



Writing Portfolios in the Classroom: Policy and Practice, Promise and Peril

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This volume presents chapters by researchers, practitioners, and policymakers who study the impact of classroom portfolios in the assessment of writing achievement by elementary and middle grade students.

The focus throughout the volume is on the tension between classroom assessment and externally mandated testing. It presents the efforts of researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to understand the impact of classroom portfolios for the assessment of writing achievement by elementary and middle grade students. Under the auspices of the Center for the Study of Writing, the editors conducted a national survey of exemplary portfolio projects, arranged for a series of "video visits," and held several working conferences. The result of this work is a broad-ranging tale: the aspirations of teachers and administrators to move the machinery of schooling in the direction of more authentic and engaging tasks, the puzzlement of students when they realize that the assignments are real and that the teacher may not have a "right answer" in mind, and the tensions between ivory-tower ideas and everyday classroom practice.

Divided into four sections, this research volume:

- * provides a historical perspective, develops the conceptual framework that serves as a background for many activities described throughout, and discusses numerous practical issues that confront today's researchers and practitioners;
- * views the phenomenon of writing portfolios through a variety of broadview lenses such as teacher enthusiasm, student reflection, assessment tension, the portfolio as metaphor, and the locus of control;
- * conveys important conceptual issues with a balance toward pragmatics; and
- * offers unique insights from the perspective of one individual who serves as scholar, researcher, and teacher.

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