Themes

In the new version of the myFolio experience, aspects of the professional growth process are driven by your school's strategic priorities, which we call Themes. Once established, Themes serve as the guiding focus for posts on the new Community Feed as well as the Goals process.

Why are Themes important? Research shows us that employees are more effective when they can see how their individual goals fit into the big picture (McKinsey, 2017). Faculty and staff who believe that they are working toward something meaningful and larger than themselves will be more productive and engaged than those who do not understand or connect with the "bigger picture." Daniel Pink has termed this purpose, the sense that what we do as individuals produces something transcendent or serves something meaningful beyond ourselves (see Daniel Pink's Drive or watch his TED talk for a more in-depth analysis of intrinsic motivation). Themes connect faculty and staff to your school's strategic priorities, thereby tapping into this need for a larger purpose while also moving everyone in your community in a common direction.

What's the process for identifying your school's myFolio Themes? Considering the strategic role Themes will play in your myFolio implementation this year, we recommend working together as a leadership team to determine your Themes for the year. The prioritization process outlined on the next page is a helpful tool to guide those group conversations.

Process Step	Example
1 Identify your school's strategic priorities for this school year.	• ensuring equitable experiences for all students across all aspects of their school experience; • developing a financial model that reduces dependence on tuition; • improving the distance learning experience for students, families, and faculty/staff.
2 Consider how the school's strategic priorities align with the school's work with faculty and staff around professional growth. **OR** Consider how you can align your school's strategy for professional growth with your strategic priorities in order to advance your school's mission and vision.	If our school is focused on increasing equitable experiences for all students across all aspects of their school experience, then... • our teachers' classroom work will need to be focused on providing equitable instruction for all students; • school leadership will need to provide professional support and tools to teachers support their own learning on providing equitable instruction; • conversations between teachers and administrators will need to include a focus on examining how classroom environments promote equitable experiences; • teachers will need to reflect on their own learning and efforts to increase equitable opportunities for all students.
3 Identify any additional priorities for myFolio work After determining which of the school's strategic priorities directly align with your professional growth work, identify any additional priorities that you want your faculty and staff to consider. This might be an initiative from the Dean of Faculty, Associate Head of School — anything that is a shared goal for faculty and staff that is not otherwise captured in the school's broader strategic goals.	Our school's strategic priorities that align with our professional growth work include equity in the classroom and distance learning. We are also focused on increasing collaboration among our faculty and staff.
4 Use these priorities to establish your school's Folio Themes.	• Equity in the Classroom • Distance Learning • Faculty and Staff Collaboration

5 Define 2-3 specific focus areas for each Theme to give them more clarity and definition. While not meant to be all-encompassing, these look-fors can help create a shared understanding of each Theme.	• Equity in the Classroom: this year, we're focusing on ensuring...
	  – equitable engagement opportunities for all students
	  – the use of instructional materials that reflect diverse perspectives
	• Distance Learning: this year, we're focusing on distance learning that:
	  – prioritizes social-emotional learning and community building
	  – provides additional support and differentiated learning opportunities for the students who need them most.
	• Faculty and Staff Collaboration: this year, our focus on collaboration includes:
	  – cross-departmental workgroups
	  – shared planning time to foster interdisciplinary instructional design.

The Folio Collaborative team understands the number of plans you have had to design this summer. We are here to do this work alongside you. Let us help you create a concrete roadmap for strengthening your school's approach toward professional learning. Schedule a call with Natika Stewart, Director of Member Success, to discuss the new myFolio features and plan your school's implementation approach.