

A TEACHER REFLECTS



Setting Up Function Albums

On the day we started this unit, I told my class about the function albums that they would be making. I stressed that the album that each student made would be a big part of his or her assessment at the end of each phase. More importantly, I told students that they should think of their albums as a permanent reference that they could use in future math courses. I think this helped motivate everyone to do a good job and keep their albums neat and up to date.

Our school has small, 16-page “blue books” that are often provided for exams and journals. I gave each student one of these booklets at the beginning of the unit and told them to set it up as their function album. The entry on the first page of the booklets was based on the writing prompts at the end of Lesson 1. This page served as an introduction to the rest of the album.

I also asked students to reserve a page up front to use as a table of contents. When the individual pages describing various function families were all complete, I had students go back and fill in the table of contents.

Function Albums and Assessment

By updating their function albums phase by phase, students were able to prepare a big part of their unit portfolios painlessly. At the end of the unit, I had students turn in their function albums

as well as some representative pieces of work from the unit. Taken together, this gave me a very good idea of students’ growth and understanding.

A Format for Function Albums

I found it helpful to give students a basic format for the pages in their function albums. I told them they could use the format I provided or create a format of their own, as long as it included the same information. For many students, having this starting point was a big help in organizing their thinking. I also encouraged students to add some creative touches so that their albums would be unique.

Function Album Format

<p><i>Name of Function Family:</i> <i>Typical Graph:</i></p> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div>	<p><i>General Equation:</i> <i>Example of Table:</i></p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 0 5px;">x</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">y</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; height: 50px;"></td> <td style="height: 50px;"></td> </tr> </table> </div>	x	y		
x	y				
<p><i>Verbal Description of Function:</i> <i>Real-World Example:</i> <i>Comparison to Other Function Families:</i></p>					