

**Institute for Christian Teaching
Educational Department of Seventh-day Adventists**

**Portfolio: A Practical Aid to Assess the Fulfillment of a
University Mission Statement**

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A Brief History of Portfolios

Portfolios have been used in the United States during the last 10 years to provide an alternate or additional way to evaluate students' skill, growth, or progress in certain areas of their education. "Portfolios offer the opportunity for students of any age, from prekindergarten to adult, to showcase their accomplishments in any language and through multiple means. They serve as a guide for students in making choices and in demonstrating how they reason, create, strategize, and reflect." (Gottlieb, 1995)¹

A portfolio is a collection of student work demonstrating abilities, experiences, and growth in personal, educational, and professional skills. It can be "a compendium of work in any format". (Gordon, 1994)² Portfolios may consist of written work, work presented in cassette tape, video, or pictures, etc. It may include student classwork, challenges to belief systems and documentation of the students response to these challenges. It may also include items employers may be interested in, such as examples of teamwork, communication skills, problem-solving, and critical thinking. (Lankes, 1998)³

Usually, the contents of a portfolio are chosen by the student and the professor in order to reflect the student's experience and skills. The use of portfolios encourages the student to assume more responsibility for their education and the documentation of what they have learned. Frequently, portfolios reflect academic and extracurricular activity. The collection should occur over a period of time according to Hamm and Adams (1992)⁴ as "the purpose is to gain a more accurate understanding of student's work, development, and growth."

As the largest school on the Loma Linda University (LLU) campus, the School of Allied Health Professions (SAHP) admitted 951 students into our programs in the fall of

1997. Portfolio Practicum I & II is our adaptation of portfolio to meet the assessment/evaluation of Loma Linda University's and the School of Allied Health Professions goals for our students. Portfolio Practicum I and II also are used to promote intellectual, emotional/relational, physical, and spiritual growth in our students. The School realized that it was easy for students to be totally focused on their specialty areas and forget other important aspects of their education and life at LLU.

Land (1997)⁵ states, "Schools appear increasingly focused on pre-professional and professional programs that emphasize skills and narrowly focused knowledge rather than issues relating to meaning and value." Being oriented to training medical professionals we realized that our programs are very intense and very specific. Because the Motto of Loma Linda University is "To Make Man Whole", and the University Mission Statement is based on the idea of "wholeness," we wanted our students to look beyond the confines of their professions, to reflect on what it means to be "whole," and emphasize how commitment to the values espoused in the Mission Statement and Motto brings meaning to a Christian health professional's care giving abilities.

Portfolio Practicum I & II allows us to focus attention on the LLU Motto, "To Make Man Whole", and the 14 goals an ideal graduate from the SAHP would demonstrate.

School of Allied Health Professions 14 Goals

1. Demonstrate clinical competence in his/her chosen profession.
2. Conduct him/herself in a highly ethical manner.
3. Demonstrate compassion for others in the manner of Christ.
4. Clarify his/her values and attitudes of human worth in relationship to his/her understanding of God.

5. Interact effectively with members of the health team and the community.
6. Communicate effectively, orally and in writing, with peers, supervisors, patients, family and the community, with sensitivity to nonverbal communication.
7. Analyze and respond to the changing field of health care.
8. Critically analyze data.
9. Read and interpret research papers.
10. Contribute to the chosen health profession through membership in professional organization(s).
11. Utilize a theoretical foundation as a basis of treatment or management.
12. Balance work, rest, and leisure within a spiritual atmosphere.
13. Be sensitive and accommodate cultural diversity among individuals.
14. Commit to long-term personal and professional growth.

This essay discusses Portfolio as one way the SAHP is attempting to meet its goals and fulfill the Mission Statement of the University, the reason this program was chosen, how we implemented it, and a brief evaluation of our experience.

Why Portfolio?

