**Enhancing Student Voices in ePortfolios through Blogging, Podcasting, and Digital Storytelling**

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**Session Description**

- Are your e-portfolios standardized checklists of skills or constructivist stories of learning? Learn about open-source or free strategies that increase student voice in learner-centered e-portfolios.
- Strategies: Blogging, digital storytelling and podcasting

**Based on my online articles**

- Electronic Portfolios as Digital Stories of Deep Learning  
  – *Emerging Digital Tools to Support Reflection in Learner-Centered Portfolios*  
- White Paper for TaskStream  
- [http://electronicportfolios.org/](http://electronicportfolios.org/)  
  – Under Online Publications  
  – Slides under Recent Conference Presentations

**A tale of two paper portfolios**

- High School graduates in Pacific Northwest (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?

**Schlechty Center’s Theory of Engagement**

1. Engagement  
   - Learn at high levels/ profound grasp  
   - Retain what they learn  
   - Transfer to new contexts
2. Strategic Compliance
3. Ritual Compliance
4. Retreatism
5. Rebellion
Metaphors!

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

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

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)

Purpose & Goals for the portfolio
(Determine Content)

- Multiple purposes:
  - Learning/Process
  - Assessment
  - Marketing/Showcase

Constructed Meaning

"The portfolio is a laboratory where students construct meaning from their accumulated experience."
(Paulson & Paulson, 1991, p.5)

Portfolios tell a Story

“A portfolio is opinion backed by fact... Students prove what they know with samples of their work.”
(Paulson & Paulson, 1991, p.2)

Learning Portfolios

- "know thyself" = a lifetime of investigation
- self-knowledge as outcome of learning

- The Learning Portfolio
  (Zubizaretta, 2004, p.20)
Showcase Portfolios

- Marketing
- Employment
- College applications
- 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

A few thoughts about Assessment -- What Type?

- Assessment OF Learning? or
- Assessment FOR Learning?

www.qca.org.uk
ages3-14

Purposes for Assessment

- Assessment OF Learning = Summative Assessment
- Assessment FOR Learning = Formative (Classroom-based) Assessment
- Past-to-Present
- Present-to-Future

Principles of Assessment FOR Learning

- Definition: Assessment for Learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.
Overlap of Assessment Types*

- Portfolios that support Assessment OF Learning
  - Positivist checklist of skills

- Portfolios that support Assessment FOR Learning
  - Constructivist story of deep learning

A Resource on K-12 Portfolios
- By Evangeline Harris Stefanakis
- Published by Heinemann
- Includes a CD-ROM with examples of student portfolios

Assessment for Learning Continuum - Enhanced

- Reflection
  - Learning
  - Self Assessment
  - Informal Feedback
  - Portfolios
  - Observation
  - Rubrics
  - Performance Based
  - Standardized Tests
  - Accountability

Some concerns...
- Assessment for Learning
- Portfolios for Learning
- What about Motivation?

Components of Portfolio Development
- Content
- Purpose
- Process

Learner Ownership and Control of Electronic Portfolio Development

- Motivation
  - Intrinsic
  - Extrinsic

- Purpose

- Process

- Organization Control vs. Learner Control
  - Learner Control leads to more Intrinsic Motivation
Portfolio Processes

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

Linked to...

Digital Tools to Support Reflection:
- Online Portfolios
- Blogs & Wikis
- Digital Storytelling
- Games

Open Source & Free Online Portfolio Tools I Tried

Open Source
- Mozilla Composer
- Plone (CMS)
- OSPI 1.5
- (to come) Elgg

Free Tools
- GeoCities
- Tripod
- Maricopa CC
- eFolio Minnesota

My evaluation study of online software, services, or strategies
- http://electronicportfolios.org/myportfolio/versions.html
- Under On-line Publications
- To date, recreating my new portfolio using 17 different software packages, services, or strategies

Conclusions
- Too early to judge
- Scales applied to each system
  - “Trade-offs” - “Balance”
  - Creativity
  - Ease of Use
  - Cost/Storage & ROI
  - Features
  - Flexibility/Customization Allowed
  - Integration with Assessment System
  - Transfer & technology skill development

“They each exhibit trade-offs between the flexibility inherent in an HTML-based tool with the relative ease-of-use but lack of creativity in a system built on a database.”
Reflection
The “Heart and Soul” of a Portfolio

Helping Students to Reflect
• Provide models and examples
• Begin with forms or prompts
• Move to journals/blogs
• Be careful that reflection in portfolios doesn’t become an exercise in filling in the blanks on a web-based form.

