Portfolio Assessment

Portfolio assessment collects student work and showcases both learning in progress and summative accomplishment. Traditionally, there are two kinds of portfolio assessment: process portfolios (comprised of documents reflecting multiple stages of a student's **scaffolded** learning) and product portfolios (comprised of documents reflecting mastery). In both cases, portfolios encourage a **growth mindset**, provide opportunities for **metacognition** and **performances of understanding**, and facilitate learning for transfer. The more responsibility students take for their portfolios, the more effective they become as a learning tool. Furthermore, process portfolios make it difficult for students to plagiarize, since grading can be weighed by the quality of the process instead of solely on the product.

Some tips for assigning portfolios:
- Share your **learning goals** for assigning portfolios, and consider asking students to name their own.
- Prompt students to save and sort their work with the portfolio in mind.
- Clarify your grading criteria, if applicable, and provide opportunities for **formative feedback**.
- Assign **low-stakes assignments** that students will include in their portfolios, either as stepping stones to **higher-stakes assignments**, or reflections on their process.

Examples of portfolio contents
- A process portfolio for a Math course might include: problem sets and written explanations of how certain problems were solved, sample annotated textbook pages that showcase reading comprehension strategies, weekly or monthly reflections on self-identified areas for improvement and accomplishments, tables and charts annotated with questions or observations, reflections on the course's final project that tie together early- and late-semester course concepts, peer-reviewed problem sets.
- A product portfolio for a Psychology course might include: a poster presentation, a final paper, a conference abstract, the strongest mid-semester work along with reflections on why each item was chosen, and a letter to the instructor reflecting on how the portfolio represents mastery of cumulative course content.

References
James, Kirsten. "Using Portfolios to Evaluate Student Writing." WAC Program, UW-Madison. Digital.
Olds, Barbara M. "Using Portfolios to Assess Student Writing." Colorado School of Mines. Digital.

See also
High-stakes and Low-stakes Assignments
Metacognition
Scaffolding Student Learning