Digital Storytelling in Electronic Portfolios for Reflection and Deep Learning

Dr. Helen Barrett

University of Alaska Anchorage
The REFLECT Initiative

Themes

- Portfolios
- Assessment for Learning
- Reflection
- Storytelling
- Digital Storytelling
- Examples

Digital Stories and e-Portfolios

- highly motivating project-based learning activity
- powerful artifacts in electronic portfolios
- the importance of reflection in e-portfolios
- tools for scaffolding reflection: blogging and digital storytelling
- overview of the literature on reflection and learning
- some new perspectives on storytelling as reflection on experience to improve learning (McDrury & Alterio)
- the role of reflection in brain-based learning (Zull)

The Bottom Line:

pedagogical and theoretical justification for integrating digital storytelling into the curriculum

---

A tale of two paper portfolios

- High School graduates in Washington state (and Utah, too!)
- High school freshman in NY
  (Jim Mahoney, *Power and Portfolios* published by Heinemann)

What's the difference between those two stories?

- What are the variables that produce these extremes in attitudes toward ownership of portfolios?

What is a Portfolio in Education?

What goes into that type of portfolio?

"The Blind Men and the Elephant"

- Eskimos having 49 different words for "snow"
- Those who don't live in that environment tend to see it all as the same cold white stuff
- Same goes with "portfolio"

Metaphors!

- Mirror, Map, Sonnet
- C.V. or Multimedia Resume
- Test
- Story

- http://electronicportfolios.org/metaphors.html

Purpose & Goals for the portfolio (Determine Content)

- Multiple purposes:
  - Learning/Process
  - Assessment
  - Marketing/Showcase
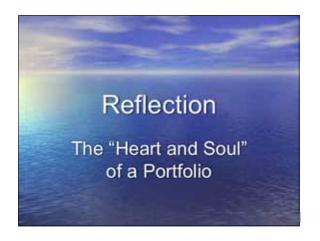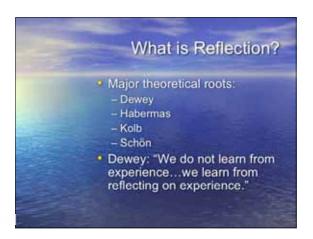
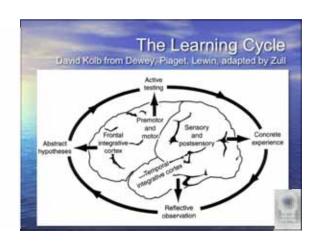## A few thoughts about Assessment -- What Type?
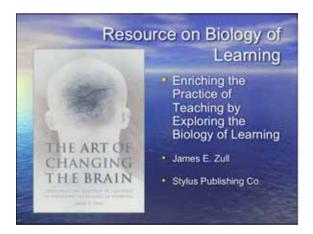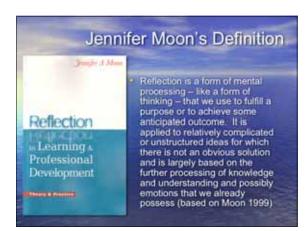
- Assessment OF Learning? or
- Assessment FOR Learning?

What is your portfolio?

- A standardized **checklist** of skills? (Positivist)

or

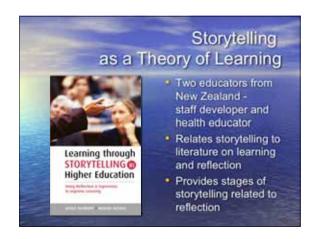- A reflective **story** of deep learning? (Constructivist)

Reflection

The "Heart and Soul" of a Portfolio

What is Reflection?

- Major theoretical roots:
  - Dewey
  - Habermas
  - Kolb
  - Schön
- Dewey: "We do not learn from experience…we learn from reflecting on experience."

Resource on Biology of Learning

THE ART OF CHANGING THE BRAIN

- Enriching the Practice of Teaching by Exploring the Biology of Learning
- James E. Zull
- Stylus Publishing Co.

