations, which would allow for public scrutiny and for socialisation of student learning, within a manageable timescale. It would be good to envisage digital modes of construction of posters, to enable archiving (for assessment and for reflection on learning in the department, and to provide models for future students)

1. One of the key functions of the portfolio is to give a pedagogical function to the advising process. We need better tools for this within the Learning Management System, so that students and advisors can build an archive of student work, and so that a record of key moments of reflection and revelation can be kept throughout the student’s career. Moments where particular learning-objectives have been identified and spectacularly satisfied could be recorded here. If the university decides that an ‘education passport’ is an interesting idea for students, it should be built into the platform for advising. There was a discussion about the temporality of reflexion: what are the relative valences of continuous reflection, with the advisor, and of finding and seizing a *moment* for reflection?

The new general education process, the co-curricular process, and experiential learning, might be particularly well-served also by portfolio assessment. If these become key aims for AUP, digital tools and an efficient and manageable process of collection and display will be important. The work would fall probably on the shoulders of advisors; the scale of this work needs to be estimated carefully.

**Appendix 1 – CL 4075 Portfolio, Syllabus**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **COURSE TITLE:** | Portfolio | **COURSE NO:** | CL 4075 |
| **PREREQUISITES:** | Junior Standing | **SEMESTER:** | Spring 2017 |
| **PROFESSOR:** | David Tresilian (Chair of the Degree Committee and convener of this course); Dan Gunn  and your advisor | **CREDITS:** | 1 |
| **CLASS SCHEDULE:** | see below | **ROOM NO:** | -- |
| **OFFICE HOURS:**  **OFFICE NUMBER:** | please make an appointment by email  Grenelle offices: Tresilian (G112) and Gunn (G111) | **PERIOD (S):** | -- |
| **MAILBOX LOCATION:** | Grenelle | | |

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Taught as a directed study, this course enables senior students to assemble as a whole their own work for the Comparative Literature major, the Literary Studies and Creative Arts major, and the Creative Writing major, in order to reflect, to evaluate, and to critique its coherence.

**STUDENT LEARNING GOALS:**

* Reflect, evaluate and critique the coherence of the work you have done within the major so far.
* Learn more about your strengths and weaknesses and about what you have achieved.
* Think about the extent to which the learning outcomes the Department promises to convey to its students have been achieved in your case. (The learning outcomes for the Comparative Literature and the Literary Studies and Creative Arts major appear at the end of this document, together with the learning outcomes for the Creative Arts major.)

**PROCEDURE:**

This course is organized by the chair of the CL / LCA Degree Committee, who serves as convener. The convener collects coursework and organizes the panel meeting. However, all your individual coursework, i.e. the composition of the portfolio and the cover essay, is supervised by your advisor. You should get in touch with him or her as soon as possible. Your advisor will also communicate suggestions and observations to you.

There are three important dates that you must keep in mind:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Monday 10 April | Due date of cover essay and portfolio, both to be submitted to the course convener.  Submission in digital form to [dtresilian@aup.edu](mailto:dtresilian@aup.edu) is sufficient. |
|  | The portfolio panel discusses your portfolios. You will not attend this meeting, but receive feedback via your portfolio advisor.  If necessary, you can then revise and resubmit your cover essay or other parts of the portfolio according to the instructions of your advisor. |
| Thursday 20 April | Final presentation of portfolios before the panel. This date was scheduled long in advance to assure maximum attendance. Please make sure that you are available too. |

**THE CONTENTS OF THE PORTFOLIO:**

1. You assemble a selection of papers and other materials produced in your major classes (a minimum of five substantial pieces of work, produced for a minimum of five courses that count towards your major), plus (optionally) work from other classes that you and your advisor consider to be relevant to your intellectual focus. For students in the Literary Studies and Creative Arts and Creative Writing majors, this body of work will include creative work in their chosen media.

