

PROfiler

*products resources opportunities
personal portfolio and filing system*

Institute on Community Integration, UAP



The College of Education
& Human Development

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WHAT IS THE P.R.O. FILER?

The P.R.O.filer is a personal portfolio and filing system that is designed to help all students —

- Learn how to organize important documents.
- Keep records of school and community learning opportunities.
- Create a personal portfolio to showcase their accomplishments.

By using the P.R.O.filer, students will learn to develop the skills they need to manage their own personal filing system. They will also have their most valuable information and accomplishments right at their fingertips to share with others as they pursue their future goals. The P.R.O.filer —

- Gives students a way to select and save important documents and information.
- Can be customized, individualized, and is evolutionary in nature.
- Can be used as part of a curriculum in a classroom or as a training tool in any setting with students.

The P.R.O.filer system also provides a valuable resource for educators and other professionals as they help students to plan for their futures. This portfolio and filing system is designed to build off of the School-to-What? Check it Out! Day Planner Inserts and Personal Asset & Goal Setting Sheet.

WHO CAN USE THE P.R.O. FILER?

The P.R.O.filer is designed for use by all students. However, anyone could benefit from using this system — even adults! Some students may need assistance in starting and then maintaining their personal portfolio. Identifying who will do this is an important step in the process. This system can also be adapted for those students who are non-readers, have visual impairments, or who speak English as a second language.

WHEN SHOULD WE START USING THE P.R.O. FILER?

Best practice indicates that students should begin using this planning system no later than age 14 or 9th grade. This can be used as early as kindergarten, with teachers and parents beginning the process, and then working with students to gradually hand over the responsibility and ownership of the portfolio.

Each student's personal portfolio will grow and expand throughout their high school life. In all likelihood, it will go through several major revisions as students decide what they want to include and as new or updated information replaces the old.

A process for transferring the use of the personal portfolio from middle or junior high school to senior high school needs to be in place so that files do not disappear during this transition.



WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT?

The P.R.O.filer is a tool that —

- Supports empowerment and self-advocacy on the part of young adults.
- Gives students a tangible, concrete product to use in planning for and achieving their future goals.
- Provides a structure for organizing information that, once started, can be used throughout their lifetime.
- Provides a way for students to “showcase” their work — a way to ensure that they can share their achievements and accomplishments with others.

This tool provides staff with an invaluable way to support students in planning and preparing for the future. It is wonderful and rewarding to see students taking ownership of their personal portfolio and begin to use it independently.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE P.R.O. FILER?

Each P.R.O.filer consists of a personal portfolio and filing system for each student. The P.R.O.filer contains the following 11 sections —

1. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Sports achievement and recognition (both school and community-based involvement).
- School and community clubs (positions held, examples of work).
- Education (reports, papers, projects).
- Fine Arts (music, drawings, performances).
- Other (anything you are especially proud of!).

2. EDUCATION

- Education records (transcripts or academic records).
- Diploma (certificate of completion).
- Assessments and test scores (interest inventories, PSATS).
- Applications to post-secondary schools (examples, copies of those sent).
- Individual Education Plan (copies of originals).

3. FINANCIAL

- Credit card accounts and information.
- Bills (loans, credit, residential information).
- Banking (checking, savings, loans, bank statements).
- Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (records, documents).
- Income tax forms (copy).
- Estate planning (wills, trusts, legal documents).
- Supported income documents (food stamps, general assistance, A.F.D.C.).

4. MEDICAL

- Medical and dental information (insurance, benefits, contact information).
- Names of health care providers (doctor, hospital, dentist).
- Medical records (health history, procedures).
- Medical Assistance information (copy).
- Other health-related services (chemical dependency, mental health services).

5. OTHER

- Miscellaneous paperwork and items.
- Thank you cards and letters.

6. PERSONAL

- Birth certificate (copy).
- Social Security card (copy).
- State picture ID (copy).
- Driver's license (copy).
- Voter registration card (copy).
- Marriage license (copy).

7. RECREATION AND LEISURE

- Health club information.
- Community education.
- Library information.
- Parks and community centers.
- Adaptive recreation information.
- Community organizations and clubs.

8. RESIDENCE

- Independent living options and services (apartments, agencies).
- Rental information (lease agreements, brochures).
- Warranties and repair information.
- Receipts for household purchases.
- Handbooks for appliances.
- Subsidized housing information.

