Resource Guide for e-Portfolios

This resource guide is a companion document to the Professional e-Portfolio Guidelines for MA Teaching & Learning and B.Ed. K/Elementary, Secondary, Music, and TESL Programs.

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SECTION I: CONSIDERATIONS FOR E-PORTFOLIOS

Developing Technology Skills: International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards for Teachers

www.iste.org/standards/ISTE-standards/standards-for-teachers

- Facilitate and Inspire Student Learning and Creativity
- Design and Develop Digital Age Learning Experiences and Assessments
- Model Digital Age Work and Learning
- Promote and Model Digital Citizenship and Responsibility
- Engage in Professional Growth and Leadership

The ISTE Standards for Teachers are in line with Quebec’s Professional Teacher Competencies and with the Quebec Education Program. They provide pre-service and practicing teachers with a useful guideline for developing the skills and knowledge they require to be successful practitioners. School administration communication is increasingly only online and most report cards are completed using a web-based service. Communication with parents is often done using email, websites and content management systems. The artifacts and reflections you incorporate into your e-portfolio should demonstrate your readiness to participate in networked learning opportunities.

Selecting and Contextualizing Artifacts as Evidence of Competency Development

The qualities and characteristics of exemplary practitioners are not easily reduced to a checklist. This is an opportunity for you to examine your unique talents and select or create artifacts that show them off. Nuanced qualities like patience, a caring disposition or creativity are very difficult to capture, as are the habits of mind of exemplary practitioners.

Take the time to make a plan before you get in front of the technology. Creating a concept map will allow you to generate categories and organize them before you start. For each of these, consider what they look like in your practice. What does a caring educator look like, sound like? Can you think of an artifact you could create that would capture that quality?

In addition to describing your personal qualities and characteristics, include evidence from your pedagogical practice with links to the Professional Competencies, such as inquiry projects or rubrics used in formative assessment, etc. Testimony from colleagues, supervisors, students or parents can be a powerful way to show your level of competency. You may also want, with permission, to showcase student work – safe-guarding confidentiality. Never include photos or videos of youth; once something is online you cannot retain control over who sees it or how it is used even if it is on a password protected e-portfolio site. This protects you as well as your students.
Artifacts should always be accompanied by a professional reflection that tells the reader why they are considered important to showcase, and how they serve as evidence of your mastery of one or more of the professional competencies. The portfolio is both an internal process of ongoing reflection as well as a means to communicate that self-awareness to a wider audience. Providing the reader with a variety of products in various media will keep them engaged in your story as well as demonstrate your ICT competency.

For each of the Professional Competencies, consider which artifacts you might include that show you at your best. The same artifact (lesson plan, video clip) may serve as evidence for several competencies. At the end of each professional competency, there is a list describing what students should know and be able to do at the end of their degree (see the section for each competency in the Ministry of Education publication *Teacher Training-Orientations, Professional Competencies*.) Use these criteria as guides when selecting, reflecting on and evaluating artifacts for inclusion.

In summary, professional competency development is a journey; your e-portfolio reflects what you can do at this stage of your learning. Show prospective employers a disposition towards learning. Include your goals and your ongoing learning/professional development plan.

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**Technical Considerations of Artifacts: from Physical to Digital**

Create pages that **group information in categories**. You may want to have a page for your philosophy of teaching for example, or a page listing awards and publications.

As you add artifacts to your portfolio it is important that you **tag** them. A **tag** is a keyword that is associated with your content and describes your artifact. Tags help users to find associated content. You might, for instance, tag your math lessons "math", "grade 3" and "addition". If you are sharing a reflection on your teaching of that lesson, consider tagging it with "reflection." You might tag your artifact with a shorthand notation to indicate which professional teaching competency it demonstrates evidence of (for example, “PC1”). Many users skip this step in the hurry of their day and find themselves sifting through entries to find evidence of their learning at the end of their degree when they could be devoting that time to marketing themselves. The more organized you are when inputting data, the easier it will be for you to put together your showcase portfolio.

