

REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

Advisor's Guide to personal growth and leadership development

Lesson Number: **RNH.4.2**

Building a Portfolio

Purpose:

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to the use of portfolios and help them begin to develop one of their own.

Quick Reference:

Time Required:

60 minutes

Objectives:

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Define a portfolio and tell what it is used for.
2. Discuss how to prepare a portfolio and what it should contain.
3. Assemble a portfolio for themselves.

Materials:

- ✓ Student résumés – (create prior to this lesson) – one per student
- ✓ Folders or binders – one per student

Directions:

1. Ask students to get out their résumés.
 - a. Ask students if their resumes accurately and fully describe them.
 - i. The answer will probably be “no.”
 - b. Tell students that many people (students and adults alike) assemble personal portfolios to go beyond their résumés and help people better understand their talents, skills, and accomplishments.
 - c. Portfolios offer proof of what you can do and what you have accomplished.
 - d. More and more, employers are asking for portfolios in addition to résumés and today the students will start developing portfolios of their own.
2. Explain to students that portfolios can take many different shapes and sizes. A portfolio should be as individual as the person it represents.
 - a. Regardless of its size or shape, a portfolio should contain “artifacts” or items that help explain a person’s skills, abilities, and interests.
 - i. These artifacts can include photographs, newspaper clippings, audio or videotapes, completed assignments or exams of which you are particularly proud, etc.—anything that will fit and help describe you!





- b. Explain that a portfolio is somewhat like a scrapbook of their abilities, accomplishments, and goals. However, instead of a collection of memories, a portfolio contains items that convey specific messages about them to prospective employers or educators.
 - c. Portfolios should be organized and purposeful, and they should contain self-reflection for every entry.
3. Here is a general outline of items students might include in their portfolios. Depending upon the position sought, the portfolio could have additional, more specialized materials.
 - a. Cover letter stating the purpose of the portfolio
 - b. Statement of goals (short-term, medium-term, and long-term)
 - c. Résumé
 - d. Educational background (schools attended, courses completed, grades earned, etc.)
 - e. Activities
 - f. Accomplishments
 - g. Work samples
 - h. Photos of relevant work performance or activities
4. Students may want to use tabs to create distinct sections in their portfolios.
 - a. As an example, they may have an education tab behind which is a list of schools attended, courses completed, grades earned, and completed assignments or exams of which they are proud.
 - b. They may have an FFA tab that includes copies of award certificates, photos that show them participating in activities, a convention program, etc.
 - c. They may have a landscape design tab with printouts of their landscape designs and photos of landscapes on which they have worked.
5. Ask students to begin assembling their portfolios by collecting the items they want to place in them and developing a cover letter.
 - a. Spend a little bit of class time to get everyone rolling, then check on their progress periodically throughout the course.
 - b. Encourage the students to really get creative and personalize their portfolios.
 - i. They can create special cover art as well as section dividers.
 - c. You may want to have everyone turn their portfolios in for evaluation at the end of the course.



Connection Questions:

1. How might the materials in a firefighter's portfolio differ from that of a teacher's portfolio?
2. Think about your dream career/job.
 - a. What are some of the experiences you will need to have in order to prepare you for the position?
 - b. How will you highlight those experiences in a portfolio?

LifeKnowledge Connections:

Precept(s) Addressed:

Vision

- C1. Contemplate the future.
- C2. Conceptualize ideas.
- C3. Demonstrate courage to take risks.
- C4. Adapt to opportunities and obstacles from multiple perspectives.

Personal Growth

- I2. Make clear decisions in my professional life.
- I5. Demonstrate exemplary employability skills.

Communications

- M1. Demonstrates technical and business writing skills.
- M2. Demonstrates professional job-seeking skills.

Flexibility/Adaptability

- O3. Reacts with openness to feedback and professional growth opportunities.

LK Lesson Suggestion:



HS.37 – Developing a Résumé

AHS.18 – Managing Change in Career



Appropriate Cover Letter

April 20, 2011

Tractor Supply Company
Attn: HR Specialist
320 Plus Park Blvd.
Nashville, TN 37217

Re: Retail Store Manager

Dear Sir or Madam:

This letter is in response to your ad in the *Tyler Courier Telegraph* for a retail store manager. As you see from the enclosed résumé, I have worked in sales and customer service for several years. I have experience in inventory control, cost control and multi-project management. Anticipating and solving problems is one of my strengths. In addition, I have several years of experience using laptop and personal computers and am proficient in Microsoft Word and Excel.

At first glance, my résumé might indicate job instability. However, this is not the case. Rather, I was working in an unstable industry. I am anxious to secure a position in a stable environment where I can apply my sales, customer relations and managerial skills. I am willing to relocate anywhere in the central or western United States.

I appreciate any consideration you might extend me concerning a retail store manager position. I look forward to discussing the options in depth with you soon.

Best regards,



Inappropriate Cover Letter

Dear Sir:

Just by reading you're ad I know I am the one who can do the job you require. I am successful simply because I don't give up.

I am at a time in life when I am very concerded about this nation. Although, "the job comes first," I only want to work with people who share my conservative beliefs. I am a success, but need encouragement from co-workers to help return the USA to its former glory.

I am enclosing a resume and an article that I have written and truly stand behind. Hope to hear from you real soon.

Sincerely yours,