9. SUPPORT SERVICES

- Legal resources and services.
- Police, fire, and emergency contacts.
- Social services information.
- Homeless and temporary shelter resources.

10. TRANSPORTATION

- Public transportation (bus schedules, taxi numbers).
- Car records (payments, insurance, tabs).
- Safety information.
- Carpooling and ride share.
- Mobility training, information.

11. VOCATIONAL/WORK

- Resume (disk, original, and additional copies).
- Applications for employment (samples, copies of applications submitted).
- Job information (check stubs, employment handbook, benefits)
- Unemployment and workers compensation information.
- Volunteer and community service records.
- Internship records and information.
- Career interest assessments and information.
- Employment agency support information (supported employment, vocational services and training, Division of Rehabilitation Services).

This planning system promotes flexibility and creativity — two of the best attributes to have present when creating a personal portfolio! It can be used in a wide variety of settings and by people in many different roles — from a homeroom teacher, to individual future planning sessions, by career guidance counselors, to open study hall.

The key to developing a really wonderful personal portfolio is to understand the importance of each section provided within this product and to encourage full exploration of these by students.

Anyone can help students develop their personal portfolio —

- A teacher, guidance counselor, or other support person who knows the individual student well.
- A work experience teacher, business mentor, guidance counselor, or individual plan case manager.
- A parent or family member.
- A community education staff person.
- Anyone else who knows the student.

Developing and using the personal portfolio can be done anywhere —

- In homeroom.
- In study hall.
- Through independent study.
- Career counseling sessions.
- Individual Futures Plan meetings.
- Independently at home.
- As part of the curriculum in certain classes that are tied to the community, to business, or to career and futures exploration.
- As part of a project to meet certain graduation standards.
- Through Community Education classes.

WHAT ARE SOME BASIC STEPS FOR GETTING STARTED?

The key to getting started is to tap into your own common sense and creativity! The following checklist is intended as a guideline ONLY. Feel free to add, delete, and customize this list to match your plan for developing personal portfolios with all of your students.

CHECKLIST TO GET READY

DECIDE ON A LOCATION

Decide upon a forum or place where you will help students begin developing their portfolios. Pick a place that allows consistent and ongoing support to be provided to students until they get their portfolios started and assembled. This might be in a regular study hall, a course you teach, or through a career exploration class.

UNDERSTAND THE PORTFOLIO AND ITS SECTIONS

Go through the portfolio sections and make sure you understand each section and the content in that section so that you can explain these to students.

COLLECT AND GATHER EXAMPLES OF ITEMS TO KEEP IN EACH SECTION

One way to do this would be to develop your own portfolio to share with students — one that houses all of your critical information, awards, and best work. Don't ask students to share something or collect information that you wouldn't be willing to do yourself!

ASK STUDENTS TO PURCHASE A PORTFOLIO CASE

This can be a plastic file box with a lid and handle — or any other type of storage case can be used to house the P.R.O. filer. These can be found at office supply stores or local discount department stores. The portfolio should be something that will store not only documents, but also examples of awards or artwork – in other words – three-dimensional examples of student accomplishments!

DEVELOP A HANDOUT FOR EACH SECTION OF THE PORTFOLIO

Develop a handout or guideline sheet for each section of the personal portfolio explaining its purpose, content, and providing some examples. Although you have an overall guideline that can be inserted into the front of each student's portfolio as an index, it is good to also have a detailed outline for each section. You may only want to introduce one or two sections per meeting time, and student homework and assignments can revolve around creating each section and sharing it with their peers.

STORE ITEMS ON COMPUTER DISK

If possible, explore the option of creating and storing documents on a computer disk. Items such as a resume or reports and papers can be developed and stored on the disk. The disk can then become part of the portfolio with its own storage area and will allow for updating of important information as students progress through their future planning.

FILING SYSTEM FOR INFORMATION

Each section of the portfolio will continue to grow as students progress through experiences and mapping out their future plans. You may want to encourage students to use some type of filing mechanism for storing items such as brochures, handouts, and resources within each section of the portfolio case. Options include pocket or manila folders or two-pocket folders that can hold different types of information.

