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# The use of digital technology for portfolio creation, management and utilization

Linda H. Tomlinson

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**THE USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY FOR PORTFOLIO  
CREATION, MANAGEMENT, AND UTILIZATION**

**By**

**Linda H. Tomlinson**

**An Independent Study  
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of:**

**Master of Science in Deaf Education**

**Washington University School of Medicine  
Program in Audiology and Communication Sciences**

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**Approved by:  
Barbara Lanfer M.A.Ed., Independent Study Advisor**

*Abstract: The purpose of this study was to create a digital portfolio  
that was practical and effective for both teachers and parents.*

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## **List of Abbreviations**

CID-Central Institute for the Deaf

## **Background Information**

The term “portfolio” is one that has multiple connotations in the world of teaching, and as such, is a term that brings up many different opinions and emotions within that world. The concept of a portfolio originally developed inside the academic and professional art world. According to the Office of Research Education Consumer Guide, “Portfolios in classrooms today are derived from the visual and performing arts tradition in which they serve to showcase artists’ accomplishments and personally favored works” (Office of Research Education Research Consumer Guide, November 1993). Portfolios created in this vein were used to secure shows, commissions, and acceptance to academic programs. They were designed to portray the artist’s ability and strengths rather than pointing out their weaknesses or deficits.

In an era of alternative approaches to the weaknesses of standardized testing in our country’s educational system, it comes as no surprise that the artists’ tool came into play and was used as a model in the development of student portfolios. After many years of revision, alterations, and adaptations, the student portfolio is still a very controversial tool that has yet to find a successful method of standardization. According to the (NWEA) Northwest Evaluation Association, an educational alliance, a portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that serves as an accurate representation of the student’s efforts, progress, or achievement in specific content areas. To achieve true portfolio status, the collection must include student participation in selection of portfolio pieces, the guidelines for selection, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student reflection (Arter & Spandel, 1992).

The effective portfolio provides a glimpse into the growth of the student's academic performance. Portfolios are not simply a storage place for a random selection of student work. The key element of 'purpose' takes what could simply be a collection of student work and changes it into a portfolio of reflections on goals and accomplishment. Students are both empowered and given an ever-evolving tool for personal measurement and analysis (Case, 1994). Portfolios can be used to demonstrate evidence that the development or proficiency within a specified set of goals is progressing or has been achieved. Through the use of a portfolio as opposed to a set of standardized questions, the student can demonstrate proficiency on his own terms and in his own way.

Portfolios come in many different formats and are used for many different purposes. Some portfolios can be subject specific such as a math portfolio or a writing portfolio. Others can even be specific to one long term project or experience. Portfolios vary greatly depending on the age of the students involved. A preschool portfolio will look vastly different from a high school portfolio. The weight placed on the various components of the portfolio process will be directly proportional to the age of the participants. The portion devoted for self-evaluation and self-reflection is one that will grow over time and will be much less present in the younger years. However, the section devoted to artifacts might include much more for the younger students because it is a highly effective way to demonstrate skills less easily seen through written pieces or other more advanced academic products. In a preschool, social/emotional goals and motor development are heavily stressed- portfolios are helpful ways to monitor and analyze such developmental milestones.



Portfolios can include a wide variety of materials that are considered evidence. Most commonly, portfolios consist of teacher-completed checklists, reading logs, student work samples from worksheets, written work, tests, student self-reflections, reading reflections, sample journal pages, and teacher observations. However, there are other materials that are beginning to make a more regular appearance such as audio clips of story retelling and video clips of group projects, debates, and everyday skill performance. The materials included in portfolios do not need to adhere to strict universal conformity—they just need to effectively demonstrate the goal or skill being targeted.

Portfolios can be used for a multitude of purposes. The most commonly cited purpose, however, is assessment. (Grubb & Courtney, 1996, Office of Research 1993, Shapley & Bush, 1999, Grace, 1992, Hall & Hewitt-Gervais, 2000) Alternative assessment can come in many different forms, but portfolio assessment has stood out through the years as one of the most commonly attempted alternatives. (Cawthorn, 2006, Meisels, 1995, Arnold & Johnson, 2004). By assessing the student's portfolio, the target skill can be analyzed through multiple products that originated in a more natural context than the contrived snapshot approach provided by most traditional assessments. The portfolio assessment sidesteps common problems such as test anxiety and situational complications.

