

Digital Portfolios in Blended Learning Environments



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Introduction

The dramatic shift to remote learning during the 2019-20 school year, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, posed a new challenge for educators. How do they create a learning environment that keeps the learning going and supports the whole child? Educators around the globe found a blended learning approach addressed their concerns.

This approach is a combination of on-campus and at-home learning.

While there are many EdTech tools to help educators and students thrive in blended learning environments, digital portfolios have proven to be one of the easiest to implement, and most effective tools in successfully building this meaningful learning environment.

In this e-book you will find an infographic explaining how digital portfolios fit into a blended learning environment. The following pages include further explanations of each step, as well as examples, templates, and resources to get educators started using digital portfolios in their classrooms.

1 PRE-ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

Portfolio analysis,
Self-assessment,
Anticipation journals

2 INSTRUCTION & LEARNING

Narrative feedback,
Experiential learning,
Peer evaluations

Digital Portfolios in Blended-Learning Environments

LIFELONG LEARNING

Capstone projects,
Peer-to-peer teaching,
Reflective journaling

3 DEMONSTRATE MASTERY

- ✓ Whole-child Approach
- ✓ College-prepared
- ✓ Workforce-ready
- ✓ Social/Emotional Well-being
- ✓ Physical Health
- ✓ Academically-motivated

Step 1:

PRE-ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

A successful blended learning environment begins with pre-assessment assignments and activities. Pre-assessment gives educators the opportunity to evaluate students' readiness for new learning, allowing educators to appropriately plan their instruction. Educators are encouraged to use pre-assessment often in the learning process.

Digital portfolios are a valuable tool in the pre-assessment process; they're where teachers can track the pre-assessment results for each student, and provide valuable insights beyond a test score. Below is a short list of pre-assessment activities that can be completed in a digital portfolio. The links provided below include templates and user examples to demonstrate how to use a digital portfolio during this phase of learning.

- **Portfolio analysis:** a teacher evaluation of a student's portfolio, viewing work from past units/semesters/years, to understand a their capabilities
- **Self-assessment:** the student evaluates their own work and progress, identifying strengths and weaknesses
- **Anticipation journals:** giving students the opportunity to document in their portfolios what they hope and expect to learn during the unit/semester/year.
- **Entrance ticket:** short prompts asking students to recall background knowledge that is relevant to the topic of the day.
- **Knows and Need to Know:** student created lists of what they know, and what they will need to know based on driving questions and problem statements
- **Concept maps:** visual representations of the connection of ideas, terms, and concepts
- **Formative assessment:** formal and informal assessments conducted by educators for the purpose of modifying instruction and activities to improve student learning

Step 2:

INSTRUCTION & LEARNING

After pre-assessing the students, educators will have a better idea of how to instruct their students effectively. When educators understand the needs of their students they'll know where to offer extra support and where they can challenge each individually. Throughout the instruction and learning phase educators can gauge a student's progress through instruction, grading, assessments, and academic reporting.

Digital portfolios help educators and students keep track of their learning. When students document their learning within their digital portfolio teachers have a reference point to track and check-in with each student. Below is a short list of instruction and learning strategies that can be completed in a digital portfolio. The links provided below offer examples, templates, and other resources to help educators start their digital portfolio practice.

- **Spaced practice:** providing students materials to study over an extended period of time, to help draw connections between concepts and build upon knowledge easily
- **Personalized feedback:** offering specific, customized feedback to students
- **Experiential learning:** creating concrete, hands-on experiences for students who, once the experience concludes, reflects on the process and lessons learned
- **Peer evaluations:** giving students the opportunity to assess a classmate's work from their perspective, not pretending to be the educator
- **Student interviews:** educator led individual or small group discussions with students about their understanding of a specific concept. Notes/video from each interview can be documented within a digital portfolio
- **Analyzing & solving real-world problems:** using real-world problems as projects for students to analyze and solve

Step 3:

DEMONSTRATE MASTERY

During the learning process educators look for evidence to show a student has mastered a concept. Mastery is achieved when a student has learned what they need to in order to move on, or build upon previous knowledge.

Below is a short list of assignments and activities to be completed within a digital portfolio that help educators identify when a student is demonstrating mastery. The links provide examples, templates, and other resources to give educators a better understanding of what these activities look like when completed in a digital portfolio.

- **Portfolio analysis:** a teacher evaluation of a student's coursework gauging learning process and academic achievement
- **Capstone projects:** a culminating academic and intellectual experience in the form of a multifaceted student assignment
- **Presentations:** students showing and explaining a piece of their work to their class
- **Student demonstrations:** students show what they have learned for educators to determine if they have met learning objectives or standards
- **Peer-to-peer teaching:** students assume the role of an educator to share their knowledge with other students
- **Reflective journaling:** more than a learning log, it is a place for students to record their progress in their learning journey; it steadily grows over time
- **Summative assessment:** measuring student learning at the end of a unit comparing it to benchmarks or standards

Step 4:

LIFELONG LEARNING

Using a digital portfolio in a blended learning environment helps students take ownership of their learning, stay engaged, and teaches them the necessary skills for lifelong learning. A digital portfolio is the students' space to see their learning and to have a voice and choice in how to engage with topics, which helps them learn and master each concept in the best way for them.

There are several ways to measure the success of a blended learning environment using digital portfolios. Below is a short list of results educators can track and measure using a digital portfolio. The links provided are examples, case studies, and samples of student work.

- ✓ **Whole child approach:** ensures each student is healthy, safe, engaged, challenged, and supported through creating a sustainable environment for long-term success
- ✓ **College-prepared:** ensures students have cognitive strategies, content knowledge, self-management skills, and are knowledgeable about post secondary options
- ✓ **Workforce-ready:** connecting what students are learning in the classroom to everyday, workforce settings
- ✓ **Social/Emotional Wellbeing:** ensuring each student is aware of their mental health (how they think, feel, and behave) and how to support their own healthy mental habits
- ✓ **Physical Health:** educating students about their minds and their bodies, providing the skills needed to maintain physical wellness
- ✓ **Academically-motivated:** when a student is intrinsically motivated to take ownership of their learning
- ✓ **Goal setting & tracking:** digital portfolios are ideal for tracking the progress of soft skills over time

Conclusion

If educators determine a blended learning environment best fits their school's needs, introducing a digital portfolio program is an easy, impactful way to help students and educators thrive within the environment.

From completing assignments to taking notes, from group projects to personalized feedback, digital portfolios capture it all. Digital portfolios streamline processes, become the central place for educators to track each student's learning, and become a platform for students to have a voice and choice in their learning.

To experience first-hand how digital portfolios optimize blended learning environments, create your [free bulb digital portfolio](#) today.

About [bulb](#) Digital Portfolios:

bulb is a digital portfolio used worldwide by students to build skills for the future, by teachers to measure competencies, and by districts to meet learning goals. bulb is ad-free, meets data privacy policies, and integrates with most LMS and SIS systems.

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