When putting artifacts online, **avoid sending your readers away** from your portfolio to view the content. If possible, upload the file to the e-portfolio service you are using and then link to it. If you can’t upload it, try embedding the content you’ve uploaded elsewhere into your page. If you have a YouTube video for instance, select “share” and then “embed,” copy the code displayed and paste it into the <html> view your portfolio. The video will then show up in your portfolio itself. This can be done with Google Documents, Prezi presentations, Soundcloud audio files, Flickr photographs and many more media. If you have to link to external sites, consider having the link open in a new window. This will keep your portfolio open and easier to come back to once your reader has viewed the media.
**Sound files** can often be compressed which will reduce their size. If you are sharing a voice recording, try using the .mp3 format.

When sharing documents, save or ‘print’ your file to **pdf format**. This will preserve your formatting and allow users on any platform to view your content the way you intend. [CutePDF](https://www.cutepdf.com) is one example of a free print-to-pdf utility.

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**Presentation Tips**

Create a **static front page to welcome visitors** to your portfolio. From here, users should be able to navigate easily to appropriate sections of your work. Include links to your digital footprint (Twitter, Facebook, etc.).

Prospective employers will want to **know more about you** than your teaching philosophy. Do you play in a theatre group? Link to the troupe's page. Do you play in a band? Link to your Soundcloud.com site. Are you a photographer with a page on Flickr? If we teach who we are, then your professional portfolio should let others know a little about who you are as well as demonstrate your competency as a teacher-candidate who has fulfilled their teacher education program’s academic requirements. If your portfolio is going to be useful to you as a marketing tool, then it should be one that continues to reflect your evolving practice.

Don’t try and pad your portfolio or inflate accomplishments. **Be honest.** Having a direct impact on the development of young children and working with vulnerable populations, teachers are held to a higher moral standard. As such, your employer will expect that your portfolio reflects that professional integrity: you are who you say you are.

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**Copyright**

If you are incorporating media content into your presentations or media productions, **ensure that you have the right** to use them. If you **select media** that has an appropriate [Creative Commons](https://creativecommons.org) license you will be better informed about your rights. The university’s [Code of Student conduct](https://www.gsu.edu/student-life/code-of-conduct/) discusses the serious Academic Disciplinary repercussions of using others’ work without permission or citation.

You may also want to license your own content. You can use [this simple guide](https://creativecommons.org/licenses) to create a license to add to your content. This will allow other teachers to use your content while providing appropriate attribution.

If you are looking for curricular content, try searching for [Open Educational Resources](https://www.opened.ru).

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**Managing Your Digital Identity: Branding**

A consistent identity across web platforms will help people identify you. Continue to reach out through social media, making connections with other educators who share your passions. The more control you take of your digital footprint, the more closely your digital and real life identities will align. Your e-portfolio is likely only one aspect of your digital footprint. This is an
opportunity for you to consider creating a personal and professional online identity; “branding”
yourself, and managing that content across several services and social media. Some teachers
have opted to have both public and private spaces on social networks like Facebook for
instance. **It is important to keep in mind that nothing published to the internet is truly private.**
Also, when you “follow” someone or “like” content, you leave markers behind you that serve as
signposts to others. You may take great care in curating your own photos as you work on your
personal ‘brand’ as a teacher, but you should also consider the photos or videos taken of you
by others. Take a moment to Google yourself or to search for your name on Facebook. Pretend
you are an employer or someone running a background check. What image of you will others
find?

| Transformation from Working to Showcase e-Portfolio |

In the process of creating your working portfolio, you will be engaged in a continuous cycle of
action and reflection leading to informed action, a process that will help you to become a
reflective practitioner. Your showcase e-portfolio is both an academic product, demonstrating
your competency as a teacher candidate in relation to the Professional Competencies, as well as
a way for you to demonstrate your skills set to prospective employers. [This graphic](#) by Dr.
Helen Barrett helps to visualize the distinction between a working and showcase portfolio.

