Electronic Portfolios in Language Learning
Dr. Helen Barrett
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The Power of Portfolios
what children can teach us about learning and assessment
Author: Elizabeth Hebert
Publisher: Jossey-Bass
Picture courtesy of Amazon.com

The Power of Portfolios
Author: Dr. Elizabeth Hebert, Principal Crow Island School, Winnetka, Illinois
Picture taken by Helen Barrett at AERA, Seattle, April, 2001

From the Preface (1)
"Portfolios have been with us for a very long time. Those of us who grew up in the 1950s or earlier recognize portfolios as reincarnations of the large memory boxes or drawers where our parents collected starred spelling tests, lacy valentines, science fair posters, early attempts at poetry, and (of course) the obligatory set of plaster hands. Each item was selected by our parents because it represented our acquisition of a new skill or our feelings of accomplishment. Perhaps an entry was accompanied by a special note of praise from a teacher or maybe it was placed in the box just because we did it."

From the Preface (2)
"We formed part of our identity from the contents of these memory boxes. We recognized each piece and its association with a particular time or experience. We shared these collections with grandparents to reinforce feelings of pride and we reexamined them on rainy days when friends were unavailable for play. Reflecting on the collection allowed us to attribute importance to these artifacts, and by extension to ourselves, as they gave witness to the story of our early school experiences."

From the Preface (3)
"Our parents couldn’t possibly envision that these memory boxes would be the inspiration for an innovative way of thinking about children’s learning. These collections, lovingly stored away on our behalf, are the genuine exemplar for documenting children’s learning over time. But now these memory boxes have a different meaning. It’s not purely private or personal, although the personal is what gives power to what they can mean."
Let's get personal…
Think for a minute about:

Something about your **COLLECTIONS**:
- Suggested topics:
  - If you are a parent, what you saved for your children
  - What your parents saved for you
  - What you collect…
  - Why you collect…

**Some issues to consider**
- What do your collections say about what you value?
- Is there a difference between what you purposefully save and what you can’t throw away?
- How can we use our personal collections experiences to help learners as they develop their portfolios?

The power of portfolios to support deep learning is personal.

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**What is a Portfolio in Education?**

A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student’s efforts, progress and achievements in one or more areas over time.

(Northwest Evaluation Association, 1990)

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**Why use Portfolios?**

- provides a richer picture of student performance than can be gained from more traditional, objective forms of assessment

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**What is a Portfolio in Education?**

The collection must include:
- student participation in selecting contents
- the criteria for selection
- the criteria for judging merit
- evidence of student self-reflection

(Northwest Evaluation Association, 1990)

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Parent Questionnaire Ratings of the Usefulness of Different Types of Information for Learning about Their Child’s Progress in School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Useful</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Very</th>
<th>Blani/Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of Information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report Cards</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child’s teacher talking about his or her progress</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standardized tests</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing graded examples of my child’s work</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: After Shepard & Bliem, 1995, p. 27
What is an Electronic Portfolio?
• uses electronic technologies as the container
• which allows students/teachers to collect and organize portfolio artifacts in many media types (audio, video, graphics, text)
• using hypertext links to organize the material
• connecting evidence to appropriate standards (in a standards-based portfolio)

Portfolio Processes
Traditional
• Collecting
• Selecting
• Reflecting
• Directing
• Celebrating
+ Technology
• Archiving
• Linking/Thinking
• Storytelling
• Collaborating
• Publishing

Definitions
• Artifact: a piece of student work
• Captions: brief explanatory reflection on a piece of work in a portfolio
• Evidence of Learning in a Portfolio
  Artifact
  + Reflection (Student’s Rationale)
  + Validation (Teacher’s Evaluation)

3 General Components of the Portfolio Development Process
• Content
  – Learner’s artifacts and reflections (captions)
• Purpose
  – Reason for creating the portfolio including learning, professional development, assessment, employment
• Process
  – Tools used
  – Sequence of activities
  – Rules established by educational institution
  – Evaluation criteria
  – Collaboration or conversations about the portfolio

Purpose & Goals for the portfolio (Determine Content)
• Multiple purposes:
  – Learning/Process
  – Assessment
  – Marketing/Showcase

Learning Portfolios
• “know thyself” = a lifetime of investigation
• Self-knowledge as outcome of learning

The Learning Portfolio (Zubizaretta, 2004, p.20)
Learning Portfolios
- Support reflection which is central to learning
- Reflections – The Heart and Soul of the Portfolio
- An electronic portfolio without reflection is just a
  - Digital scrapbook
  - Fancy electronic resume
  - Multimedia Presentation
  - Personal web site

Showcase Portfolios
- Marketing
- Employment
- Tell your story
- A primary motivator for many portfolio developers

Assessment Portfolios
- A major movement in Teacher Education in U.S.
- A major new commercial market
- A primary motivator for organizations

Authentic Assessment
- where students generate rather than choose a response
- "The terms alternative assessment, authentic assessment, or performance-based assessment are often used synonymously "to mean variants of performance assessments that require students to generate rather than choose a response."

