Tactile and Advanced Computer Graphics Module 10

Creating a Portfolio
### Summary

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<tr>
<th>Instructor(s):</th>
<th>SMART Objectives: <em>Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-sensitive</em></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Goal(s):</strong> Transcribers-in-training will master the guidelines for creating an effective portfolio, and use the principles learned to select work for presentation.</td>
<td>By the end of this module, students should be able to:</td>
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<td><strong>GD10.1:</strong> Determine the purpose of a portfolio, and the ways in which a portfolio provides an advantage in the professional world.</td>
<td><strong>GD10.2:</strong> Identify different types of portfolios and the elements that complete a solid portfolio.</td>
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<td><strong>GD10.3:</strong> Comprehensively present and continually update the work relevant to the individual's portfolio.</td>
<td><strong>Delivery Method(s):</strong> Lecture, Checklist Activities</td>
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<td><strong>Length:</strong> Three Topics, Total Length: 3.5 hours</td>
<td><strong>Any Applicable Business and/or Soft Skills?</strong> This module is primarily soft skills based, with correlations to resume building and cover letter construction.</td>
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| Take Away Message(s): A critical component to showcasing the development of your work and presenting who you are and what you can do, which cooperates directly with building a resume or writing a cover letter, is your portfolio. |

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**Graphic Design Module 10-1**
Title of Module: *Interpreting for Tactile Graphic Design and Production*

The intent of this module is to provide a foundation in portfolio building, beginning with the importance of creating a portfolio and concentrating on discerning appropriate content for targeting a specific audience. Constructing an effective portfolio will provide a measureable advantage to any transcriber-in-training who plans to market his/her certifications, skills, and creativity in the professional world.

**Agenda** – topics to be covered in the module and length of each item

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Topic: Tactile Graphics</th>
<th>Time Allotted: 3.5 hours</th>
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<tr>
<td>A. What Is a Portfolio?</td>
<td>(1 hour)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. What Does a Portfolio Contain?</td>
<td>(1.5 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Presentation of Work</td>
<td>(1 hour)</td>
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**Materials & Supplies** – items needed in order to carry out the agenda and classroom activities

1. Handouts: Portfolio Types (10.B.1), Portfolio Checklist (10.C.1)

**Classroom Preparation** – steps to follow when setting up the learning environment

1. Classroom should be organized in a way that promotes group discussion.
A. What Is a Portfolio?

Objective GD10.1: Determine the purpose of a portfolio, and the ways in which a portfolio provides an advantage in the professional world.

**CONTENT PRESENTATION AND LEARNER PARTICIPATION**

The following are potential introductory remarks as well as relevant context that may be useful for the instructor:

**What Is a Portfolio?**

As a transcriber-in-training, you have acquired a variety of skills over the course of this program. Even as a result of completing the last nine graphic modules, your knowledge of design, whether for tactile graphics or print media, is wide! The next step is one of the most important strategies in preparing your work for the professional world. A critical component to showcasing the development of your work and presenting who you are and what you can do, which cooperates directly with building a resume or writing a cover letter, is your portfolio.

What exactly is a portfolio? The word "portfolio" is from the Italian *portafolio* or *portafoglio*, which are derived from the Latin *portare*, meaning "to carry" and *folium*, which means "a leaf". Traditionally, a portfolio was simply a case for important documents and sketches, for carrying "leafs", or sheets, of individual pages. Today, a portfolio can be a case of important documents, and also a professional showcase of high-quality finished work.

At this point in the curriculum, you have probably learned about building a resume to present to potential employers, or a cover letter to highlight the skills you would bring to an organization. A portfolio operates in the same way, but demonstrates your talent without explanation! Remember the old adage, a picture is worth a million words? By compiling a collection of work that is diverse and of superior quality, an agency or potential employer immediately knows the range of your experience and talents. The quality of your work will speak for itself and support your credentials.

Building a resume and writing a cover letter are important because each provides a quick glance at what you're all about. They can be prepared in advance to the application
process or interview, so you will have time to analyze what you plan to send. A portfolio provides the same opportunity. Often, an interview is a series of spontaneous or unexpected questions because an employer wants honest and direct answers from a candidate. Presenting a portfolio, with which you have taken time and care to prepare, also gives you an advantage because you are able to reference your work when explaining your skills. In some cases, a portfolio can eliminate the need to provide work samples to an organization, which may be asked of you.

**ASSESSMENT**

Review the following terms:

**Portfolio**: a case of important documents or a professional showcase of quality finished work.

Ask transcribers-in-training to review why a portfolio is important, and the advantages a portfolio provides.

**B. What Does a Portfolio Contain?**

Objective GD10.2: Identify different types of portfolios and the elements that complete a solid portfolio.

**PREINSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Prepare handout 10.B.1, Portfolio Types, for distribution at the end of this objective.