DATE ALL MATERIAL

Consider having students date all materials they want to keep in their portfolio. A small adhesive sticker indicating the date received is recommended for brochures and handouts. Pencil can also be used for dating purposes to avoid having to use correction fluid or multiple stickers.

COLOR-CODE THE SYSTEM

Another option is to assign a color to each major section of the portfolio. Plain stickers can be used for labeling and students can color the top of labels with permanent felt-tip markers — a different color used on folders within each section of the portfolio. This allows for a broad array of colors and sections to be used. It also helps to color code brochures and other information so that they are returned to the correct section in the portfolio. Using folders of different color within each section is another option.

USE THREE-RING BINDER DIVIDERS

Another option for color-coding is to use three-ring binder dividers to separate categorical information within each section. As the portfolio grows more comprehensive over time, separate three-ring binders may need to be established for housing certain categories that may have large amounts of information, as it may outgrow the actual portfolio case. Color code binders to match specific sections in the portfolio.

UPDATE THE P.R.O.FILER

The portfolio should be cleaned out and updated at least quarterly, maintaining only the most essential and up-to-date information within the actual portfolio case itself.

STUDENT MATERIALS CHECKLIST

- Plastic file box or similar case for portfolio development and storage.
- Colored three-ring binder indexes, manila file folders, two-pocket folders, or folders of different colors for information storage within sections.
- Pocket-style, top-loading sheet protectors, manila file folders, or two-pocket folders for information storage.
- Multi-colored markers for color coding.
- Sticky labels for labeling.



STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS WITH STUDENTS

INTRODUCE THE P.R.O.FILER TO STUDENTS

Encourage students to think about the positive outcomes of having an organized system to keep track of their important papers, essential documents, and best accomplishments.

PERSONALIZE THE P.R.O.FILER WITH STUDENTS

Have students personalize their portfolio by putting their name on the box in permanent marker. You may want to spend time letting students develop a design and look for the outside of their portfolio case.

REVIEW THE SECTIONS OF THE P.R.O.FILER

Go through the system in a general way, highlighting the sections that will be worked on. Give each student their own copy of the sections that will shape their personal portfolio and have them insert these sections into their portfolio case.

COLOR-CODE STORAGE FOLDERS AND INSERT INTO P.R.O.FILER CASE

Provide a stack of folders to each student (manila, two-pocket, or whatever you have chosen) and have them adhere labels to the folders. Each main section of the portfolio such as Personal Information, Education, or Financial has been color-coded with a tab. Have students color-code about five manila or two-pocket folders in the same color as each main section. Insert these color-coded folders behind each main section insert. Additional manila or two-pocket folders can be labeled later, as information is collected and inserted.

CHOOSE ONE—TWO SECTIONS TO START

Choose only a few sections at a time. Build your curriculum and class assignments around these areas. Each area could take one–three days (or more) to complete, depending on the students and the setting in which this is being taught. The overall goal and project for the class is to develop a complete personal portfolio and filing system and to then share this with other members of the class. Tie this project into graduation standards for your school and state, if at all possible. Class interaction and discussion can revolve around building their portfolios. Community-based experiences can also be connected to building the portfolio and learning to build each section within their portfolio.

HELP STUDENTS LEARN TO MAINTAIN AND UPDATE THEIR PORTFOLIOS

Part of learning to develop and use a personal portfolio and filing system is learning how to keep it updated and current, so that it is always useful throughout our lives. Teach students about the value of cleaning out their portfolio case on a regular basis and model through example. Show them your portfolio, share when you add things, and share when you are removing items. Have students do this with you as they move through the process of developing their portfolio. Also, consider teaching students how to determine what type of information should be stored where so that they learn how to file and find critical information.

AND IN THE END...

Once the P.R.O.filer system is developed, the process of maintaining it is really one of using “the teachable moment.” As students progress through the education system and prepare to move into adult life, there will be countless moments when teachers, parents, administrators, guidance counselors, business mentors, and others can support students in maintaining their portfolio. We can help by suggesting that students keep something in their portfolio — an example of outstanding work or a great accomplishment — or to look for information to add to their portfolio.

Developing this system not only on a school-wide basis, but in all schools and grades throughout your district or community will help this to become a systemic change agent. It will help students to realize their potential, to identify their greatest assets and skills, and to build upon these with tangible results, through their personal portfolio!

Good luck!