Questions to guide the transformation process:

- Where are you now? Where will you go from here?
- What do you believe and what have you learned about teaching and learning?
- What have been your greatest successes?
- What were some of the challenges you will continue to work on?
- What professional goals have you set for yourself? What will count as evidence of you
  having attained those goals?

In answering questions like these prior to interviewing for a job placement, you will be better
prepared to present yourself as a focused, thoughtful educator with clear beliefs and
purposeful goals. Master educators are lifelong learners. Demonstrate to your future
employers that you have a concrete plan for continuing your professional growth over time.

**It may be helpful to think of the creation of your showcase e-portfolio as the process of
crafting a digital narrative.** Invite the reader in, engage them in exploring your story and to
show what you know and can do using pictures, sounds, video and hypertext. Taking ownership
of your portfolio both in style and content will both increase your enjoyment of the process and
allow prospective employers to see you for who you are.

| Presenting Your Work Offline |

If you are sending your e-portfolio to a school who has requested an offline copy, you may want
to download your e-portfolio to a flash drive or CD/DVD or create a short print version. You will
need to be even more selective of your content in order to keep the document concise.
Keep your files small. If you are sharing a photograph taken with a modern camera, the file can be quite large. This makes high-quality printed copies but is unnecessary for online publication. A quick solution is to take a screenshot of your photograph instead of uploading the original.

With an e-portfolio published to the web, consider creating a QR Code. Copy the web address of your portfolio and paste it into a QR Code generator. The image you generate can be copied to your business card or printed C.V. Readers will be able to scan your code with their smartphone and pull up your website.

### SECTION II: DIGITAL RESOURCES

**Choosing an e-Portfolio Platform**

- **ePEARL**

  ePEARL is part of the Learning Tool Kit available free of charge to Quebec K-11 schools. It is available in both official languages and supported by a bilingual team. ePEARL is supported by LEARN Quebec as well as school board RÉCIT animators and ICT consultants. It has been designed and field-tested by classroom practitioners here in Quebec and the design is informed by researchers at several partner universities.

  Reflection prompts are built-in to this free, bilingual service. When you upload an artifact, you can choose to record your reflection in text or audio or to upload an image. Artifacts are organized according to competency in the file view making sorting efficient. Learners can invite other students or teachers to view their data or to provide feedback on their content.

  When you are ready to publish your e-portfolio, you have the option of downloading your portfolio to a data CD/DVD or USB flashdrive.

  ePEARL is installed on the board or university servers, so data limits are set locally.

- **Edu-portfolio**
  - [http://eduportfolio.org/](http://eduportfolio.org/)

  Edu-portfolio was created by Prof. Thierry Karsenti and his team at Université de Montréal. It is available for use free of charge. Edu-portfolio is available in several languages. While Edu-portfolio was created here in Quebec, it is being made available to a global audience.

  You can download your Edu-portfolio to a data CD/DVD or USB flashdrive for offline viewing. Users are limited to 100 MB of storage on the Edu-portfolio server.

- **Google**
  - [https://sites.google.com/site/eportfolioapps/](https://sites.google.com/site/eportfolioapps/)
Dr. Helen Barrett (http://electronicportfolios.org/) has a Google website on the use of Google Apps to create e-portfolios. One distinct advantage of Google is that you can manage all of your content in one place and it can be accessed from anywhere. You own your data and it exists independently of your institutional access. While Google allows you to manage all of your content online, it does not have a keyword tagging option. A more efficient way of managing your artifacts might be to use Evernote as a repository for your raw data. This will allow you to add descriptive tags to your content. Once you have made your plan, you can select content for publication in your showcase e-portfolio. At that time, you may want to use Google Sites as a publishing platform.