**CONTENT PRESENTATION AND LEARNER PARTICIPATION**

The following are potential introductory remarks as well as relevant context that may be useful for the instructor:

**What Does a Portfolio Contain?**

If you can remember back to learning tactile graphics, a primary design concept is adapting the print image so that information is not only accurate, but clear and accessible to a braille reader. The same concept can be applied to creating a portfolio. When you present a body of completed work to an agency or potential employer, your intent must be clear. Ask yourself a few questions:

- What is your intent on creating this portfolio? Is the portfolio for your records or for presentation to another person, perhaps an agency or employer?
• What *kind* of portfolio are you looking to create? Is it geared to a specific or very specialized job? Or simply a job in a specific field?

The portfolio you create must address your audience, and be constructed based on what that audience should see. If you plan to create a portfolio for your own use, as a compilation of your progressing work, include a variety of images that highlight the scope of your skills and also represent the finest quality (or your favorites!). If you plan to submit a portfolio to an organization, include the same variety of work, but target what the external individual or company may be interested in. For example, if applying to a traditional braille transcription position, focus on showcasing your braille skills rather than your experience with Adobe software. However, if the position is more specific, for instance, a transcriber/tactilist with Tiger experience, you may highlight your graphic design and Adobe experience, perhaps by including Tiger-embossed tactile graphics within your portfolio. Try to anticipate questions an agency or employer might ask, like if you’ve worked with a specific software program, or if you’ve ever designed something to client specifications, or what you’ve designed for yourself. A diverse range of pieces will demonstrate your flexibility and creativity. If you bring your portfolio to an interview, refer directly to your work to explain which software was used, what a client asked for, or the development of an idea.

For tactile graphics, remember that interpretation of a print image is the key to creating a readable diagram. Beautiful graphics that are complicated or busy are meaningless to a braille reader! The work in your portfolio must also represent your knowledge of the subject matter and field. Remember, any potential employer knows every detail of the job to which you are applying, especially in such a specialized industry.

Consider creating a “send ahead” portfolio. Are there items you think will be helpful for an agency or employer to see before a face-to-face interview? Often, the cover letter and resume are sufficient for the first round of an application process. But include electronic samples of work, at the very least, shows initiative and commitment to the position for which you apply. On the other end of the spectrum are “leave behind” portfolios, which allow an employer to look through the work you provide after you have left an interview. Generally, you should provide copies, or samples, for an employer to retain. Do not send or bring master or original graphics! It is possible that you may never see samples again. "Sample" work is like a sheet of personal references: provide a copy for an agency to keep; you cannot take it with you! For tactile graphics, simply create thermoform copies of the images you’d like to present within your portfolio. Also, if you’re submitting tactile graphics, do not submit any secure materials, even if you have experience within the standardized testing arena. If an agency or potential employer realized that you were
distributing secure materials without permission, that breach of confidentiality is a seriously negative reflection on your application.

With any application or job inquiry, include an updated and comprehensive, yet succinct, resume, a cover letter entailing your skills and how you would be an asset to that specific organization, and copies of any certifications. For documents within your portfolio, for example, if you are a braille transcriber with multiple certifications, it’s beneficial to provide sample braille format files of differing and complicated transcriptions (literary, Nemeth, music, textbook formatting). Prepare a CD or flash drive containing sample files in a braille format. If you plan to email the package, do not send a group of single files attached to an email! Prepare a compressed zipped folder, with individual directory folders within, perhaps labeled “Literary”, “Nemeth”, or “Tiger Graphics.” Presentation is everything to agencies accepting a million applications. If your information is organized, the consideration you take will not go unnoticed.

If showcasing your graphic design skills, use the same type of selection process when thinking about your portfolio. The pieces you choose should be comprehensive in scope, but still target the agency for which you apply. For example, if you are looking at a position in retail graphic design, include pieces that “market” an idea, like brochures, flyers, or packaging. When submitting a graphic design portfolio, it is acceptable to organize work and provide it electronically. However, keep in mind that high-quality finished pieces are much more impressive if seen in person, rather than on a computer.

♣ ASSESSMENT

Instructor: Distribute Handout 10.B.1, Portfolio Types, to transcribers-in-training. As an entire class, review each scenario presented and answer the questions posed at the beginning of the worksheet. Facilitate a discussion about what to include in a portfolio based on the principles just learned.

C. Presentation of Work (1 hour)

Objective GD10.3: Comprehensively present and continually update the work relevant to the individual's portfolio.

♣ PREINSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES
Transcribers-in-training should make the handouts from the last lesson readily available. Reviewing the scenarios may be helpful as the class learns about the presentation of their work.