Portfolios have unique benefits for all of the parties involved in the educational process. For parents, they provide a concrete collection of familiar items that speaks for itself during conferences and grading periods. For teachers, they allow a direct correlation to be made between the instructional process and the learning outcomes. For

students, they provide an opportunity for self-evaluation and an understanding of their own development and growth.

“Portfolios constitute a history of the child’s development and can be used to communicate that information to parents and administrators. Parents have a clearer, more complete picture not only of their child’s growth and development but how it occurred over time and within the school setting” (Grubb & Courtney, 1996). Portfolios give parents something concrete to refer to with questions, comments, or concerns. The artifacts can be paired side by side for comparison and thus used as a tool for discussion. Teachers are able to help explain the development of certain skills over time and the thought process that developed with the hope that parents will then be able to foster the preservation or enhancement of the skills in the home.

The benefits for teachers are numerous. Portfolios allow teachers to observe language development across ages and cultures in a way that more traditional assessment measures cannot because the portfolios allow students to be compared to themselves. Their development is not held to the average standard, but instead takes into account their unique backgrounds and initial skill levels before evaluating their end result. It allows for an evaluation of progress as equally important as the final result. Teachers can also use the continuously growing body of evidence to analyze the effectiveness of their teaching style and approach. Portfolio assessment gives teachers information about children’s development which can enable them to make plans for curriculum and instruction (Diffily & Fleege, 1994). Teachers are able to analyze the portfolios to determine efficacy of teaching practices and to facilitate faculty discussion about goals and means. Teachers regain a sense of authority when they make instruction decisions

based on their own evaluation of the portfolios rather than having decisions handed down to them from administrators. Portfolios also provide the unique benefit of time and relevance. “Portfolios are valued as an assessment tool because, as representations of classroom-based performance, they can be fully integrated into the curriculum, and unlike separate tests, they supplement rather than take time away from instruction” (Office of Research Education Consumer Guide, 1993).

Above all, however, in theory, students gain the most benefit from the use of portfolios. Portfolios are a way to ease transitions from class to class, grade to grade, or school to school. “Bridging kindergarten and school with portfolios was one way of bringing flexibility and continuity to the years from five to eight” (Kankaanranta, 1996). Expectations and tasks change a lot from the younger grades to the more product-based primary grades, and having a solid group of work to review provides a student with a way to see how far they have come along with the methodical progression of their development. This also allows them a chance to reflect on the effort and effectiveness demonstrated within their work. “All portfolios- across these diverse curricular settings, student populations, and administrative contexts- involve students in their own education so that they take charge of their personal collection of work, reflect on what makes some work better, and use this information to make improvements in future work” (Office of Research Education Consumer Guide, 1993).

The portfolio provides an opportunity for the students to engage in conversation with their teachers and an internal dialogue as well. Students are able to formulate ideas and improvement strategies of their own making because of this internal dialogue sparked by the portfolio self-analysis. Students are empowered by an effective analysis of a

portfolio by the teacher because it leads to improvements in instruction directly connected to their personal progress and success. The Education Consumer Guide goes on to explain that portfolios are useful as a support to the new instructional approaches that emphasize the student's role in constructing understanding and the teacher's role in promoting understanding. Portfolios also offer a way for students to carry their education beyond the classroom walls. They encourage the students to use their new knowledge in less traditional avenues and experiences in order to have more to bring back to the portfolio on a personal level.

The use of portfolios for assessment has been a key issue of debate among educators for several decades. While the advantages of portfolio assessment are discussed and defended frequently with sound logic and theory, the actual practice leaves many unanswered questions. Issues of validity and reliability are the biggest concerns as well as the problems of time and resource availability. With such large variability, portfolios present a big challenge for schools hoping to implement them effectively.

One school system set out to determine just how effective their system could be despite the obstacles facing the task of standard implementation. Dallas Public Schools implemented a reading/language arts portfolio assessment in the 1995-1996 school year in an effort to meet the new guidelines outlined in the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994. Clear procedures and expectations were listed in the Dallas Public Schools' Title I Local Education Agency Plan that explained the optional student assessment for students up to the second grade. A study was conducted to measure the degree to which technical standards were met by the proposed plan once implemented. Portfolio assessment for the district was studied for three years to allow time for adjustments and

improvements. However, it was determined that the assessment system did not provide information about student achievement that was deemed high quality. The two outstanding problems were those of validity and reliability. The rating scores were found to be unreliable and the work samples inconsistent and invalid (Shapley & Bush, 2000).