The Learning Cycle
David Kolb from Dewey, Piaget, Lewin, adapted by Zull

Jennifer Moon's Definition

Jennifer A Moon

Reflection in Learning & Professional Development

Theory & Practice

- Reflection is a form of mental processing — like a form of thinking — that we use to fulfill a purpose or to achieve some anticipated outcome. It is applied to relatively complicated or unstructured ideas for which there is not an obvious solution and is largely based on the further processing of knowledge and understanding and possibly emotions that we already possess (based on Moon 1999)

Storytelling as a Theory of Learning

Learning through STORYTELLING in Higher Education

- Two educators from New Zealand - staff developer and health educator
- Relates storytelling to literature on learning and reflection
- Provides stages of storytelling related to reflection

Links between Learning and Storytelling

Map of Learning (Moon, 1999)	Learning through Storytelling (McDrury & Alterio, 2003)
• Noticing	• Story finding
• Making sense	• Story telling
• Making meaning	• Story expanding
• Working with meaning	• Story processing
• Transformative learning	• Story reconstructing

McDrury, J., Alterio, M. (2003) *Learning through Storytelling in Higher Education*. London: Kogan-Page, p.47

Storytelling as Reflection
(Schön, 1988)

"…for storytelling is the mode of description best suited to transformation in new situations of action."
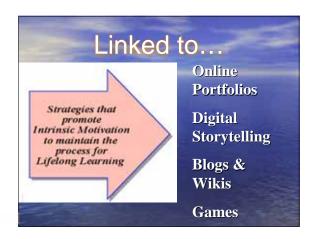
Portfolio tells a Story

"A portfolio tells a story. It is the story of knowing. Knowing about things… Knowing oneself… Knowing an audience… Portfolios are students' own stories of what they know, why they believe they know it, and why others should be of the same opinion."
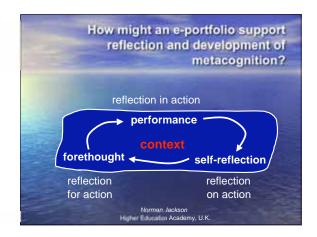(Paulson & Paulson, 1991, p.2)

Linking Two Dynamic Processes to Promote Deep Learning

Portfolio Development Process
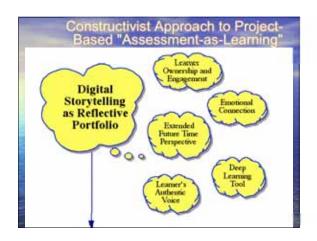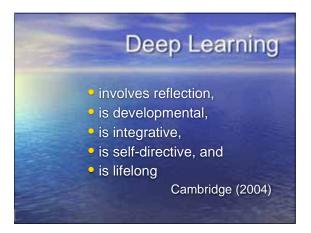**Digital Storytelling**

Linked to…

Strategies that promote Intrinsic Motivation to maintain the process for Lifelong Learning

Online Portfolios

Digital Storytelling

Blogs & Wikis

Games

How might an e-portfolio support development of personal knowledge?

knowledge for
acting/doing

performance

context

forethought → self-reflection

knowledge for
planning actions
and imagination

knowledge of self
derived from doing

Norman Jackson
Higher Education Academy, U.K.

How might an e-portfolio support reflection and development of metacognition?

reflection in action

performance

context

forethought ← self-reflection

reflection
for action

reflection
on action

Norman Jackson
Higher Education Academy, U.K.

Digital Storytelling is BOTH…

HIGH TECH
and
HIGH TOUCH

Why include Digital Storytelling in ePortfolios?

Learner Motivation and Affect

Brain Research on Emotion in Learning

Constructivist Approach to Project-Based "Assessment-as-Learning"

Digital Storytelling as Reflective Portfolio

Learner Ownership and Engagement

Emotional Connection

Extended Future Time Perspective

Deep Learning Tool

Learner's Authentic Voice

Deep Learning

- involves reflection,
- is developmental,
- is integrative,
- is self-directive, and
- is lifelong

Cambridge (2004)

Voice = Authenticity

Where is the "voice" in
most electronic portfolios?

Digital Paper or Digital Story?

Digital paper = text and images only
Digital story = tell your story **in your own voice**.
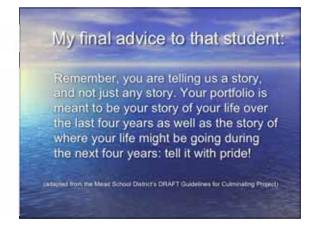**Multimedia** = audio and video

A high school student inquiry

"I am a student in high school. Why is it manditory for me to make a proficient on my portfolio for me to graduate? I have all of my credits to graduate, but if I make lower than proficient I don't get to graduate."

How would you answer this student?
Read my complete answer in my blog:
http://electronicportfolios.org/blog/

My final advice to that student:

Remember, you are telling us a story, and not just any story. Your portfolio is meant to be your story of your life over the last four years as well as the story of where your life might be going during the next four years: tell it with pride!

(adapted from the Mead School District's DRAFT Guidelines for Culminating Project)

Researching Digital Storytelling

On the DVD-ROM:
- A set of research questions and suggested research strategies
- A set of rubrics for evaluating digital stories (based on Scott Co. Schools - KY)
- A literature review on digital storytelling