CONTENT PRESENTATION AND LEARNER PARTICIPATION

The following are potential introductory remarks as well as relevant context that may be useful for the instructor:

Presentation of Work

The professional world is competitive, to put it lightly! Because of the competition out there, the presentation of your work is the most important consideration when building a resume, writing a cover letter, or constructing a portfolio. Presentation provides the first and lasting impression of who you are and what you can do. Just as you would present yourself in a professional manner for an interview, by carefully selecting business attire, your work should also be presented in a professional way.

To begin, all pieces in a portfolio should be freshly kept, clean, and neatly organized. In the case of a portfolio, size matters! In writing a resume or cover letter, quality is more important than quantity. Determine the most superior quality pieces for presentation, keeping in mind that on the whole, your portfolio should be targeted and comprehensive. For example, when including tactile graphics, ensure that the thermoformed copy is clean, all braille dots are high and round, and all components of the print image are there. It is a good idea to include a clean copy of the print image for reference. Bind the print image, the collaged graphic, and the tiger graphic (if both are applicable) into a comb volume with covers. Include multiple images/tactile graphics in one bound volume if desired. Braille format files completely accurate and formatted correctly. Include the print matter as well, if it is available.

If you plan to submit a graphic design portfolio, consider printing high-quality copies of your work onto professional grade paper (or at least a heavy stock on which the colors are bright and clear). You may want to have a few pieces professionally matted (framed in white cardboard) which amplifies the initial impression of the work. Work can be separated by paper within a portfolio case, or placed into plastic sheets and bound into a three-ring binder.

Often, a collection of work is referred to as a “working” portfolio, meaning as a unit, it is never absolutely and finally complete. When you construct a portfolio with your finest work, it does not mean that you are finished working, or that you will never make another great piece! As a transcriber-in-training, or tactilist-in-training, or designer-in-training, you
are continually creating new pieces, and your style and skills are constantly evolving. A working portfolio will mimic your progress, and requires as much updating and refreshing as do your techniques! When you have a steady stream of work, or agencies are interested in your talents, it is quite easy to let your portfolio catch cobwebs. Like a resume, ideally a portfolio should be continually updated, so if you're ever looking for work again, there is no need to scramble. Keep your work fresh! Include new material, because with the range of skills you have acquired in your training, there is no doubt that your work will get better with experience.

Remember, use your strengths to support your portfolio. A portfolio should always be representative of your finest-quality work.

**ASSESSMENT**

Instructor: Distribute Handout 10.C.1, Portfolio Checklist, to transcribers-in-training. As an entire class, review each item presented. Ask each transcriber-in-training to look at his/her work and determine the ways in which they would create a portfolio. Facilitate a discussion among transcribers-in-training based on the principles just learned.
Resources

*Creating a Professional Portfolio, WorkQuest™:*

Tactile and Advanced Computer Graphics Module 10

Creating a Portfolio Handouts
**Portfolio Types (10.B.1)**

For each of the following scenarios, answer the questions below and make a list of items that should be included in a portfolio.

- What is your intent on creating this portfolio? Is the portfolio for your records or for presentation to another person, perhaps an employer?

- What kind of portfolio are you looking to create? Is it geared to a specific or very specialized job? Or just a job in a specific field?

**Scenario 1:** Jane is looking to work part-time as a braille transcriber for an agency that specializes in textbooks for kindergarten through first grade.

**Scenario 2:** Alice is hoping to pull together a portfolio to reference as a working compilation of her accomplishments.

**Scenario 3:** John is looking to become a full-time tactilist at an organization working with e-braille (electronic formats, rather than hard-copy braille).

**Scenario 4:** Harry just received his Nemeth certification and wants to send information to agencies in the hope of becoming an off-site contractor.

**Scenario 5:** Susan is applying to a Graphic Design and Marketing position at a major grocery store.
**Portfolio Checklist (10.C.1)**

- What is your intent on creating this portfolio? Is the portfolio for your records or for presentation to another person, perhaps an employer?

- What kind of portfolio are you looking to create? Is it geared to a specific or very specialized job? Or just a job in a specific field?

- Does the portfolio target your audience?
- Is the work of your highest quality?
- Have you included a resume, cover letter, and copies of all certifications?

**For braille portfolios:**

- Have you included a wide range of braille files, in formatting and in content?
- Does each braille file include a copy of the print version?
  - Are the braille files organized in directories and then copied onto a CD or flash drive, or compressed into a zip folder?
- Does the portfolio contain a wide range of tactile graphics, including collage and Tiger-embossed graphics?
  - Have you provided the thermoformed copies, rather than the original masters?
  - Is the print copy available?
  - Are the tactile graphics bound into sets, including the print copy, the collage graphic, and Tiger-embossed graphic (if applicable)?

**For print portfolios:**

- Does the portfolio target the potential job or specific talents you have acquired?
- Is each piece of high quality?
- Is the work presented clean and neatly organized?
- Are some of the works professionally matted for presentation?