A similar study took an in-depth look at a mathematics portfolio assessment program that was a statewide practice in Vermont. The study focused on solutions to the problems of validity and reliability within Vermont's system by studying the differences among the slightly varied methods used by all of the participants as well as the differences among the outcomes. The study found that reader agreement was the biggest inconsistency and therefore a problem with the system. Over the course of two years, only moderate agreement was found with regard to quality ratings. Because of this, the reliability was not high enough to warrant use as accepted scores for the students. When studying the possible solutions to their primary problem, it was found that in order for them to be implemented effectively, the solutions were not viable options given their time and resource burden (Klein, McCaffrey, Stecher, and Koretz, 1995).

Good portfolio projects do not happen without considerable effort on the part of teachers, administrators, and policymakers. Research shows that portfolios place additional demands on teachers and students as well as on school resources. Teachers need not only a thorough understanding of their subject area and instructional skills, but also additional time for planning, conferring with other teachers, developing strategies and materials, meeting with individual students and small groups, and reviewing and commenting on student work.(Office of Research Education Consumer Guide, 1993)

With all of the time, effort, and resources required for a good portfolio project, it is troubling that the results still come back invalid and unreliable more often than not. It leaves many educators wondering whether it is worth pursuing. However, the big misconception is that if a portfolio is not used for assessment it serves no other purpose. Portfolios have a strong place in the schools, especially in specialized schools or in schools with young populations.

For these students, the portfolios serve a unique role of forming a permanent record of their connection between their school, their home, and their growth and progress. For the parents it acts as a visual record of the development occurring outside of the home that might be missed without such a record. When looking at a portfolio for this purpose, rather than that of assessment, the guidelines for inclusion change. A suggested list from a long standing portfolio system in a Finnish kindergarten includes personal data, drawings, paintings, children's self-made stories, descriptions of events, celebrations, field trips, personal likes and dislikes, daily routines, visual documentation of experiences and activities, and children's self-assessments of the items (Kankaaranta, 1996). A portfolio in this vein does not serve as a method of assigning grades; however it does serve other noteworthy purposes. Kankaaranta describes this type of portfolio as a "child-centered method of documentation and assessment bringing out the children's ideas and opinions." Through the case study she conducted on the Finnish portfolio system, she found that the focus on the children's ideas seemed to strengthen their self-esteem and offer opportunities to develop self-knowledge. It helped children make and show their own choices and to reflect on their development and learning (Kankaaranta, 1996).

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to create a digital portfolio system for use at CID. This new system will take components of the recently discarded portfolio assessment system and add new and altered components to create a new approach to an effective portfolio program. The main goal of the portfolio will no longer be assessment; the primary goal is to create a tool for increased parental awareness, communication, and participation in the educational growth and development of their student while enrolled at CID.

## **Methodology**

### *Participants*

The participants in this study were students, teachers, and parents in the Primary/Upper Primary Kindergarten class at CID. Four students and their guardians participated in the project. The participants were selected based on their enrollment at CID and their assignment to the specific kindergarten class.

### *Procedures*

This study began by researching the key uses and components for student portfolios. This step consisted of reviewing the literature previously published on the topic and evaluating the different findings with specific relevance to the needs of

population found at CID. A proposed list of portfolio components and applications for a new CID portfolio system was compiled after careful review of the research.

The decision to focus on one class of students as participants was made by discussing the possible options with the principal from the Primary Department at CID. Factors such as mean age and homeroom continuity were heavily weighed. To eliminate the need for outside help or participation in artifact collection, the trial class was ultimately selected because of the immediate proximity to the project leader in a student teaching arrangement.

The next step involved interviewing teachers about the successes and difficulties of the portfolio assessment system previously used at CID. First the concept of portfolios versus portfolio assessment was explained to establish working knowledge of the topic. The proposed new portfolio system was discussed, and the interviewees were asked to share their ideas of priorities and concerns for the new system. Questions such as time commitment, frequency, and content were discussed. The interviews were based around a loose framework of questions but were left open for independent comment or questions.