Purposes for Assessment
Assessment OF Learning = Summative Assessment
Assessment FOR Learning = Formative Assessment
Past Present Future

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ePortfolio Technology over Time
- Container
  - 1991: Desktop
  - 1995: CD-R
  - 2000: Internet
  - 2005: DVD-R
  - 2006: Pocket Tech (PDAs, Flash drives, Phones, iPods)
- What's Next?
- Authoring Software
  - Common tools
    - Office & PDF
    - HTML Editors
  - Customized Systems
    - Online data bases
    - Work Flow Management
    - Assessment Management
  - Interoperability (currently in 'silos')

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Levels of ePortfolio Implementation

- **Working Portfolio**
  - The Repository
  - The Digital Archive
  - The Artifacts (meta-tagged)
  - Personal Information
  - Reflective Journal
- **Presentation Portfolio(s)**
  - The “Story” or Narrative
  - Multiple Views (public/private)
  - Varied Audiences (permissions)
  - Varied Purposes

What is the best tool?
It Depends!

State of the Art of e-Portfolio Development

- **Publishing environments:**
  - Optical media (CD-R, DVD-R)
  - WWW
- **Authoring environments:**
  - Common Tools
  - Customized (Commercial) Systems
  - Open Source Tools
  - Web 2.0 Technologies

Planning Issues

- **What is your purpose?**
  - authentic assessment (formative feedback)
  - showcasing best work and growth over time
- **Software capabilities:** allow interaction between teachers and students around learning activities and products,
  - **Students:** create, store artifacts and reflections and organize their work, preferably with hyperlinks
  - **Teachers:** review the work and provide feedback in narrative form (based on a rubric, if available)
- **Internet access?** Poor or good?

Today’s Tool Choices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor Internet Access?</th>
<th>Good Internet Access?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)</td>
<td>TaskStream, iWebFolio or any commercial fee-based system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple iLife (iDVD, iWeb)</td>
<td>OSP &amp; Sakai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web Page Editors (DreamWeaver, Front Page)</td>
<td>Web 2.0 tools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Today’s Tool Choices

These tools require only a browser and good Internet access to create electronic portfolios because they are Application Service Providers (ASP) - the software is on the company server.

Office - Word, Excel, PowerPoint

**Advantages**
- On most personal computers
- Common toolset
- Easy to create hyperlinks
- Easy to add comments
- Does not require Internet access to develop portfolios (students work off-line)

**Disadvantages**
- Set up own system for storing and organizing files and managing the feedback on student work (probably using Track Changes in Word or Comments in all tools)
- Data aggregation must be set up by teacher with another tool, like Excel, not automated
- Files should be translated into Web-compatible format before posting online (HTML or PDF)

Better for publishing on CD
Web 2.0 Technologies

Advantages
- Free, often open-source tools on the WWW
- Me Publishing
- Shared Resources
- Shared Writing
- Media Creation Online

Disadvantages
- Requires higher technology competency
- Mostly not secure websites

Architecture of Interaction (Web 2.0) allows a Pedagogy of Interaction (ePortfolio 2.0)

Digital Evidence of Writing
- Word processing documents
- Blogs: Blogger.com
- Shared Writing
  - Wiki - wikispaces.com
  - GoogleDocs

Digital Evidence of Speaking
- Shared Video
  - YouTube.com
- Online Video Creation:
  - Bubbleshare.com
  - Jumpcut.com
- Podcasts
  - Online Audio Creation:
    - Odeo.com
    - Podomatic.com

Free Online Portfolio Tools
- Blog with pages
  www.wordpress.com
- Free online portfolio for edu addresses
  www.epsilen.com
- KEEP Toolkit
  www.cfkeep.org
- GoogleDocs
  docs.google.com/
For more details:
Authentic Assessment with Electronic Portfolios using Common Software and Web 2.0 Tools
http://electronicportfolios.org/web20.html

“every day-ness”
How can we make ePortfolio development a natural process integrated into everyday life?

Lifelong and Life Wide Learning

My Final Wish…
May all your electronic portfolios become dynamic celebrations and stories of deep learning across the lifespan.

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