Cindy Malinowski, a professor in the Emergency Medical Care program, did the initial research and study into portfolios and felt that this was a viable method that could be adapted for our use in the School of Allied Health Professions. After discussion with the Dean of the School of Allied Health Professions, Dr. Joyce Hopp, we felt that portfolio could be used to fulfill and evaluate our goals for several reasons:

- Having students create something that they could take with them would provide more of a concrete, memorable effect. It would not just provide us with “statistics” that would measure the fulfillment of the goals but provide documentation that the student could show to prospective employers, etc.
- By using portfolio students within the different programs could meet the goals using a variety of methods and at different levels.
- Students would be able to show individual differences and demonstrate different mastery levels of the required activities or skills.
- Portfolio could be molded to varying formats and uses, and provide greater flexibility than other options.

A Description of Portfolio Practicum I and II

We developed the Portfolio Practicum I and II (formerly called Junior and Senior Portfolio) to assess and assist students in becoming the kind of graduate that the SAHP desires. Occurring outside the traditional religion classes, Portfolio Practicum gives the students the opportunity and encouragement to develop wholeness within their disciplines and challenges them to reflect on and evaluate their beliefs.

As Portfolio Practicum I and II were developed, ten of the SAHP goals were assigned to Portfolio Practicum I, (numbers 1-4, 6, and 10-14), taken by our Associate of Science (two year degree) and Bachelor of Science (four year degree) students, and the remaining four (numbers 5, 7-9) to Portfolio Practicum II taken by Bachelor of Science students only. Portfolio Practicum II is very similar to Portfolio Practicum I but includes more work on

goals numbered 1-4, 6, and 10-14, at a higher level requirement. In this paper I will address only Portfolio Practicum I.

As Associate of Science students may not have time to complete all 14 goals during their program, we decided to allow them to complete only Portfolio Practicum I. This will cover ten of the fourteen goals. A Bachelor of Science student will complete all fourteen goals by registering and participating in both Portfolio Practicum I and II.

Portfolio Practicum I

Portfolio Practicum I is structured around a one hour orientation where the concept and definition of “wholeness” is presented, plus five two-hour seminars. During the one hour orientation students are oriented to the syllabus and the criteria required for completion of the class. Samples of previously completed portfolios are available to provide ideas of how they may choose to proceed.

The seminars cover five topics: Balance, Communication, Teamwork, Diversity, Compassion/Human Worth. Each seminar is a starting point to assist and encourage students to look at the goals and the requirements needed to complete them. Assignments are explained and suggestions of how to meet the requirements are given. These seminars occur over the space of three or four quarters depending on the specific program. During each quarter the seminar is given at least twice to accommodate schedules and reduce seminar size. A description of each seminar is as follows:

- **Balance**: This seminar includes topics that cover a student’s personal and professional life. These topics include stress management, exercise and leisure activities, time management, and

developing and maintaining one's personal spiritual growth. Students are asked to assess their own lifestyles and respond to such questions as: Do I really put the most important things first in my life? Do I spend time pursuing personal spiritual growth? How can I keep the pressures of life in perspective? Writing personal and professional goals is discussed and encouraged.

- **Communication**: This seminar stresses communicating professional and compassionately with diverse clients/patients and peers. The students are exposed to communication challenges occurring in the health profession. Non-verbal communication behaviors and how they affect communication and relationship are also examined. In the 1997-98 school year a personality test was completed and the results and their implications for communication were discussed. Other activities include giving an oral presentation to a group (usually within their program), and an evaluation of their writing skills.
- **Teamwork**: This seminar focuses on leadership and group process. Activities that challenge and require teamwork are practiced (played) and discussed during this seminar. This content may overlap with the communication goal.
- **Diversity**: During the diversity seminar interacting with diverse groups of individuals with respect to socio-economic status, physical and mental disabilities, religion, culture, and ethnicity is discussed. Students beliefs are challenged. The major assigned activity includes a visit to the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles (a museum filled with information, pictures, and artifacts from the Holocaust, plus an area that tests a person's beliefs about diversity, and

information on other genocidal activity going on around the world at the moment) and the writing of a reaction paper to the experience. (Interestingly, while this was the most complained about activity, it has become the one where the students, in their reaction papers, frequently stated that it was a life changing experience for them.)¹⁸

- Compassion/Human Worth: The compassion seminar looks to biblical examples of compassion and a discussion on human worth and its implications for compassionate behavior. Compassion vs. detachment in the workplace is discussed. (During the most recent offering of this seminar the discussion was very heated because of belief by some students that they should not become involved with their patients/clients and needed to remain detached in order to provide care.) The activity required to complete this goal is 15 hours of community service. This content may overlap with diversity and communication.