After the teacher interviews were completed, the information was compiled and reviewed and changes were made to the proposed portfolio format and plan of implementation in a manner reflecting the input from the teachers. It was determined that two different formats would be used to data collection and organization. The first format would be an individual portfolio and the second format would be a class portfolio. The two formats would be submitted for review and comparison upon completion of the trial project.



For the month of February, artifacts were collected according to the two prescribed systems for the participants. Assignment to the different formats was determined by participant attendance in the first week of the trial. Two students were selected to be used in the individual portfolio trial and all four students were selected to be used in the class portfolio trial. Informal parent feedback on the project was gathered throughout the duration of the trial period. This feedback was used to make minor adjustments to the inclusion guidelines for artifacts. Items such as daily worksheets and written tests were excluded from collection because work samples such as those are already sent home on a regular basis. Their inclusion would not add anything new to parent awareness or involvement as part of the portfolio concept.

Throughout the trial period, a time log was kept as part of a record of time expense. One of the primary goals of the proposed portfolio project was to create a useful tool with minimum time commitment from the teaching staff. To ensure that this goal was achieved, a detailed log was kept to provide an exact record of the time required to collect, organize, and manage each of two proposed formats. This information was presented to the teachers when the two completed formats were reviewed and discussed.

Upon completion of the trial period for artifact collection, the three sample portfolios were constructed (two individual portfolios and one class portfolio). Several templates and programs were examined and tested until the final program was selected for use. Through feedback and informal interviews, secure online availability had been determined to be the primary method of delivery desired by the parents. After review and experimentation, a program created by faculty of the Rhode Island School of Design was selected for use.

The parents were contacted via email and phone to determine the desired viewing circumstance. Parents were given the options of either viewing the portfolios online on their own or viewing the portfolios at school with the project leader.

## **Results**

### *Initial Interview Summary-CID Staff*

The initial interview with the teachers resulted in a fairly uniform list of concerns and preferences. Time commitment was the biggest source of hesitation from all participants. The teachers felt that the time required creating and maintaining the proposed portfolio system would far outweigh the positive results from such a project. When prompted to suggest a reasonable amount of time per week for the project, the majority of participants felt that no more than five minutes per week, per student would be a realistic expectation with reference to their current schedule.

On the issue of frequency, each of the suggestions ranging from weekly to bi-annually was offered as a favorable choice. The participants who voiced favorable interest in the project preferred a higher rate of frequency and those with less interest preferred a lower rate of frequency. All participants agreed that a monthly rate would be reasonable when listed as an alternative to their first choice for frequency.

The topic of variation in content categories warranted the least amount of attention from the participants. It was agreed among all participants that the focus of the content would be the core subjects as well as unique learning experiences such as field trips and special activities.

The use of digital technology was unanimously supported by all participants with the stipulation that proper training and/or support staff be available for the project. The inclusion of video and sound clips was supported by most participants with some hesitation with regard to the potential complexity of the required technological knowledge.

When asked to select a primary use for the portfolio, all participants chose the portfolio's use as a tool for the enhancement of parent-teacher communication. As a secondary use for the portfolio, most participants chose the portfolio's use as a tool for the enhancement of parent-child communication.

#### *Initial Interview Summary-Parents*

Throughout the trial collection period, informal parental feedback occurred through daily interactions and brief discussions. The response from all parents was uniform. The parents favored a higher time commitment than the teachers; the range of suggested minutes per week was twenty to thirty per student. All parents favored a two-week rate of frequency for portfolio updates.

All parents felt that in addition to the core subjects being included, the special areas such as Physical Education and Art should be incorporated with equal emphasis. They agreed that it would be helpful to be alerted to what developmental skills and creative talents are happening while their children are in school.

Digital technology was favored by all parents as the portfolio format. They listed video clips and digital images as the most important artifacts for inclusion.

All parents agreed that the primary use of the portfolio should focus on keeping the parents involved in their children's education. A secondary use suggested by most parents was the use of the portfolio to aid in the process of eliciting language and prompting dialogue between parent and student.

