

Why Use Portfolios / Rubric Based Projects and Project Based Learning?

- Activities are tailored to student needs (based on data collected in EA/ECC Screening Tools, including interviews).
- Provides an authentic audience and reason for students to learn (particularly helpful for students who do not want to learn about their VI “because we say so” and/or builds empathy by working with other individuals).
- Opportunity for you to model appropriate language, as well as acceptance/understanding of VI and accommodations.
- Cover a range of skills and areas of the ECC with one comprehensive goal.
- Infuses other skills into lessons (literacy, technology, communication skills, critical thinking/problem solving, etc.).

Selecting Activities:

- Develop portfolio activities based on:
 - Current Needs/Strengths
 - Anticipated Needs (transitions, skills for the future)
 - Areas of concern based on family, student, and teachers (entire IEP team)
- Build student choice/student voice whenever possible
 - Review complete rubric with students, allow them to pick out which activity they will do first
 - You want them to do all of the activities; why not let them pick where to start?
 - Planning: consider the next 1-8 weeks (the student’s and your schedule)
 - Do you want a quick activity or one that will take a few sessions?
- Note! Always leave a couple blank spaces in your rubric so that activities can be added later in the IEP year, without an addendum to the original goal.
 - All the IEP teams have found this very reasonable, and like that it leaves room to address new areas which may come up at a later date.

Resources

- EARubric.com (ECC Screening Tool—Tailor your list to meet individual student’s needs) http://earubric.com/expanded_core_curriculum_needs_screening_tool.html
- Buck Institute / Project Based Learning <http://bie.org/resources>
- Your Peers—we are all trying to figure out the same thing, Work SMARTER not HARDER!
- Consider your students interviewing others:
 - This may be older students or adults with visual impairments.

Early Elementary Goal

“Over the course of the IEP year, [STUDENT] will explore and evaluate at least 3 accommodations or modifications in class to visually access materials, documenting the pros and cons of the accommodation, and write at least 3 sentences reflecting on each accommodation.”

** Documenting student responses should be done in an age-appropriate and student-specific manner. Consider video log, working on handwriting, or beginning keyboarding/computer access skills.

General Goal

“Over the course of the IEP year, [STUDENT] will complete at least [XX] activities as outlined on the Portfolio Rubric, scoring [student specific criterion] on the final portfolio.”

* Make sure you have the rubric to share at the IEP, so that everyone on the team understands what the projects might be. Be open to editing the rubric during the IEP meeting.

** Criterion could be “primarily 3s and 4s,” “80%,” etc. (note: stay away from specific point values, i.e. 16 out of 20 because the number of activities the student completes may be different than what the team anticipates)

Goal with Objectives

“Over the course of the IEP year, [STUDENT] will demonstrate an understanding the accommodations, resources and skills needed to compensate for his/her visual impairment by scoring [student specific criterion] on a portfolio project, as measured by a teacher rubric.

Objective 1 “Accommodations:” [STUDENT] will explain the purpose and appropriate situation to use at least 4 accommodations, including pros & cons of the accommodations.

Objective 2 “Learning Media:” [STUDENT] will document their preferences for the 4 areas: technology solutions, adaptive tools/optical devices, preferred print size and listening/audio materials.

Objective 3 “Social Skills:” [STUDENT] will discuss impact of his/her visual impairment in at least 2 social situations and identify 3 compensatory techniques.

Objective 4 “Career Education:” [STUDENT] will interview a professional with a visual impairment about his/her job, preparing 8-10 questions ahead of time and completing a reflection after the interview.

** Modify objective areas to student needs.

For all options, include a copy of the rubric with the student’s special education file or digitally attach the rubric to the IEP. Also consider documenting the activities reviewed by the IEP team elsewhere in the IEP (for example the narrative page) so that there is no question what the goal involves.

Sample Text for IEP:

Explanation of Student Portfolio IEP Goal:

Activities for [STUDENT’S] portfolio goal were selected and identified through conversations with [STUDENT] prior to his/her IEP meeting and reviewed with the IEP team during the IEP annual meeting. A copy of the teacher rubric is included in [STUDENT’S] special education file with his/her IEP.

Student activities may include; *[briefly list some of the activity names from the rubric]* and additional activities which may be added if needed over the course of the IEP.

Student Portfolio Project Sample Data Sheet / Progress Monitoring

This is a template you can use to monitor student progress throughout the IEP year. Using the chart makes it easier to know at a glance what projects have been completed and when. This chart is helpful for writing end of the quarter progress reports and when a new TVI takes over goal implementation.

Portfolio Project Documentation/Completion of Activities Checklist:

Item #	Date Started	Date Completed	Grading Quarter	Score
1	11/10	1/8	2 nd	3
2	1/15	2/11	2 nd & 3 rd	3
3				
4				
5				
6	9/23	2/11	1 st & 3 rd	3
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				

Note: Item # corresponds to specific lines/activity numbers in the portfolio rubric.