All the seminars are conducted by SAHP faculty, faculty of religion, and topic specialists from either within the university or on a contract basis. These five seminars cover six SAHP goals. The remaining four goals of Portfolio Practicum I are met in the specific programs and through a Christian ethics class required by all SAHP programs. All record keeping is done via the faculty involved with portfolio and a graduate assistant from the Department of Psychology in the Graduate School.

¹⁸ In the student's reaction paper they were asked to share what their experience at the museum were like, what really surprised them, what disappointed them, what their feelings were, and how this experience changed them. and why/why not.

Evaluation

The 1997-98 school year was the second year we used the program. During this time we have learned many things about portfolio and our students. Our program also grew very quickly during these two years. We started the first year with students from 3 programs within the school, giving us approximately 50-60 students. This past year we had 9 programs with 260 students taking part in Portfolio I and II. The fast and continued growth has provided us with the logistical nightmare of trying to schedule seminars at times that fit into everyone's schedule. This has proved to be a major problem, but we are improving our scheduling tactics.

The first year we ran the program we had a good response from the students. They indicated to the faculty that the program was beneficial to them.

The second year was a great learning experience. We added many programs and because of the size of the classes and the variety of programs represented, we didn't have as good communication with the specific program directors as we could have had. This resulted in confusion for the students, program directors, and for us. As a result this past summer we have had meetings with all program directors involved with Portfolio and will continue to work on improving communication regarding Portfolio with all the program directors and their faculty.

The students also had several major complaints involving class loads, scheduling, and not hearing about this class when they started the program. To address some of these problems we started a student committee comprising students from all the programs involved. This committee met several times this past year and made several recommendations which we are attempting to implement in the 1998-1999 school year. The students felt more satisfied

with handling the difficulties of the class when they were involved with the decisions that were made.

Some of the changes being implemented or considered for this 1998-99 school year include:

1. Combine seminars for a total of three, two-hour seminars and increasing student directed activities. The combinations will be Diversity/Compassion, Communication/Teamwork, and Balance. We will continue to have a one hour orientation to the program at the beginning of the school year. The focus of the orientation will be on the purpose and benefits of the class and portfolio development.
2. The students have requested to have more options available for the fulfillment of the goals. We are adding new options to all the areas and also adding higher level assignments that will allow students, to show excellence and document their efforts. A letter of distinction will be provided for every three activities completed at the "exceptional/excellent" level.
3. We are discussing increasing the hours required for community service and being more specific in activities that will fulfill this requirement. (Students transferring from different public schools have stated, that in some programs, students are required to do a certain amount of community service per week/month. They have communicated that 15 hours aren't really enough to become committed to community service.) This may take the form of a requirement of 15 hours community service in Portfolio Practicum I and 15 hours in Portfolio Practicum II.

4. We based this program on Christian Seventh-day Adventist values and will continue to do so.

We also want to show understanding and respect of other religion's points of view , e.g. Muslim, Hindu, and other Christian faiths. We feel, though, that since this is an Adventist school, and the students are well aware of it, that we need to present the SDA Christian perspective, but also be prepared to dialog with students and encourage thought about their beliefs. (Approximately half of our students in the School of Allied Health Professions claim a Seventh-Day Adventist belief system). General questions asked during the compassion seminar, for example, start with, "What do you believe about compassion?" "How do you show it?" "How have your religious beliefs affected your belief about human worth?" "How has your belief about human value affected your compassion?" "Is this consistent with your belief about God?"

I am sure this class will continue to evolve and change over the next few years, but we feel the value it has is worth the time and effort, especially when we receive letters and papers from community service leaders about the acts of compassion/service they have seen demonstrated by our students and from students themselves telling us how certain activities have changed them. (See Appendix for examples.).