### *Time Log Results*

The time recorded for artifact collection includes all time that exceeded the normal work and data collection limits in the classroom. For example, the time recorded for a video clip did not include the actual performance time because that is time already built into the schedule. It only included the additional time required by the teacher to set up and tear down the equipment, etc. The time recorded for posting to the website includes all time spent writing comments, posting images, and organizing information. The time spent on the initial format selection and organization was not included. The exclusion of this time was determined to be appropriate because it is a one time situation and does not require regular maintenance once created.

The time commitment from the teacher for the first portfolio created averaged eight minutes per week. This was for the individual student portfolio titled *JW*. The time commitment from the teacher for the second individual student portfolio (*AL*) was significantly less and averaged three and one half minutes per week. The difference is attributed to the familiarity with the program and desired format gained from the first experience. The time commitment from the teacher for the class portfolio was also significantly less than the first portfolio and is felt to have a similar explanation. The average time for the class portfolio was six minutes per week.

*Final Interview Summary-Teachers*

After review of the sample portfolios, most participants agreed that the average time commitment of three and one half minutes per student, per week from the teacher was reasonable. All participants felt that the average time commitment of six minutes per class, per week from the teacher was practical. All teachers felt that the monthly rate of frequency was both reasonable and effective. Most teachers agreed that a higher rate of frequency such as weekly or bi-monthly would also be a realistic possibility.

All teachers felt that the academic content areas included were appropriate and comprehensive. Some teachers called for the inclusion of Literature as well. Most teachers felt that the inclusion of non-academic areas such as P.E. and Art (areas in which homeroom teachers are not present) posed logistical problems regarding artifact collection and explanations and should therefore be removed.

All teachers felt that the use of digital technology was beneficial. Most teachers agreed that the skills required creating and maintaining the portfolios appeared to be minimal and therefore listed the simplicity as the primary advantage of this format.

All teachers agreed that parent-teacher communication would be enhanced by the use of the portfolios. Most agreed that parent-child communication would be enhanced by the use of the portfolios, although some teachers expressed concern that parents may not make effective use of the portfolio for this purpose due to time or attention constraints.

*Final Interview Summary-Parents*

After review of the sample portfolios, all participants agreed that the average time commitment of seven minutes per student, per week from the parent was reasonable. All parents felt that the monthly rate of frequency was effective. Most parents agreed that a higher rate of frequency, specifically weekly, would be preferred.

All parents felt that the academic content areas included were appropriate and comprehensive. All parents agreed that the inclusion of non-academic areas was beneficial and provided important information and opportunities for conversation and continuation in the home.

All parents felt that the use of digital technology was very beneficial. All parents listed the online availability as the primary advantage of the format. Most agreed that being able to access the portfolio from any location at any time increased the likelihood of consistent and thorough use. All parents listed the inclusion of video clips and images as the secondary advantage of the format.

All parents expressed approval of the portfolio for the purpose of enhancing parent-child communication. Most parents suggest that they would build a regular time into their schedule for portfolio review and discussion with their children. All parents agree that the portfolio serves the purpose of aiding parent-teacher communication, but they list this as a secondary benefit with the primary emphasis being placed on parent-child communication.

## **Discussion**

The data collected throughout the study has proven that there are valuable and practical uses for portfolios beyond the most common use of alternative assessment. The feedback collected from the parent interviews supports the idea that a portfolio system is a desired addition to CID's current methods of teacher-parent communication.

Initially the teachers interviewed harbored doubt and concern over the time commitment required for the proposed portfolio system. However, after the trial product was reviewed and the time logs were evaluated, those concerns were alleviated and the teachers changed their opinions about the practicality of the proposed portfolio.

The parents shared positive responses in the initial interviews as well as in the final interviews. This could be attributed to the fact that little commitment is being required of them in terms of time and work; they have control over how much or little they interact with the system. For parents who desire maximum involvement, the tool will be available for their use in the proposed system; for the parents who desire minimum involvement, the tool will still be available for them when and if they choose to access it.

## **Conclusion**

The goal of this study was to create a portfolio system that was both practical and effective for both teachers and parents at CID. Based on the information gathered from the initial and final interviews of the participants as well as the data collected throughout the trial period, the project leader has demonstrated that the intended goal was met. The trial portfolios were well received and all participants expressed interest in pursuing

implementation of the system in the future at CID. Overall, the project demonstrated that the proposed portfolio system could be an effective tool for the enhancement of teacher-parent communication and parent-student communication while only demanding a minimal additional commitment from the CID staff.



