

THE INTERP PORTFOLIO

by Don Crabtree

Eric Fromm once said that education is, "Helping the Child reach his potentialities." It is my hope that the use of the portfolio type of project in individual events might help reach some of those potentialities.

If your school is fortunate enough to have forensics in your curriculum, you may be asked to include all levels of experience within your class. You may be greeted with cheery, "I want to learn everything" faces of the first year students as well as the divas and the "I am so cool you can't teach me anything" attitude of some of the advanced students. The perplexing and challenging question that this posits is "What do I do with the advanced students while I teach the neophytes?"

Of course, the complexion of the "variety" level students will set the tone for how things will work; however, there still needs to be structure and accountability as well as a way to use a type of "performance-based evaluation" for the advanced level students. Let's be honest, subjectivity is rampant in this domain of evaluation.

A possible solution is the use of a *video portfolio*. I have found this especially helpful in the interp areas. At Park Hill High School, we are blessed with classes in forensics but they are composed of all levels of experience. The video portfolio has proven to be successful for our program and I have found this type of evaluation to be far more concrete, easier to document, and more beneficial to the students.

The purpose of this article is to present several ideas regarding this project and system of accountability.

The video portfolio is made up of six parts or requirements.

I. Analysis

This section deals with the basic fundamentals of script choice and selection.

A. Students are to record: title, author, publisher, publisher's address, and ISBN number if available.

B. A one page summary of the piece of literature after a complete reading. It is crucial that the student read the "entire" piece of literature.

C. One paragraph explanation of the title and why they think the author chose it.

D. A statement of the dominant theme in the selection.

E. General observations about life and human existence that the author has made.

F. Does the selection contain any especially curious objects, mysterious characters, repeated names, etc.? Encourage the students to explore "hints" from the literature that can provide larger meanings and symbols. Many times these elements can provide a deeper understanding of the central theme.

G. List connotative and denotative meanings of any unfamiliar or interesting words.

H. List any important word groups or thought centers. Write a one-page paper paraphrasing the selection. The student must use his or her own words but should keep the author's intent.

I. A statement of explanation of any extrinsic factors of literary quality: universality, risk factors, popularity (is the selection over used) etc.

II. Cutting the Material

The interpreter should learn to cut with the incisive skill of a surgeon so that what is eliminated strengthens the presentation. It is as dangerous to cut living literature as it is to cut living tissue. Every cut or adaptation must be done for a specific reason and with ample justification. Since the author wrote every word with deliberate purpose, changes must be made on a similar basis. This section of the portfolio should include:

A. An uncut, xeroxed copy of the complete piece of literature.

B. A second copy that uses a system of marking out what is cut so that the student can see what was in the original version. Sometimes it is necessary to go back and include something that was originally omitted.

C. *A photocopy of every page from which any line of the cutting is taken; pages are to be in the order in which they are performed.

D. *All words used from the script should be highlighted. Leave any words not used unmarked.

E. *Indicate any word changes and/or additions in ink.

*Items C, D, and E are required if your work is challenged at the NFL Districts or Nationals.

III. Video Performance #1:

The first recorded presentation should be done while using the script. After the student feels he or she has done a successful taping, they will orally tape a critique of their own work. This taped critique becomes a part of the portfolio. This section should contain:

A. Self-critique of the initial performance

B. Written critique from instructor

C. Three peer critiques

IV. Practice Sessions:

The student is to record at least four practice sessions without the use of the script.

Portfolio requirements are:

A. Four practice sessions.

B. Student self-critique after each session.

C. One recorded session of the student reading another type of literature (I.E, newspaper, newsmagazine, etc.) in the character(s) of that used in the original literature. This will enhance a student's ability to focus on characterization(s).

D. This performance should also concentrate on the physical aspects of the cutting.

V. Final Video Performance

This section requires the student to submit the best-videotaped performance for final evaluation.

VI. Attached Cover Letter: The final requirement is to include a "packaged" submission of the entire project. This

package should include:

- A. A cover letter explaining the project.
- B. Any other critiques or copies of tournament ballots if any competition has taken place.

The final video performance will then be evaluated on:

- A. Organization
- B. On time submission
- C. The inclusion of all required elements
- D. Final, overall taped submission of the final videotaped performance

One could easily devise a point guide for such an evaluation. We have used the following:

- Skill demonstration: 40%
- Productivity: 25%
- Required elements of package: 20%
- Overall packaging of project: 15%

There are several advantages to this type of project and system of accountability:

- A. Students stay more focused on the assignment.
- B. Advanced students are held accountable for time on task.
- C. Allows for a more in-depth analysis of their work.
- D. Students may be able to use some of the video presentations for auditions or scholarship requirements.
- E. The presentations can be viewed by other classes and utilized in subsequent years.

This type of project may allow an instructor to control the accountability of advanced students more successfully. This type of project can also be easily adapted to oratory or extemp as well.

Louis D. Brandeis stated that responsibility was "the great developer." Perhaps this type of evaluation system will allow us to develop the best possible individual events for students.