Endnotes

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1. Gottlieb, Margo. (1995). Nurturing Student Learning Through Portfolios. TESOL Journal, Autumn pp.12-14.
 2. Gordon, Rick. (1994). Keeping Students at the Center: Portfolio Assessment at the College Level. The Journal of Experiential Education, 17, (1), 23-27.
 3. Lankes, Anna Maria D. (1998). Portfolios: A New Wave in Assessment. T.H.E. Journal, 25, (9), 18-20.
 4. Hamm, Mary., & Adams, Dennis. (1992). Portfolios: A Valuable Tool for Reflection and Assessment. The Journal of Experiential Education, 15, (1), 48-50.
 5. Land, Gary. (1997). Helping the Church Think – The Intellectual Task of Christian Higher Education. The Journal of Adventist Education. Summer, pp. 8-11.

APPENDIX A

Letter received from a community service organization regarding a student in Portfolio Practicum I.

It was about a year or so ago when I witnessed one of the most compassionate acts I have ever seen or heard of. In reading this letter, one might think I am exaggerating to make this person look good, but even the words on this page alone can not express how truly remarkable an experience it was.

It was a good idea I thought to expose the college group to the homeless outreach. I know those involved would have a chance to learn how to love the unlovely. What I did not know in preparing for that day is that I would be the one learning from them. "You guys have to be sure and be available for God to speak to you at a moments notice", I said. First we began by lining up tables piled full of clothes and other necessities that homeless desperately need. The need was no more evident than when people in the crowd tried to get through the doors so that they could have first dibs on the merchandise. "It's almost time", they said. Some people were finishing eating and others were standing in line for a hair cut. Then someone said, "Here they come". The doors opened and people came through as their numbers were called out to enter the room. I remember thinking to myself that the group was doing quite well. For the most part everyone seemed to be pretty helpful. Some were helping people to find their sizes and others were trying to keep people from taking too much merchandise. I remember watching my friend Joe just wondering what he and the others were thinking about this whole thing. Joe is one of those guys who does not always show a lot of expression and so you are often left wondering if he enjoyed things or not. "What can I do to help them understand what this is all about", I thought. Then this man approached our table and as he rummaged through the neck ties he said, "trying to find some clothes that I can wear to an interview". I remember how this immediately sparked us to try and help this man. On thing that you always hope for when you see homeless people is that they will find work, or more importantly, a home. Joe and I helped him find a pair of pants and a coat that matched. "You look like about a size 17" neck", I said to the man. "Yes, I think I almost have everything", the man replied. I remember thinking that I might hire this man if I were to interview him for a job. There was such a sense of satisfaction just thinking that we were able to help this man in some way to get off the streets. But then that satisfaction was silenced as the man spoke and said, "wait, I still need shoes". I immediately remembered how few pairs of shoes we had. If only this man would have shown up a little earlier we might have had a pair of dress shoes to give him. Then in a second of pure Christ-like action Joe asked the man, "wait, what size do you wear?" The man quickly answered, "10 ½". Without a thought of what to do, I watched as Joe began to remove a pair of 10 ½ dress shoes from his own feet! Then without a thought the man said thank you and went on his way. It happened so fast that I am not sure that Joe or the man wearing his shoes realized what had just taken place.

It was a good idea I thought, to expose the college group to the homeless outreach. I knew those involved would have a chance to learn how to love the unlovely.

"And the King will answer and say to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to me." Matt 24:40

APPENDIX B

Requirements to Used to Meet the Goal Objectives for Portfolio Practicum I.

Workshops

Fall Quarter

1. Balances work, rest and leisure within a spiritual atmosphere. (Goal 12)
 - a. Attend Balance and Personal Growth workshop.
 - b. Complete assignment given at workshop (Identify personal goals and plans to meet goals)

2. Communicates effectively, orally and in writing with peers, supervisors, patients, family and the community, with sensitivity to non verbal communication. (Goal 6)
 - a. Arrange for an oral presentation to be observed by Portfolio Doctoral Assistant or Professor.
 - b. Attend Communication Workshop
 - c. Provide clinical evaluations which document your communication and interaction with health care team.

OR

 - d. Obtain a letter from your supervisor or a health care team member which describes your ability to communicate well with patients.