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## **Appendix A: Portfolio Tips for Teachers**

**Frequency:** Determine a frequency for updating the portfolios that is both realistic and consistent. Discuss this with cooperating teachers and administration prior to beginning of the portfolio. Most parents prefer frequency rates of weekly, every two weeks, or monthly. Another option is to base the frequency rate on the thematic units. This would most commonly result in a weekly update, but it would leave room for adjustment due to lengthier themes, vacation days, excessive absence, school events, or inclement weather.

**Format:** Choose between a class portfolio and individual student portfolios before you plan anything else. Take into consideration your class size, your desired time commitment, and amount of parental involvement. If you have a large class, it will most likely be most practical to build a class portfolio rather than individual student portfolios. However, if your students vary significantly in skill level, it might be most appropriate to have individual portfolios to avoid comparison among parents.

**Inclusion:** Determine what content areas you deem beneficial for inclusion before you begin building your portfolios. Consider the location of instruction for the different areas. For example, do not include Physical Education if you are unable to get access to artifacts and explanations.

**Access:** Discuss with the administration and participants the various security options. Before you begin creating the portfolios, determine how wide you would like the access

to spread. It can be arranged so that only the parents in your class (and the administrators) have access to the class portfolio, or it could be accessible to all parents in the department or school. For individual portfolios, access can be limited to just the student's parents or close support team. Talk with the parents and make sure they feel comfortable with your decision.

**Technological Aspects:** For the video or sound clips, make sure you record them in a small enough format to be posted to the website. The file size needs to be 10 MB or smaller, so keep that in mind when you choose the format, as it is much more difficult to reformat it to a smaller file size after the fact.

**Artifact Selection:** When you consider what artifacts to post, keep in mind that the focus of the portfolio is to give parents an understanding of what is happening in the classroom that can't be explained as well in words. Items such as worksheets that will be sent home do not have much relevance for the portfolios. However, something like a video clip from a speech show or snapshots from a field trip are highly beneficial.

**Written Component:** When you add explanations of activities and lessons try to give a brief summary of the concept. The most useful pieces of information to include are new vocabulary, comments specific to a difficulty or success, and phrasing for new concepts that the students will recognize and connect from the classroom to home. Always be sure to include at least two positive comments per child with each update.

## Appendix A: Time Log Tables

**Table 1**

**Time Log: Class Portfolio**

	Collection of Artifacts (minutes)	Posting to Website (minutes)	Total Minutes
Week 1 2/4-2/8	2	0	2
Week 2 2/11-2/15	2.75	0	2.75
Week 3 2/18-2/22	1.75	7.5	9.5
Week 4 2/25-2/29	2	8.25	10.25

**Table 2**

**Time Log: Individual Student Portfolio (JW)**

	Collection of Artifacts (minutes)	Posting to Website (minutes)	Total Minutes
Week 1 2/4-2/8	1.5	0	1.5
Week 2 2/11-2/15	1.75	9	10.75
Week 3 2/18-2/22	1	12	13
Week 4 2/25-2/29	1	6	7

**Table 3**

**Time Log: Individual Student Portfolio (AL)**

	Collection of Artifacts (minutes)	Posting to Website (minutes)	Total Minutes
Week 1 2/4-2/8	1.5	0	1.5
Week 2 2/11-2/15	1.25	0	1.25
Week 3 2/18-2/22	1.25	3	4.25
Week 4 2/25-2/29	1	6	7

## Appendix C: Sample Portfolio Excerpts

### Bio

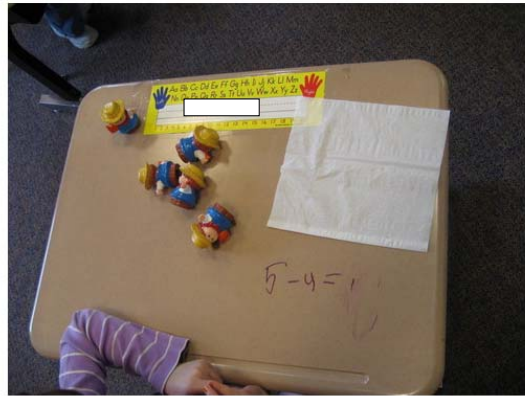
#### About Me



Hi! My name is Allie and I am 5 years old. I am in the kindergarten. My teacher is Miss Lauren L. and I think she is nice. My favorite color is purple and I love to skateboard with my daddy. At school my favorite is gym and reading. When I'm a grown up I will be a mommy.

