

ePortfolio Reflection:

Looking back at My Past Work and the Process of Building my ePortfolio

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Abstract

My name is Erica Nickolaus and I am a senior at Old Dominion University. As part of my major in leadership, I am creating and putting together an electronic portfolio that looks back at my past work and accomplishments. In this portfolio I have chosen three skill sets to highlight, along with three artifacts that highlight each. This reflection looks back at the process of making my ePortfolio and the artifacts that I have chosen.

Throughout my career at Old Dominion University, I have had a lot of experiences, projects, and assignments that have given me a chance to grow and develop my skill set. I will be graduating from ODU in December of 2025, making the end of my journey here. By making an ePortfolio, I am able to share those skill sets and experiences and show off what I have accomplished. In my portfolio you will find three different skills that I am highlighting, along with three artifacts for each skill that showcases my proficiency in each of the skills. The three skills that I have chosen are leadership, critical thinking, and ethical consideration. I believe that these skills are valuable to any leader but also have value in any field. This paper will go over the process of making my ePortfolio, picking my skills, and will reflect on each assignment chosen.

The first step to creating my ePortfolio was to improve my skills. When picking up my skills, I looked back at my past artifacts to get an idea of what I had, what stood out the best, and what could be marketable. Picking skills are also important to show your range. I wanted to pick skills and artifacts that show that I am capable of doing multiple disciplines, especially with this major being an IDS major. We had a chance to explore multiple disciplines including leadership, ethics, law, and others. This helped to expand our knowledge base and increase our skills further.

One skill that I knew that I wanted to include was leadership. I have grown up a lot of leadership, and I know I wanted to show that off. The second skill that I knew that I wanted to include was critical thinking. Throughout my time in college, we have done a lot of activities and papers that have pushed our critical thinking, and I want to showcase that as well. The last skill that I wanted to show took a little bit more thought. I was not quite sure

what else I wanted to show, and I had to look back on my previous papers and assignments to figure out what that was. Ultimately, I decided on ethical consideration. We have done a lot in our classes regarding ethics, and I think that is an important part of leadership as well. These three skills together show a strong skill set across different disciplines.

The next step of creating my ePortfolio was picking my artifacts. I felt like I was at a bit of a disadvantage because of my previous college experience. I started at ODU back in 2014. During that period, I was taking classes on campus, where I finished all of my general education classes. I had also been working on a different major that I eventually switched to. After some time, I made the decision to leave college and start working full time. At this point in time, college was not the path for me. After a few years off, I made the decision to go back to school and continue my degree with ODU Global where I switched my major to Leadership. Because of all of these factors, I did not have any of my general studies papers and projects to utilize in my portfolio. I do think that I still have very solid nine pieces, but it could have been nice to look back at some of my old work, even just to see how far I have come. My first step to pick out my artifacts was looking over all of my work and grouping it into my skills. I went over potential artifacts and decided what skill they represented. Once I had my three skills represented and organized, I picked out my top three artifacts from each. The next section of this paper will go over each of my pieces, how it pertains to my skills, and why I picked that artifact over others.

The first paper that I chose to incorporate was my leadership autobiography. This was one of the first papers that I wrote when I resumed my schooling. I think that this paper is a great way to start my ePortfolio because it sets a tone for what is to come for the rest of

the portfolio. In this paper, I lay out my thoughts on leadership and the experience that I have had previously. I also think that shows the growth that I have accomplished over the past two years. I have changed some ways that I view leadership, while some have stayed the same. I also think that this paper is important because it shows some of my work experience as a manager. I highlight some of this and talk about how that has also shaped me into the leader that I am today.

The next paper that I am displaying is my leadership philosophy. This assignment is similar, but this assignment looks more at the leader that I aspire to be and the leaders that I have admired. I think that this assessment is important because it showcases some of my values and what I hope to accomplish. This was interesting to look back on and reflect on what I have learned. I can see what I have grown into and what I still need to work on. It is important to remember your values and to make sure that you are keeping up with them. Even when I get a bit of a slump as a leader, I still need to remember my leadership philosophy, which is why this document was important to include.

My last paper that I included in leadership was my interview with a leader. This assignment was also early on in my major program, but it was probably my favorite assignment and one of the most impactful. This assignment was for my Women in Leadership course, and for this assignment we were tasked with interviewing a high-ranking woman in leadership. I chose to interview my former principal and current Chief Operating Officer for Public Service for the Howard County Library System, Marcy Lenord. I gained a lot from this interview, and I really enjoyed speaking with her. She has done a lot for my local community and is something that I have looked up to. Hearing her story and

her philosophy was a great learning tool. She also told me about the time when she chose to leave a job because her values did not line with the group she was with. I think that that is a great lesson in taking a step back and seeing what you value and realizing that it is time for a change.

Going into the next skill set, the first assignment that I chose for critical thinking was my digital poster essay. I chose to incorporate this because it was a unique assignment that showed my creative side along with my writing skills. In this assignment, we were tasked with creating a digital poster through Canva that displayed one of the topics that we learned in our digital writing course. This assignment challenged me because I had to think outside the box to display our findings in a digital form and across a visual medium. We did a lot in the course where we discussed different visual choices in order to strengthen our ideas. This will be useful across many fields as the digital world is rapidly growing. Being able to connect better with people online is something that will be useful in future jobs.

The next assignment I chose was my powder point that I made describing my research process. I thought that this assignment was important because it displayed more of my critical thinking and thought processes. It goes over the steps that I used in my research paper and looks at different disciplines that I used. I also chose this assignment because it also provides a variety in my ePortfolio. I wanted to include different kinds of assignments and not just straight papers. I think that is important for future jobs to see a variety, as it also showcases the interdisciplinary skill set.

My final artifact for critical thinking was my research paper. This paper showcases a semester long assignment where we formulated a research question and developed the research. This paper also shows my knowledge of the restaurant industry, which is currently my primary field. I think that this assignment not only showcases my work, but also the work that I have done outside my degree. It shows the knowledge and the critical thinking that I have picked up over the years while I was taking time off from school.

My final skill that I chose with ethical consideration. For this skill, the first assignment that I chose was my personal code of ethics. This assignment was more of an informal assignment, but I still think that it was important. This showcased what I value in myself and what I strive to do every day. While I might struggle with some of this list at times, it is still something that I try and do every day. Looking back at this list is important to remind myself of what I am working towards.

The next assignment is my learning an actions paper from my ethical leadership class. This assignment looks back at what we learned in the class and how we plan on applying for our future. I think that assignments like this are important because they apply what we have been learning in our lives. It is important to tie learning back to yourself to be able to use it. This is also something that I think looks good to leaders. Being able to look at your own skill set and where you need to improve it's important to any job and to any future.

The last assignment that I chose to add is my book review of *The Leadership Star* by Brian Hartzler. I really enjoyed reading this book. I think that there were a lot of strong

qualities here that can apply to any leader. I also really liked how there were a lot of real-world examples throughout the book. In this paper, I broke down the fundamentals of the leadership star and concepts behind it. I think this paper is important to show because it not only shows my thoughts behind the content, but my ability to comprehend different materials.

While creating my ePortfolio, I was able to look back at my past work and see all that I have accomplished. I think that I have come a long way and I am proud of the work that I have put in. I hope that anyone viewing my ePortfolio and this reflection can see the effort and the knowledge that went into my college career. I think that I have picked up many marketable skills along the way, not just the three that are listed here. I also think that this reflection was a great opportunity for me to really take a deeper look into everything and think back on what I have done.