REFLECT Initiative
Researching Electronic Portfolios: Learning, Engagement, Collaboration through Technology

Helen Barrett
Research Project Director

Why The Reflect Initiative?
- Empirical evidence on effectiveness of e-portfolios in secondary schools
- Use portfolios to complement standardized tests
- Conduct a meta-study made of many smaller studies

The Goal:
- To collect data and draw conclusions about the impact of electronic portfolios on:
  - student learning
  - Motivation
  - Engagement
  …in secondary schools

What participants receive:
- Free web-based software for all student participants
- Free regional workshops (Aug-Sept. 2005)
- Onsite visits (one a year)
- Online professional development for all teacher participants

Goals of the REFLECT Initiative

The overarching goal of The REFLECT Initiative is to collect data and draw conclusions about the impact that electronic portfolios have on student learning, motivation, and engagement and how teaching practices and strategies change with electronic portfolio integration.

Some Key Research Questions
- How do e-portfolios provide evidence of deep learning?
- Under what conditions can e-portfolios be successfully used to demonstrate assessment for learning and assessment of learning?
- Under what conditions do students take ownership of their e-portfolios?
- What are the benefits of developing e-portfolios as perceived by students, teachers, administrators, and/or parents?
- What are perceived obstacles to implementing e-portfolios with secondary school students and how can they be overcome?
- How do paper portfolios differ from e-portfolios?
The Vision of REFLECT

To provide the teachers with the training and the students with the tools:

- To tell their *stories* with *pride*!
- To put *heart* and *soul* and *voice* into their portfolios!

How Were Schools Chosen?

- Schools submitted a proposal for their project in Spring 2005
- All participating organizations needed to send at least one representative to the Inaugural meeting (Philadelphia just prior to NECC)
- Students must participate (and be supported) for the length of the entire program (2 years)

Research Project Factors

- **Pre**: Fall 2005 (Sept-Oct)
  - Online surveys of students and teachers (UNT)
- **Ongoing**: through Online PD & Teacher Journals (blogs)
  - Sample student ePortfolio reviews
- **Site Visit observations**: Fall 2005/Spring 2006
  - Focus on introduction and implementation by teachers
- **Mid**: Spring 2006 (May)
  - Online surveys of students and teachers
- **Site Visit observations**: Fall 2006/Spring 2007
  - Add Student focus groups
- **Post**: Spring 2007 (March-May)
  - Repeat online surveys of students and teachers (UNT + HSSSE)
  - Paper survey of parents (English & Spanish)

Summary of Research Protocols

Timeline

- High School graduates in Washington state (and Utah, too!)
- High school freshman
  (Jim Mahoney, *Power and Portfolios* published by Heinemann)
Difference between those two stories?

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

Learner Ownership and Control of Electronic Portfolio Development

Motivation

Extrinsic

Intrinsic

Purpose

Process

Contents

Content

Content

ORGANIZATION CONTROL

LEARNER CONTROL

Learner Control vs. Organizational Control

Assumption:

Greater Learner Control leads to more Intrinsic Motivation

Getting Started

Each school needed to decide on the best implementation to fit the needs of the project.

Many Choices....

- Showcase Portfolio?
- Assessment Portfolio?
- Combination of both?

What Type of Portfolio?

Presentation Portfolio

- Gives student ownership
- Flexible structure

Assessment Portfolio (DRF)

- Provides rigid structure
- Provides school with evaluation data

Purposes for Assessment

Assessment OF Learning = Summative Assessment

Assessment FOR Learning = Formative (Classroom-based) Assessment

www.qca.org.uk/afl (ages3-14)
Overlap of Assessment Types

Portfolios that support Assessment OF Learning

Institution-centered

Portfolios that support Assessment FOR Learning

Learner-centered

What is your portfolio philosophy?