**Wordpress**

- [http://learn.wordpress.com/](http://learn.wordpress.com/)

Many districts are using either self-hosted Wordpress blogs or www.wordpress.com to create e-portfolios. Wordpress is an opensource, flexible, robust blogging platform. There are millions of users and consequently many tutorials to be found to help you get started.

**Other Website creation services**

Wix and Weebly are examples of free web services that will allow you to create professional sites quickly. While they come with well-designed templates, they don’t offer the user any easy way of exporting their content. That means that once you use their service, you are locked in. With the volatility of the tech industry, this is not a trivial concern. If you decide to use a web-based service, ensure that you have a backup of all your content offline.

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**Digital Tools to Capture Artifacts**

The following is a short list of some of the software and hardware that you may want to use to capture evidence of your learning. As these tools change so quickly, please consider them as examples in use at the time of publication. Consider how you might leverage the technology you have access to in order to capture evidence of your teaching and learning using pictures, video, sound or hypertext.

The power and impact of an e-portfolio is in the media. Moving your content online involves more than uploading your word processing files. You will want to leverage the digital medium and bring images, sound and hypertext to your e-portfolio. Short video segments can bring readers into your practice and see you in action (not your students).

**Hardware**

If you have access to a smartphone, iPod, tablet, laptop or desktop, you have everything you need to create your e-portfolio. If you only have a print version of a document (a certificate or award you received) consider taking a photograph of it instead and upload the photo to Dropbox. If you share your photographs to Flickr, you can import them to your portfolio. The video quality of most devices will allow you to capture good quality short films on the go. Video
editing can be carried out on the device itself prior to uploading. Soundcloud offers a free mobile app for sound recording and sharing. Files can be made public or kept private.

Most laptops and many desktops have built-in microphones. If yours doesn’t come with one, you can get a functional microphone at the dollar store for less than $5. Since you will want small files, you won’t require a stereo recording mic.

Software

If you are working from your laptop or desktop, there are powerful opensource and free applications available to you:

- **Evernote** will allow you to collect all of your artifacts in one place. It can hold audio and image files as well as documents and allows you to tag your content with keywords to organize your artifacts: [https://evernote.com/](https://evernote.com/)
- **Freemind** is an opensource mind mapping application: [http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page](http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page)
- **Libre Office** is an opensource office suite compatible with Microsoft Word, Powerpoint or Excel formats: [www.libreoffice.org](http://www.libreoffice.org)
- **Google Docs** can also serve as an office suite replacement: [www.google.com/docs/about](http://www.google.com/docs/about)
- **GIMP** is a very powerful photo editing application that replaces expensive programs like Adobe Photoshop: [www.gimp.org](http://www.gimp.org)
- **Paint.net** is another free application for image editing with a simpler feature set and an intuitive interface: [www.getpaint.net](http://www.getpaint.net)
- **Audacity** is an opensource sound recording and editing software: [http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download](http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download)
- **VLC** is a video and audio player that will play back and export a wide variety of file formats: [www.videolan.org](http://www.videolan.org)

Additional Resources for Learning about Portfolios

- [www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/pedagogy/portfolio/teacher/](http://www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/pedagogy/portfolio/teacher/)
- [www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/pedagogy/portfolio/](http://www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/pedagogy/portfolio/)

Examples of Student/Teacher e-Portfolios:

- [http://blogs.ubc.ca/portfolio/introduction-to-eportfolios/examples/](http://blogs.ubc.ca/portfolio/introduction-to-eportfolios/examples/)
- [http://eduportfolio.org/pages/exemples](http://eduportfolio.org/pages/exemples)
- [https://rebeccalynntaylor.wordpress.com/](https://rebeccalynntaylor.wordpress.com/)
- [http://hire.samwempe.com/](http://hire.samwempe.com/)
- [http://rempel-j.wix.com/altitude](http://rempel-j.wix.com/altitude)