Winter Quarter

3. Demonstrates compassion for others in the manner of Christ. (Goal 3) Clarify his/her values and attitudes of human worth in relationship to his/her understanding of God. (Goal 4)
 - a. Attend Compassion and Human Worth Workshop.
 - b. Complete assignments given in workshop.
 - c. Complete 15 hours of community service, and describe your experience.

Spring Quarter

4. Is sensitive to and accommodates all types of diversity among individuals. (Goal 13)
 - a. Attend Diversity Workshop.
 - b. Visit the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. Write a summary of your experience and how it helped you progress towards this goal.

Ongoing Goals

5. Demonstrates clinical competence in his/her chosen profession. (Goal 1)

Choose one of the following:

 - a. The student may provide recent clinical competency and behavioral evaluations.
 - b. The student may arrange for faculty observation and evaluation of their clinical performance.

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6. **Contributes to the chosen profession through membership in professional organization(s). (Goal 10)**
 - a. **Show evidence of membership in a professional organization.**

 7. **Commits to long-term personal and professional growth. (Goal 14)**
 - a. **Attend Balance and personal Growth Workshop.**

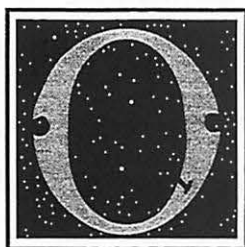
AND

Choose one of the following:

 - b. **Join a professional organization and attend at least three local professional meetings.**
 - c. **Join a state professional society and attend one state sponsored meeting.**
 - d. **Join the national society and attend one nationally sponsored meeting.**

 8. **Conduct him/herself in a highly ethical manner. (Goal 2)**
 - a. **Attend the Christian Ethics class for medical professionals.**

 9. **Utilizes a theoretical foundation as a basis of treatment or management.**
 - a. **This will be done within your program specific classes.**



OUR MISSION

LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY,

a Seventh-day Adventist Christian health sciences institution, seeks to further the healing and teaching ministry of Jesus Christ "to make man whole" by:

- EDUCATING** ethical and proficient Christian health professionals and scholars through instruction, example, and the pursuit of truth;
- EXPANDING** knowledge through research in the biological, behavioral, physical, and environmental sciences and applying this knowledge to health and disease;
- PROVIDING** comprehensive, competent, and compassionate health care for the whole person through faculty, students, and alumni.

IN HARMONY WITH OUR HERITAGE AND GLOBAL MISSION:

- ☞ We encourage personal and professional growth through integrated development of the intellectual, physical, social, and spiritual dimensions of each member of the university community and those we serve.
- ☞ We promote an environment that reflects and builds respect for the diversity of humanity as ordained by God.
- ☞ We seek to serve a worldwide community by promoting healthful living, caring for the sick, and sharing the good news of a loving God.

TO ACHIEVE OUR MISSION WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

OUR STUDENTS

Our primary responsibility is the education of students, who come from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, enabling them to acquire the foundation of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and behaviors appropriate for their chosen academic or health-care ministry. We nurture their intellectual curiosity. We facilitate their development into active, independent learners. We provide continuing educational opportunities for our alumni and professional peers. We encourage a personal Christian faith that permeates the lives of those we educate.

OUR FACULTY, STAFF, AND ADMINISTRATION

We respect our faculty, staff, and administration who through education, research, and service create a stimulating learning environment for our students. They contribute to the development of new understandings in their chosen fields. They demonstrate both Christian values and competence in their scholarship and professions.

OUR PATIENTS AND OTHERS WE SERVE

We provide humanitarian service through people, programs, and facilities. We promote healthful living and respond to the therapeutic and rehabilitative needs of people. We seek to enhance the quality of life for individuals in local, regional, national, and world communities.

OUR GOD AND OUR CHURCH

We believe all persons are called to friendship with a loving God both now and throughout eternity. We support the global mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church by responding to the need for skilled Christian health professionals and scholars. We seek to honor God and to uphold the values of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its commitment to awakening inquiry. We are drawn by love to share the good news of God expressed through the life and gospel of Jesus Christ and to hasten His return.

A SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
HEALTH SCIENCES INSTITUTION