The portfolio should be introduced by a covering essay of 1500-2000 words. This essay should aim to indicate what you see in your work – the work you include in the portfolio – as demonstrating the skills and knowledge that you have attained, which ideas and themes are key to your work as an individual student, and how your work has developed and changed.

2. The collection of papers and other materials is prefaced by:

a. A table of contents

b. A critical and synthetic prefatory essay of 1500-2000 words in length, which

* introduces the body of work,
* identifies and justifies areas of intellectual focus,
* reflects, evaluates and critiques the coherence of the work you have done,
* reflects about strengths and weaknesses and takes stock of achievements,
* including your development as a well-informed reader and writer.

**SUBMISSION OF THE PORTFOLIO:**

The portfolios must be submitted in digital form, by email or on a data stick (or CD). Visual material (paintings, drawings, models etc.) can *additionally* be submitted in the original (paper, canvas etc.) for the panel to see. All the same, also submit this work in a digitalized form (scans, photos, etc.).

**GRADING:**

The portfolio will be graded “Credit” or “No Credit”.

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| --- |
| **ATTENDANCE POLICY:**  Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation.  It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus.  The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance.  Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students’ participation in study trips related to their courses.  **Attendance at all exams is mandatory.**  IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.  Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an “F” for the course.  An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.  Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and *especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.* |
| **ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STATEMENT:** As an Anglophone university, The American University of Paris is strongly committed to effective English language mastery at the undergraduate level. Most courses require scholarly research and formal written and oral presentations in English, and AUP students are expected to strive to achieve excellence in these domains as part of their course work. To that end, professors include English proficiency among the criteria in student evaluation, often referring students to the university Writing Lab where they may obtain help on specific academic assignments. Proficiency in English is monitored at various points throughout the student's academic career, most notably during the admissions and advising processes, while the student is completing general education requirements, and during the accomplishment of degree program courses and senior theses. |

**Department Learning Outcomes for the Comparative Literature Major** **and the Literary Studies and Creative Arts Major**

1. Critical Reading: students will be able to explore, analyze, and reflect critically on major works of world literature, philosophy, and criticism across a wide range of genres and time periods.
2. Writing: students will be able to express themselves creatively, clearly, coherently, and elegantly in order to produce effective writing in different genres.
3. Comparison and Contextualization: students will be able to analyze their readings within their historical, geographical, and generic contexts to make enlightening connections with other works on the basis of responsible and informed awareness of cultural and linguistic diversity. Students of Comparative Literature will be able to demonstrate knowledge of traditional and recent methods in literary scholarship.
4. Languages and Linguistics: Students will be able to read and write about works in different languages.
5. Interdisciplinary exploration: Students will be able to relate their work to the methods and contents of other disciplines.
6. Professional Production and Publication: Students will develop skills in professional writing in the cultural sphere, showing intellectual ambition, creativity, and imagination; they will develop a personal focus for their chosen field of production, demonstrating the capacity to interpret and evaluate it in the light of their academic study.

**Department Learning Outcomes for the Creative Writing Major**

1.     Students will demonstrate knowledge of the history of literary forms, and of the techniques involved in the creation of contemporary literary works and works from earlier periods, across several genres and in more than one culture.

2.     Students will analyze literary works, reflect on their qualities, and show awareness of appropriate methods in literary criticism

3.     Students will create literary works in one chosen genre which are complete, carefully edited, and which show awareness of the conventions of the genre.

4.     Students will demonstrate advanced capacities in their use of the English language as a creative and communicative tool, and basic capacities in their understanding of the relation between English and French, and show awareness of the challenges involved in translation.

**Appendix 2**

**Portfolio comment form, for assessment (as used from 2015 onwards)**

For each of the portfolios, please would you write a short report, with comments organized under the following headings. If all or many of us respond to all of the headings, none of us need write very much. So be brief, but please do it! Deadline of XXXX to please send the reports to me.