- A standardized checklist of skills? (Positivist)
- or
- A reflective story of deep learning? (Constructivist)

A look at some of the REFLECT schools

Overall Cohort

- 14 Active Projects
  - Arizona (3)
  - New Jersey
  - California (5)
  - Florida
  - Maryland
  - New Jersey
  - Brazil
  - Tennessee
- 31 Active Schools
  - 15 in Arizona DOE Project
  - 4 in New Jersey DOE Project
  - 1 Elementary School
  - 1 Intermediate School
  - 29 High Schools
  - 2 Private Schools (MD & FL)
- ~133 Active Teachers
- ~3100 Students (Fall Semester)
  - Could double in Year 2

Mount Juliet High School (TN)

- Presentation Portfolio
  - Template created and distributed to all of the students
  - 470 participating students

Mount Juliet High School
Quotes

- “We have found the web-based portfolios are giving us a leverage not found in paper-based portfolio products.” - Diane Bennett, Project Leader

John O’Connell High School (CA)

- Directed Response Folio (Assessment Portfolio)
  - College to Career Classes
  - 450 participating students
  - French class
  - Spanish classes
  - AP Biology

John O’Connell High School

- Directed Response Folio (Assessment Portfolio)
  - College to Career Classes
  - 450 participating students
  - French class
  - Spanish classes
  - AP Biology

Associado Brasil America

- Brazilian/American Bi-national Center accredited by the U.S. government
- It promotes cultural and educational exchange through English courses for adults, teens, and children and holds cultural events, courses and seminars for professionals, scholarship programs, Portuguese as a second Language, translation services and membership programs for U.S. alumni.
- Presentation Portfolios – one for each of eight semesters
- Portfolios Submitted to DRF
- 130 students

McGarvin Intermediate School (CA)

- Social Studies Classes
- 175 students
- Directed Response Folio Template
McGarvin Intermediate School

Looking Ahead… 2006
- Initial Surveys in the process of completion
  - Using Survey Builder and DRF within TaskStream
  - Student Survey (UNT's CAQ)
  - Faculty Survey (UNT’s TAC, CBAM, Davies/Stiggins AFL strategies)
- Teachers submitting products
  - Weekly Journal
  - Professional Portfolio
- Phase 2 Professional Development (Pedagogy)
- Site visits to schools throughout Spring 2006
- March Meetings in Orlando (FETC) and Palm Springs (CUE)
- Spring Survey focus specifically on Portfolio Use

PD Needs Assessment (TaskStream-Phase 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining a Reflective Journal with the Web Page Builder</td>
<td>27.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the Resource Folio to upload work samples</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating your Professional Portfolio using the Web Folio Builder</td>
<td>27.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the Lesson Builder and the Unit Builder</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the Rubric Wizard</td>
<td>30.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the Message Center (internal e-mail)</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the Discussion Board</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a Directed Response Folio</td>
<td>36.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a Template for the Web Publication Tools</td>
<td>19.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a customized form for your students to complete</td>
<td>58.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=36

PD Needs Assessment (Pedagogy-Phase 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21st Century Learning</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formative Assessment FOR Learning strategies</td>
<td>27.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Learning Portfolios</td>
<td>47.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project-Based Learning</td>
<td>38.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement and Motivation</td>
<td>47.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Integration of Technology into Instruction</td>
<td>19.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection to support deep learning</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Storytelling</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create school-based Professional Learning Community</td>
<td>13.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=36

Site Visits
- 1 day classroom observation + conversation with teachers
- 4-8 page report with these topics:
  - Observation of Technology and TaskStream Use by Students
  - Rolling it Out: Planning and Early Implementation
  - General use of or goals for TaskStream in this implementation
  - Computer Environment in the School
  - Implementation of Research Requirements
  - School Environment
  - General feelings about TaskStream and ePortfolios from teachers
  - Professional Development Needs
  - Review of Project Goals from the original Proposal
  - Observations and Comments on the Progress of Implementation

My Initial Observations
- Teacher’s role is critical
  - Dual learning curve
    - Learning TaskStream (prior experience in TED program)
    - Using portfolios with students (prior paper portfolio experience)
    - Understanding reflection and metacognition
    - Using Assessment FOR Learning strategies
- Access to technology is also critical
  - Home access by students
  - Classroom access impact on in-school use
Validating my dissertation research

- When learning new tools, use familiar tasks
- When learning new tasks, use familiar tools

My Hope and Wish…

Electronic Portfolios become dynamic celebrations and stories of deep learning across the lifespan

Dr. Helen Barrett

- Research Project Director, The REFLECT Initiative sponsored by TaskStream
- eportfolios@comcast.net
- http://electronicportfolios.org