Bank of Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) Portfolio Project Ideas

Skills Listed in No Particular Order

Early Elementary Students (up to 3rd grade, depending on the student)

- Identify visual impairment
- Discuss pros & cons of accommodations as they are tried out (Accommodations Worksheet Handout template)
- Identify things they can/cannot see in school/environment
- Model language of how to ask for accommodations
- Test out different print sizes, “play” with photocopier to find what size enlargements they prefer.
- Prepare for low vision exam
- Buddy with another student who can model behavior, language, and acceptance as an individual with a visual impairment
- Learn optical devices (as prescribed by low vision specialist).

About 4th grade and up, Depending on the Student

Skill sets can and should be repeated periodically between 4th & 12th grades, as age appropriate expectations become more rigorous and students are able to handle more information and become increasingly independent

Self-Determination

- What is an IEP? (identifies major parts of their IEP)
- Quarterly monitoring/reflecting on progress of IEP goal (reviews own data), and use of accommodations (is everything on the IEP needed, what’s missing that should be there?)
- Explaining VI to new people (teachers or peers)
- Running own IEP meeting
- Explore IDEA Law
- Develops brief statement (2-3 sentences) to explain visual impairment to others (peers and/or adults)
- Mentoring a younger student/pen pal/video pal
- Writes a brief letter to give to substitute teachers/staff explaining visual impairment and preferred accommodations
- Maintains a weekly journal to reflect on situations or impact of having a visual impairment, along with problem solving techniques applied
- Develops and presents presentation on having a visual impairment (portfolio documentation includes outline/script and reflection after presentation).
- Read eye report and review information.
- Write a report about visual condition(s) and their implications on daily life
- Understanding how to read their eye report and what it all means.
- Reviewing role and how to apply for disability services in college
- Understanding voc-rehab’s role post-high school

Compensatory & Access Skills / Sensory Efficiency / Assistive Technology

- Use of accommodations (pros/cons; including appropriate situations to use them in)
- Listen to an entire audio book from Bookshare.org or NLS/BARD and document preferences including: sounds, listening speeds, how you listen to the materials, navigating and searching through the audio books, etc.
- Documents preferred print sizes and fonts, and appropriate use of audio materials.
- Create “How-To” guides (or video commercial) for different optical devices/assistive technology
- Discuss the pros and cons of using the computer with Zoomtext vs. built in magnification tools. Include a reference guide of keyboard commands for both Zoomtext and the computer.
- Research and write about the technology used in chosen career, discussing any additional accommodations you may need.
- Test out new technology options (apps, websites, digital enlargement, braille display etc.) and determine if they are effective. Make a commercial/advertisement explaining how to use it, or directly teach another student how to use the technology.
- Keyboard commands/shortcuts.
- Prep for low vision exam: Writes at least 5 questions which discuss pros & cons of current devices, new devices to try, and questions about visual impairment and independently asks questions at exam.
- Outline preferred accommodations to access near, intermediate and distance visuals, including technology preferences (this can also form the basis of a disability services application for college, or a letter to their next year’s teachers).

Social Skills / Recreation & Leisure

- Social situations (Identify impact of VI and problem solve strategies to compensate)
- Identifies, describes, and teaches 2 activities to peers that can be played with little or no accommodations
- Role plays different situations and determines what information is appropriate to share regarding their visual impairment, based on the context.
- Identifies 5 resources or organizations which provide benefits to individuals (children or adults) with visual impairments (i.e. APH, AFB, NFB, Camp Abilities, USABA, etc.)
- Research summer camp options for students with VI (or any social skill opportunities during the school year or summer).

Career Education (Including College Prep)

- Researches a desired career, writing 1-2 paragraphs about it and write a letter to at least one person doing that job to learn more about it.
- Research and write about the technology used in chosen career, discussing any specific accommodations you may need.
- Interview a professional who is blind or visually impaired about their job (via email, phone call or video chat), prepare 8-10 questions ahead of time, conducts interview, and completes a reflection afterwards (written, video, or conversation).

- Demonstrate understanding of ADA testing law/accommodations to independently advocate for needs in college
- Interview college student with a visual impairment.
- Interview a staff member of a college Disabilities Services office to learn about the resources offered.
- Navigate a college website and learn about disability services.
- Research entry requirements for two college programs which fit your career path.
- Research grants/scholarships for people with visual impairments.
- (Before transitioning to MS or HS) research electives or graduation requirements/options.

Independent Living Skills/Orientation & Mobility

- Navigating a new environment (transitioning to a new building, write reflection before and after a spring visit to next year's school)
- Explore ADA (identify sections of the code as it relates to accommodations they will need post-secondary)
- Transitioning to high school: Student will interview a high school student in order to explore skills needed to be successful in high school. Student will create 8-10 questions to use in the interview.
- How to navigate a college dining hall?
- Identify social groups/organizations for individuals with visual impairments.
- Shopping trip—budgeting, making fashion decisions, meal decisions, reading map/directory, etc.
- General ILS to supplement instruction learned at home.
- Reading a school building map/mapping out routes between classes.
- Transportation options in high school and post-secondary (Metro Access, public transportation, etc.).
- Interview an adult who is successfully living on their own.

The possibilities are endless!

Don't forget to use an ECC screening tool or checklist to determine which areas of need are most relevant for the student (considering immediate and long-term goals).