A: Your name

B: Student name

C: Any general comments on the portfolio

D: For EACH of the learning outcomes below – to what degree do you think that the portfolio demonstrated satisfaction of the learning outcome (if you can indicate a specific piece of the evidence that supports your claim, then please do)

1. *Critical Reading:* students will be able to explore, analyze, and reflect critically on major works of world literature, philosophy, and criticism across a wide range of genres and time periods
2. *Writing:* students will be able to express themselves creatively, clearly, coherently, and elegantly in order to produce effective writing in different genres
3. *Comparison and Contextualization:* students will be able to analyze their readings within their historical, geographical, and generic contexts to make enlightening connections with other works on the basis of responsible and informed awareness of cultural and linguistic diversity. Students of Comparative Literature will be able to demonstrate knowledge of traditional and recent methods in literary scholarship.
4. *Languages and Linguistics:* Students will be able to read and write about works in different languages.
5. *Interdisciplinary exploration:* Students will be able to relate their work to the methods and contents of other disciplines.
6. *Professional Production and Publication:* Students will develop skills in professional writing in the cultural sphere, showing intellectual ambition, creativity, and imagination; they will develop a personal focus for their chosen field of production, demonstrating the capacity to interpret and evaluate it in the light of their academic study.

**Appendix 3**

**Annotated bibliography.**

Compiled by Michelle Lynch

Baeten, Marlies. "Students' Approaches to Learning and Assessment Preferences in a Portfolio-based Learning Environment." *Instructional Science* 36.5/6, Effects of Constructivist Learning Environments (2008): 359-74. *JSTOR*. Web.

This study focuses on student preferences in learning assessment, specifically testing 138 office management students and their opinions on portfolio assessment. It was found that portfolio assessment did not deepen the students' approaches to learning, and that students felt higher pressures and workload. The purpose of portfolio assessment as a tool for reaching a deep approach to learning was not supported by the results of the study, either.

Batson, Trent. “Review of Portfolios in Higher Education: A Flowering Inquiry and Inventiveness in the Trenches.” *Campus Technology.* The Association for Authentic, Experiential and Evidence-Based Learning, 2010.

This article presents e-portfolios as an assessment tool mostly used in graduate programs to document practicums and for ethics reflection. It does offer, however, a few specific examples of the use of portfolios in undergraduate programs: in chemistry to demonstrate research skills, in social geography to develop project-working skills, and in fashion design to collect photos. The strength of the portfolio lies in its ability to teach students about communication as they examine their own work.

Baume, David. "A Briefing on Assessment of Portfolios." *LTSN Generic Centre* 6 (2001): n. pag. Web.

Beginning with a detailed account of issues in assessment, and how they are resolved by portfolio use, this article is extremely useful in posing and resolving pertinent questions surrounding portfolio assessment. Many of these questions concern the improvement of portfolio assessment, specifically in reliability and simplification. Specific details are provided for what needs to be included in portfolios, and this is accompanied by a detailed case study.

Burnett, Myra N., and Williams, Julia M. “Institutional Uses of Rubrics and E-Portfolios: Spelman College and Rose-Hulman Institute.” *Peer Review*, Winter 2009, pp. 24-27. Association of American Colleges and Universities.

This article discusses two American institutions as models for the use of e-portfolios in assessment. Spelman College uses e-portfolios as a way to assess the learning and capability of freshmen students. The college uses learning outcomes and student reflections to assess the progress of writing ability over the first year of study. The Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology uses the e-portfolio technique for all students, every year. This institute also uses learning outcomes, and categorizes all student assignments under them. Students complete different assignments in order to demonstrate growth in the defined areas, and are assessed by professors of all disciplines.

Clark, Elizabeth J., and Eynon, Brett. “E-Portfolios at 2.0- Surveying the Field.” *Peer Review*, Winter 2009, pp. 18-23. Association of American Colleges and Universities.

