
PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT: ADVANTAGES FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Pat Belanoff, SUNY at Stony Brook

Marcia Dickson, The Ohio State University
at Marion

Although our title indicated that our talk would focus on praising portfolio assessment, we decided that a question-and-answer period which addressed issues raised by other portfolio sessions at the conference would be more useful. We asked the audience to formulate questions about portfolio assessment, identified the most important (or at least the most asked about) issues, and set about creating a dialogue between the two of us and members of the audience. In brief, teachers and administrators seemed most concerned about establishing reliability and validity in scoring, devising means for preventing

plagiarism, overcoming faculty fears that portfolio assessment will compromise their authority as graders, and developing coherent systems which will address the needs of individual composition programs. Although our discussion was primarily concerned with exit and proficiency testing, many teachers expressed interest in using portfolios in the classroom to diagnose and follow the overall development of student writing ability. It became obvious that a significant number of the members of our audience already had experience with portfolio assessment, and we found that this experience was as helpful to us as we hope it was to the other participants.

Feedback from our audience indicated that the dialogue provided both support for ongoing programs and answers to questions proposed by those who are considering portfolio assessment. This leads us to feel that more sessions which promote problem-solving dialogues between those who have established portfolio assessment programs and those who are planning to create them would be of infinite value to NTNW members in the future.