Putting Together a Portfolio of Work
Adams State College Master of Arts in Education

What is a portfolio of work?
- It is a series of examples of professional work that gives evidence to your continued
growth throughout the Master’s Degree program.
- It gives evidence to your growth in professional practice.
- It creatively documents and organizes your work.
- It highlights professional achievements in relation to the learning from your classes.
- It is a RANGE of work that gives evidence to your growth as a professional.
- It is a compilation of class projects and history of your growth, experiences and
accomplishments;
- Could include reflective comments so that the reviewers understand how your degree
came together with enhanced practice.
- It is a collected example of your work and a way to showcase your talents as an
educational professional.
- This is not a retrospective of everything that you have ever done! It is a compilation of
things that go together around a common theme. i.e. curriculum, ESL practices,
leadership, etc. Keep it appropriate and cohesive.

How do I go about organizing my portfolio?
- Lay out all of your work and decide what samples best represent the work that you have done and
the growth that you have achieved.
- Ask yourself this question: What kind of professional am I and how do I best represent that
through my work?
- Try to look at your work as if you were looking through someone else’s eyes? Is it
understandable, clear, professionally sound and worthy of inclusion?
- Choose 10-20 of your best work samples (class projects, lesson planning, work on special
assignments). Choose artifacts to go with those samples, if applicable or possible.
- Choose an organizational method that is comfortable for you. Some examples might be:

1. **Organize by classes.** Use projects and work samples for each of the classes that you have taken. Reflect on where you started and where you ended up as far as professional growth.

2. **Organize by demonstration goals.** You would choose or organize around these goals, including
all or most of the goals. Or, you could use class goals, or professional goals. Some examples of
demonstration goals would be:
   a. Demonstrate continued improvement of professional practice that requires critical
      inquiry, professional development, and reflective practice. Some things that you might
      include in this category are: membership and involvement in professional organizations,
      project report on a professional presentation, literature review and or critique, collection
      and evaluation of your own work).
   
   b. Demonstrate how you design instruction or human performance strategies to meet the
      needs of learners. (i.e. analysis, of problem situations, design of instructional strategy or
      of curriculum and its components that are consistent with the learning situation and/or
      district or building curriculum goals, experience as a facilitator or deliverer of knowledge
      and higher level thinking skills.
   
   c. Demonstrate uses of a variety of media to deliver and/or design instruction or content and
      engage students in learning (e.g. samples of tools and technologies designed to meet
      specific objectives and specific needs)
   
   d. Demonstrate an understanding of how to capitalize on the capacities or capabilities on
      each learner (e.g. product or project which accommodates the special social, intellectual,
cultural, environmental and institutional aspects of the learners and their learning situation.)

e. Demonstrate how you have managed complex projects and resources in support of learning and/or curriculum development (e.g. project report on a leadership role in a situation which resulted in individual or organizational learning).

f. Demonstrate how you use incisive and relevant assessment and evaluation techniques (e.g. product or project which uses formative and or summative evaluation or design of a specific evaluation instrument to evaluate a project and/or its components.

3. Organize by the “culling method”.
   - Put together a “working set” of all of your work throughout the duration of your Master’s degree work. Throw in everything you think of as good, solid work.
   - Now begin to slowly cull out the weaker work. Throw out a few pieces. Come back a day or two later and throw out a few more. Get the work down to 10-20 pieces that you really like.
   - Find a common theme in the work. Is it very reflective of what you learned? Can you write a reflective piece that shows your growth? Can you find other artifacts that support the work (e.g., student papers, art work, comments from other professionals, etc.)
   - Wait a while and put it together in an organized way.
   - In the culling process, get other people’s input. You do not have to let them eliminate a piece of work, just let them identify those pieces that they like less well. Take their input as suggestions, not mandates.

4. The Build-Up Method
   - In the “build-up method, you organize by starting at the “other end”, the hits, the greatest things that you have ever done. These would include the best lesson plans, the best curricular designs, the best examples of a class project, etc. There may be only a few of these.
   - Then, study this group of work and take your cues from it, sorting through the rest of your work to find examples, evidence, projects that look good with this core body of work.
   - Look for work until you find 10-20 pieces that show your best professional side.
   - Write a reflective piece about what you discovered in this process.

Some Pitfalls to Watch Out For:
   - Did you discover that you did not have enough “good solid work” to put into a portfolio? What did that tell you? What will you need to do?
   - Don’t try to organize haphazardly. You must be able to see a common theme or a logical way of organizing or it detracts from the strength of the work.
   - Do you have too much of the same thing? Too many lesson plans or curriculum designs that simply show one side of your work or a limited variety of methodology or learning?
   - Did you have a goal as you set out? A level of expectation as to what it should look like and reflect about your professional practice?

And then:
Put it together in a binder of your choosing. Make sure it is clearly marked with your name, the purpose, etc. Make it a fun project and then sit back and reflect on the whole experience of the Endorsement. Recognize the work that you have done and the growth that you have achieved. Celebrate through the development of this portfolio and even better professional!