Portfolios in Six Steps:
Guiding Questions for Using Portfolios as a Tool for Reflection

According to Wolf (1996), a portfolio is "a collection of information about a teacher's practice." The introduction of a portfolio should be a clarified teaching philosophy with corresponding goals, but "the heart of the portfolio should be a combination of teaching artifacts and written reflections."

Use these steps to guide you as you assemble your portfolio. We believe teachers with strong portfolios are able to answer "yes" to most or all of the questions in the left column of each step. If you find that you are unable to answer or are responding "no" to a specific question, check out the resources linked below each step for additional clarity. Please make sure you review all six steps before submitting your portfolio. Of course, you can reach out to fellow corps members or your MTLD if you have additional questions.

Step 1: Your Vision and Teaching Philosophy

Questions to consider	Why it's important
• Have I included in my portfolio a vision for my work that is rooted in my teaching philosophy and informed by the community and students I partner with every day? ○ Vision can be in any consumable form (written, video, audio recording, drawing, etc.) • Am I compelled by this vision? • Can others readily make sense of my vision from what I have shared?	Research shows that authenticity and clarity in sharing a particular educational philosophy are the first ingredients in effective teaching. Before a teacher can reflect on their teaching practice, they must first be able to analyze personal beliefs, attitudes, and values as components that form the basis for their vision. Articulating your vision (in this case, a written vision) is a powerful way to review professional and personal values to determine how teacher actions and student outcomes actually match your vision and teaching philosophy.
Helpful Resources & Examples: Educational Philosophy Online Activity Institute Vision & Goals Session First Eight Weeks Vision & Goals Session Sample Vision with Strong Conviction	

Step 2: Vision Themes & Components that are Justice-Oriented

Questions to consider	Why it's important
• Is my vision chunked into broad themes? ○ Regionally, we've provided the Broader Outcomes (Knowledge & Skills Growth, Personal Growth, Social, Political, & Cultural Consciousness, and Access) as a starting point for justice-oriented visions • Have I created folders in my portfolio that align to each of these broader themes?	Teaching for justice requires more than just embracing academic skills development. Outlining broader themes within your vision will increase your ability to understand your areas of strengths and your opportunities for growth when you reflect individually and with your MTLD.
Helpful Resources & Examples: Description of Broader Outcomes Sample Box Setup	

Step 3: Articulating Goals

Questions to consider	Why it's important
• Have I included observable goals in my vision that align to each broader theme or component?	Observable goals provide useful (albeit imperfect) tools for understanding progress in your classroom.
Helpful Resources & Examples: Tips for Writing Observable & Measurable Goals Tips, Examples, and Non-Examples Writing SMART Goals	

Step 4: Selecting Artifacts that Highlight Process & Outcomes

Questions to consider	Why it's important

• Have I included artifacts that shed light on the observable goals I have included?
• Are my artifacts from diverse sources?
  ○ Student interview, works samples, trackers, assessment scores
• Do I have artifacts that shed light on whole-class and subgroup (SpEd, ELL, GATE, etc.) progress/ outcomes?
• Do I have artifacts that shed light on individual students?
  ○ We recommend high/medium/low samples of the same work.
• Do I have artifacts that shed light on student and teacher process?
	It's important to have insight into how students are engaging with material (process) and how their actual results (outcomes). These artifacts help us answer questions like "How much are students growing?" and "Is the material students are engaging with meaningful?"

Helpful Resources & Examples: Sample Whole Class Tracker TFA Data & Tracking tools on TFANet (accessed under teaching tab)	

Step 5: Providing Context for Artifacts

Questions to consider	Why it's important

• Have I included brief descriptions in the comments section that describe the artifacts?
  ○ Date of artifact
  ○ Class
  ○ What the artifact highlights in relation to broader outcomes/vision themes.
	Context is crucial for reflection and coaching. Research suggests that artifacts should be framed with clear identifications, contextual explanations, and reflective commentaries that examine the teaching documented in the artifact.