The spread of e-portfolios is the focus of this article. It asserts that e-portfolios are not only for small universities anymore, and also are spreading outside of America’s borders. At the time that this article was written, the number of schools using e-portfolios had tripled in just six years, with 50% of colleges using a form of e-portfolio assessment. The growth of the e-portfolio is said to have four main drivers: growing interest in student-driven learning, the progress of technology interesting students in the construction of digital self-portraits, increased accountability in higher education causing pressure for development in assessment, and the growing need for what is referred to as an “education passport.”

Costa, Arthur L. *Developing Minds*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1991. Print.

This book consists of a collection of informative articles which all address the processes by which students could potentially become better thinkers. Though slightly outdated, the work is valuable in its comprehensive and extremely organized view of the important components of teaching, learning, and assessment. This source also includes a glossary of cognitive terminology, observation forms, checklists, questionnaires, evaluation instruments, suggestions for getting started, and questions for system planners. Citing portfolio assessment as the solution, it states that "evaluation of thinking requires a re-vision: a new way of thinking about what it is we need to know, for whom, and how we can best obtain the information. We must think of evaluation as a prism of assessment strategies, not a single faceted one."

Diller, Karen R. "Learning Outcomes, Portfolios, and Rubrics, Oh My! Authentic Assessment of an Information Literacy Program." *Libraries and the Academy* 8.1 (2008): 75-89. Johns Hopkins University Press. Web.

This paper describes the process of librarians at Washington State University helping the campus to develop a portfolio method for assessing its General Education Program, a program based on university learning goals. it includes a detailed look at the learning goal matrix, and how it is used by students and faculty. There is also a report of results included, which is analyzed to show the validity and strength of the rubric as an assessment instrument for portfolios.

Dysthe, Olga, Engelsen, Knut, and Lima, Ivar. “Variations in higher education portfolio assessment.” University of Bergen.

This paper offers an account of the use of portfolio assessment in Norway. In the midst of massive education reform, Norway introduced portfolios in an effort to achieve more dynamic assessment. The paper discusses a survey of portfolio practices in four institutions, investigating working portfolios versus assessment portfolios.

Gillespie, Cindy S. "Portfolio Assessment: Some Questions, Some Answers, Some Recommendations." *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 39.6 (1996): 480-91. *JSTOR*. Web.

This article does exactly what its title claims. Beginning with a look at definitions of portfolio and reasons for quality assessment, the article goes on to provide a detailed outline of the advantages and disadvantages of portfolio assessment. This source is most valuable in its efforts to ask and answer the important questions surrounding portfolios, such as logistics of assessment, reliability, authenticity, and application. The article ends with solid and insightful recommendations for successfully using portfolios for assessment.

Hamp-Lyons, Liz, and William Condon. "Questioning Assumptions about Portfolio-Based Assessment." *College Composition and Communication* 44.2 (1993): 176. Web.

Written from the point of view of educators seeking to understand portfolio assessment and how evaluators use, perceive, and react to the portfolios in order to make what is sometimes thought to be a holistic judgement. Looking specifically at the University of Michigan's English department, this paper breaks down what goes into portfolios: the requirements, student preparation, and assessment. The authors conducted their own study in assessment of portfolios, including guidelines and reading logs. The data from this study was used to confront several assumptions about portfolios.

Klenowski, Val, Askew, Sue, and Carnell, Eileen. “Portfolios for learning, assessment, and professional development in higher education.” *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education.* Vol. 31, June 2006, pp. 267-286. University of London.

This article is a mass collection of different case studies of portfolios as used in Higher Education. It defines portfolios as being used particularly for the purposes of developing teaching skills and reflective practice, and to demonstrate evidence of achievement for summative purposes. There are case studies on three different formats of portfolio assessment: Professional Development Records, Learning Portfolios, and Learning Records.

Latrobe, Kathy. "Portfolio Assessment in the MLIS Program." *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 41.3 (2000): 197-206. *JSTOR*. Web.