What is a blog?
• Abbreviation for “web log”
• an online journal organized in reverse chronological order
• Emerging into the mainstream in the last 18 months - #1 word searched on Merriam-Webster website in 2004
• Very popular with adolescent girls
• Free, open source and commercial tools available

Examples of “BlogFolios”
• http://electronicportfolios.org/blogs.html
• Will Richardson's blog - Weblogg-ed (New Jersey)
• Mario Asselin, principal Institut St-Joseph, a private elementary school in Quebec City
• Alan Levine’s blog post on Blogfolios
• Blogs as reflective journals are great learning portfolios!

Free or Open Source Tools
Free Blog Services
• Blogger (by Google)
• LiveJournal
• Tripod

Open Source Tools
• Word Press
• Drupal
• Blosxom
• InterAct
• Moodle
• Elgg.net (New!)

Elgg.net
brand new Open Source software
• Elgg is an electronic portfolio, weblog and social networking system, connecting learners and creating communities of learning.
• Created at University of Edinburgh by David Tosh and Ben Werdmuller
How can you leverage the technologies students own?

• Accessibility from home computers
• Connectivity with cell phones & PDAs (digital images, reflections)
• What about video storage or streaming video?
• Podcasting = audio-only digital stories and blogs

“Free” Digital Storytelling Tools
http://electronicportfolios.org/digistory/tools.html

Macintosh
• Audio recording Audacity
• Image editing iPhoto, GIMP
• Video editing iMovie

Windows
• Audio recording Audacity
• Image editing GIMP
• Video editing MovieMaker2

Digital Storytelling Process

• Learners create a 2-4 minute digital video clip
  – First person narrative [begins with a written script ~ 400 words]
  – Told in their own voice [record script]
  – Illustrated (mostly) by still images
  – Music track to add emotional tone

Learner Ownership and Engagement with Portfolio

The tools should allow the learner to feel in control of the process, including the "look and feel" of the portfolio.

Deep Learning

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

Voice = Authenticity

- multimedia expands "voice" in an electronic portfolio (both literally and rhetorically)
- personality of the author
- reflections unique
- writer talking directly to the reader/viewer

Helping Students Tell Their Stories

- COLLECT more than text documents
  - Pictures
  - Audio
  - Video
- Focus on REFLECTION over time
- Help students make CONNECTIONS
- Support multimedia presentation formats
- Support storytelling

Storytelling as Reflection (Schön, 1988)

"...for storytelling is the mode of description best suited to transformation in new situations of action."

Storytelling as Reflection (Schön, 1988)

"Stories are products of reflection, but we do not usually hold onto them long enough to make them objects of reflection in their own right."

Storytelling as Reflection (Schön, 1988)

“When we get into the habit of recording our stories, we can look at them again, attending to the meanings we build into them and attending, as well, to our strategies of narrative description.”

Storytelling as a Theory of Learning

- 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
Digital Storytelling is BOTH...

HIGH TECH
and
HIGH TOUCH

Digital Paper or Digital Story?

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

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)

K-12 Digital Stories

• Victoria: K, 1, 2
• Naya: 7th

A high school student inquiry

“I am a student in high school. Why is it mandatory 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/

Graduate Student Examples

• …you are a graduate student reflecting on what is drawing you into teaching
• Play “coming full circle”
Digital Storytelling
Becomes a Lifelong Skill
• Digital Family Stories - from birth to end-of-life
• Digital Family Stories - help people reflect on life transitions
• Digital Family Stories - preserve multimedia memories as a legacy for future generations

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Helen Barrett, Ph.D.
Research Director
A research project to assess the impact of electronic portfolios on student learning, motivation and engagement in high schools

My Website and my CD
A brief look at the tools
More in-depth tutorials and examples

The REFLECT Initiative Vision … in a nutshell:
To provide teachers with the training and students with the tools:
• to tell their stories with pride!
• to put heart and soul and voice into their portfolios!

My own story
• “One good example is worth 1000 theories”
• The issue of time and learning - reaching another transition and decision point in a long career, reflecting on the milestones in my life
• Play "choices"

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

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