## Academics

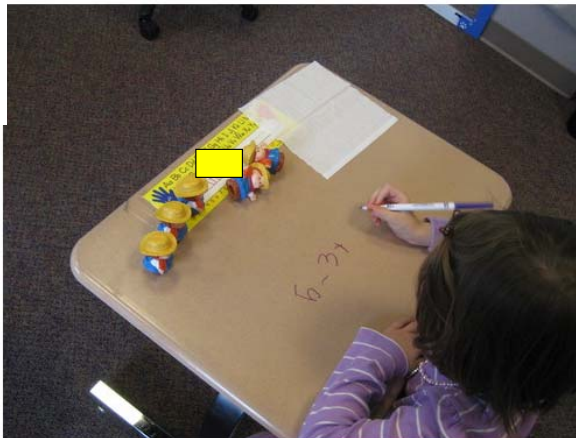
Reading  
 Math  
 Speech  
 Thematics  
 Language



The class started basic work with subtraction with numbers 1-5, and by the end of the week were able to work with numbers 0-10. Allie practiced with several different methods such as circling and crossing out images on worksheets, giving away pieces of candy to other classmates, and writing number sentences on her desk based on a subtraction problem with manipulative toys. For example: There were 5 farmers, but four walked away. How many farmers are left? You can help her practice this new skill at home with things like the number of fruit snacks or animal crackers during a snack or the number of toys while she is cleaning up.

## Academics

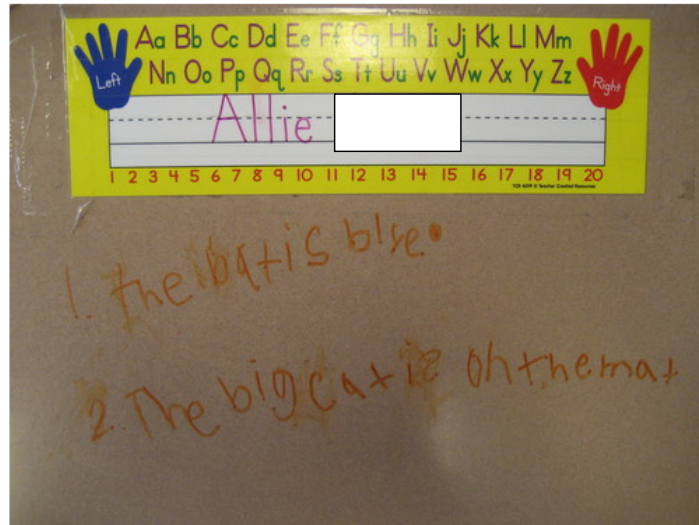
Reading  
 Math  
 Speech  
 Thematics  
 Language



Allie is doing very well with the concept of subtraction, but she does need a little practice with the symbols of the equations. She interchanges =, +, and - frequently in written form but she is very good at using the spoken terms correctly. In class she has learned that + means "put together" and - means "take away". If you would like to use these same phrases at home she should be able to really show you how much she is learning!

## Academics

[Reading](#)  
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Allie is showing progress in her reading skills. She has just moved from writing single words to sentences. The sentences use a combination of her sight words that she has memorized along with other words that she is able to sound out and spell on her own. This type of activity also allows her to practice her writing skills such as word spacing, capitalization, and punctuation. She often writes certain letters backwards and switches similar letters such as 'b' and 'p'. She is typically able to correct herself when asked to read what she has written. This would be a good activity to practice at home with the words on her word ring and other three letter words that she can sound out.

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I have seen Allie switch her letters around so I will definitely help her on that. It's interesting too that they can write on their desk ... is that what they are doing?? Cool!

04/15/08, 10:11 pm

## Extracurricular

Art  
P.E.  
Specials



On Nike Day, Allie was able to practice a variety of strength, coordination, and speed skills while participating in team games and relays. Allie seemed excited and eager to work together with her Nike buddy in all of the different tasks. She shows no sign of difficulty with any of the skills associated with these games. It also gave her an opportunity to practice her speech and language with a new person while playing trivia games about sports and activities.