Specifically looking at the Library and Information Science (LIS) master's program at the University of Oklahoma, this paper addresses the inclusion of portfolio development as it shifts assessment into student learning experiences, emphasizing educational goals and standards. The paper outlines planning and construction of portfolios, and possible future developments such as tailoring portfolios to specific career goals.

Miller, Ross, and Morgaine, Wende. “The Benefits of E-Portfolios for Students and Faculty in Their Own Words” *Peer Review*, Winter 2009, pp. 8-11. Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Focusing on the faculty and student viewpoint, this article discusses specific benefits of the e-portfolio. Students use them to reflect, gather work, and improve in many ways. Faculty use them as feedback for improving their courses. The periodic reflections offer an opportunity for metacognition, and cause students to become self-directed learners.

Morimoto, Yasuhiko. "Formal Method of Description Supporting Portfolio Assessment." *Journal of Educational Technology & Society* 9.3, Next Generation E-Learning Systems: Intelligent Applications and Smart Design (2006): 88-99. *JSTOR*. Web.

This paper deals with the development of a formal method of describing the relations between the lesson forms and portfolios, stating that these relations are indispensable in portfolio assessment. Visual blueprints for portfolio assessment design are included, which are referred to as Portfolio assessment Design Semantics (PDS).

Stocks, Claire, and Chris Trevitt. "Signifying Authenticity: How Valid Is a Portfolio Approach to Assessment?" *Oxford Learning Institute* (2008): 1-22. Web.

This paper presents many specific examples of the successes and failures of portfolio assessment, mainly discussing issues of authenticity in scoring because of the requirement to observe and assess qualitative aspects of the portfolio. By presenting and analyzing gobbets from other papers concerning portfolio assessment, this paper manages to take a straightforward and organized approach in answering concerns surrounding portfolio assessment.

Shavelson, Richard J. “The Limitations of Portfolios”. *Inside Higher Ed.* Stanford University, 2009.

Potentially valuable as a counterargument, this article is firmly against portfolios, saying that they are not up to the task of providing the necessary data for making a sound assessment of student learning. The article outlines three main reasons which explain why portfolios are not appropriate for higher education purposes: they are not standardized, they are not feasible for large-scale assessment, and they are potentially biased.

Sewell, Meg, Marczak, Mary, and Horn, Melanie. “The Use of Portfolio Assessment In Evaluation.” *Methodenpool*. University of Arizona.

This article by the University of Arizona reinforces the use of portfolios in assessments by universities, and also in evaluation of potential by future employers. The article defines portfolios as scrapbooks of progress, and credits them with achieving authentic assessment. The article also breaks down the advantages, disadvantages, and applications of portfolios.

Yancey, Kathleen Blake. “Electronic Portfolios a Decade into the Twenty-first Century: What We Know, What We Need to Know.” *Peer Review*, Winter 2009, pp. 28-32. Association of American Colleges and Universities.

This is a report of the necessary contributions to e-portfolios as assessed by faculty, students, potential employers, and members of the public. The article states that student engagement is key, and without this the portfolio fails. If correctly engaged, e-portfolios can foster the development of important non-cognitive traits as well (behaviours and attitudes including the ability to work with others). Print portfolios are mentioned as being largely course-specific and playing a limited role in student assessment. Some of the concerns which are mentioned include templates for portfolios removing student engagement, and the lack of uniformity if a school does not use a specific software for all students.

Yorke, Mantz. “Formative assessment in higher education: Moves towards theory and the enhancement of pedagogic practice.” *Higher Education*. Vol. 45, 2003, pp. 477-501. Kluwer Academic Publishers.

This paper asserts that the central purpose of formative assessment through portfolios is to provide information about performance and to facilitate student learning. Formative assessment is distinguished from summative assessment, which requires obtaining learning objectives. Formative assessment fosters student self-regulation and provides students with informative feedback which is crucial for their progress.