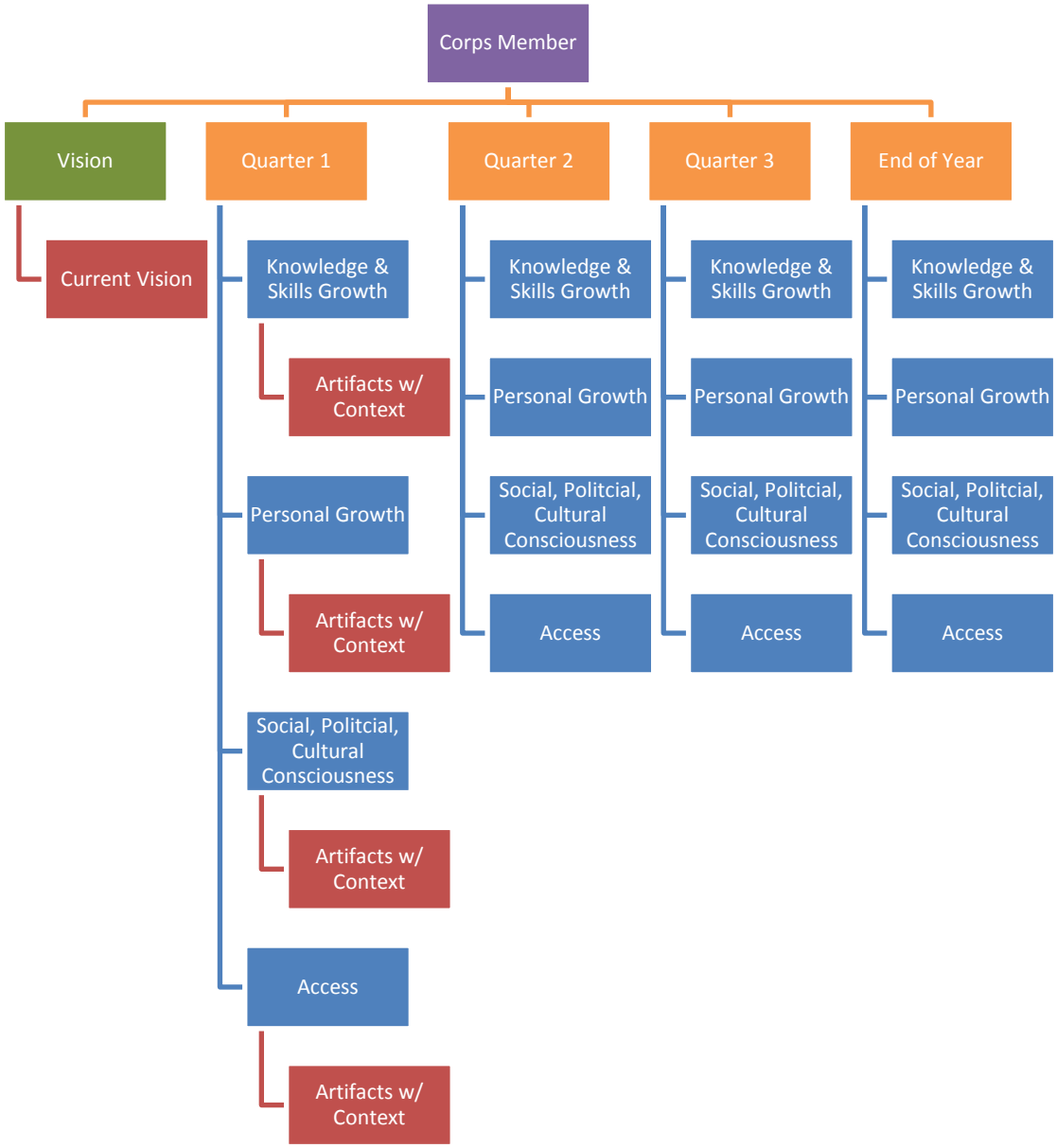
Helpful Resources & Examples: How to leave notes and comments in Box	

Step 6: Assess Your Progress

Questions to consider	Why it's important
• Can I make a claim of progress towards my vision that is supported by my artifacts and uses our regional student outcomes rubric?	If you have a vision that is deeply compelling to you, your students, and your broader community, understanding where you are in relation to your complex vision is important.
Helpful Resources & Examples: Student Outcomes Rubric	

Suggested Structure for Portfolios

Assumes usage of Broader Outcomes



Legend: