



Power and Portfolios: Best Practices for High School Classrooms

James E Mahoney

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Portfolios are a driving force in student motivation and growth. Some are so stunning that they are the very models of what writing-reading workshops set out to do-to engender in students confidence in their own abilities and to inspire them to become sophisticated users of language. But how do you set up such a workshop and how can you achieve such remarkable results?

For many years, Jim Mahoney has conducted workshops on the workshop approach to middle and senior high school teachers. Now he has written about the day-to-day practices of the writer's and reader's workshop, explaining the theory and the nitty-gritty details of putting together a portfolio in a way that goes beyond being a mere recipe. From his first chapter on the sharing of power to subsequent chapters building on Nancie Atwell's principles of time, ownership, and response, Jim shows how to structure and run a classroom with portfolios as the centerpiece.

And Jim truly practices what he preaches-when he asks his high school students to write, he writes alongside them or in front of them, using a transparency and letting them see the tentative moves, corrections, and adjustments a writer makes. Literary letters, essays, stories, poems-any and all genres are grist for the mill of producing what Jim calls "a writing state of mind." His success in promoting this state is apparent in the many compelling student samples integrated throughout his text.

If you are interested in making the move from a teacher-directed classroom to a student-centered one, in learning from and with your students, and in sharing the joys and the power of reading and writing, you find no better guide than Jim Mahoney and his *Power and Portfolios*.

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