

# The Benefits of Integrating ePortfolios Into Reading Small Group Sessions

## **-ROUGH DRAFT-**

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For many years students have been using types of journals and interactive notebooks to document their learning. As education incorporates more technology and teachers learn new online and digital strategies for teaching, we can now have our students track their assignments through online ePortfolios to show proof of learning. This publication will look at the basics of an ePortfolio and how it can be used in the classroom as teachers implement their Reading small group station rotations and the benefits of self-regulated learning as students monitor their own growth.


### **How can teachers use a digital ePortfolio in small groups for student data tracking?**


We have often wondered how teachers can track student data in a more efficient way during small groups. Too often we have found ourselves tracking student's learning during a small group session, when we should have been talking to them about their data. When students begin to reflect on their own data they will also begin to take ownership of their learning.

Implementing these resources with students is a process that won't happen overnight. Educators should be patient and give themselves grace as the students learn the importance of progress monitoring. These next five steps will help with implementing student data tracking more fluidly.

### **Step 1) Find a good tracking document.**

By implementing some sort of tracking document on the students' devices, it allows teachers to hold students accountable because they aren't tracking 22-35 student's reading data on their own. The students are easily able to pull up their own data sheets as they come to small group sessions to discuss and conference with their teachers which allows for better time management.

 Reading Stamina Chart [Stamina Chart Video](#)

 Reading Level -Student Tracking [Reading Level Tracking Video](#)

### **2) Implement student accountability.**

Students will need an accountability partner. These partners will help each other reflect and set reading goals and make better reading choices. Accountability partners will take the most time to establish, so start small with just a couple students and use them to model for the class.

The first six weeks are important for establishing accountability and it starts in a small group with the teacher and then the students will be given accountability partners once you feel they are ready. Teachers will model being an accountability partner by reviewing student tracking sheets, goals and written responses with students. If students aren't held accountable from the beginning, routines will not be established and it will be difficult for students to see they are in charge of their own learning.

### **3) Introduce a rubric system.**

Similar to step two, creating a rubric will help students understand how to streamline their thoughts while staying focused on the objective. A rubric is also an efficient way of fairly grading student ePortfolios without leaving room for too much personal sway and objectiveness. Depending on the topic and content area, complexity of the assignment, and the detail of each requirement then the rubric can help with grading a wide variety of digital assignments.

Students will be successful when they realize that they are in charge of their own learning.

### **4) Select appropriate apps for differentiated learning, progress monitoring, and communication.**

Finding the right apps for your students can be the most challenging. There are multiple programs that allow for students to complete assignments or read during small groups. ePortfolios (tracking sheets) are available for communicating with students, parents, team and/or administrators. Many of these apps also allow for parents to view their students assignments and also monitor and communicate with the teacher from home.

For submitting assignments some top choices are:

- Google Drive: Docs, Sheets, Pages, etc.
- Seesaw
- Canvas

Online ePortfolios and Websites:

- Wix
- Weebly
- Google Sites

Reading:

- Newslea: [Website](#)
- Epic: [How students can change Epic! reading levels](#)
- Learning A-Z : [Website](#)

We also love following [Dr. Catlin Tucker](#) for innovative ways to implement blended learning in our classrooms.

### **Step 5) Facilitate learning.**

Effective facilitation is the key to successful learning! A common misconception is that once students are on their way to developing their products then teachers get to sit back and get other tasks done. While letting go of total control and creating an environment of student-led learning, the teacher actually plays a key role in the facilitative process. Teachers should remain engaged, ask questions, continue to monitor progress, and redirect when necessary. The teacher's role is to make sure the students have context for their ePortfolio, a clear understanding of the expectations (rubric), while still having the freedom to make the learning their own.

When using these 5 steps, we hope that teachers will be able to create a more digital and technology-based classroom where they can keep track of the students' digital assignments and have multiple ways for students to monitor their own progress. Instructors can reinforce learning and help students become active participants in the educational process by using digital portfolios or ePortfolios. An ePortfolio allows students to capture learning in many forms to document their work and become creators of knowledge rather than just consumers of information. (Russell, 2018).

On top of all of this, one of the most important things for educators to keep in mind is a positive mindset toward digital integrations. Doing so will project them on a successful path with their students. The ability of teachers to collaborate, learn, and grow with the students will help establish new digital trends & maximize student engagement to kick-start empowerment through digital learning. You can do it!

## **References:**

Russell, A. (2018). Digital Portfolios: A Method to Assess Student Understanding. *Radiologic Technology*, 90(2), 183–186.

### **Bios:**



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