ePortfolios for Lifelong Learning: Cradle to Grave

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My focus in this session:

- **Cradle** (birth through early childhood in schools) - Family Involvement
- **Grave** (retirement years) - Family and cross-generational storytelling

My Questions

- How can families help young students build electronic portfolios (purposeful collections of their work) that demonstrate growth over time?

More Questions

- How can schools and parents help children use commonly-available multimedia software to create digital documentation of development, while addressing obsolescence of media and data formats?

Assumptions (from the Teacher/Classroom Point of View)

- In many schools, students have more computer access in their homes than in their classrooms.
- Portfolios (whether paper or electronic) belong to the student.

Assumptions (from the Teacher/Classroom Point of View)

- Teachers don’t have a lot of extra time... they need a partner in the electronic portfolio development process to help those students who do not have the necessary technology skills.
Assumptions (from the Child/Family Point of View)
- Children and parents are natural “packrats”
- Technology is becoming very commonplace in the home, even among single-parent families

Assumptions (from the Child/Family Point of View)
- Families want to find meaningful ways to support students’ learning using technology
- Parents want to be involved in early childhood learning

Families as e-Portfolio Partners
- Find strategies to involve families as partners in the e-portfolio development process
- Use home computers to make up for the lack of teacher time and access to computers in classrooms.
- Take advantage of the popularity of scrapbooking to involve families in e-portfolio development.

Turning scrapbooks into portfolios
- With some guidance, and support for facilitating student self-reflection, these scrapbooks could be turned into portfolios.
- How can families help build electronic portfolios that demonstrate growth over time?

What’s Next?
A Gift for the Future
A Partnership for Today
- How to extend this process beyond the classroom...

Documenting our Families’ Stories
- There are a group of people (personal historians) who are helping elderly people recall and record their life stories.
- A new trend is to record these stories in audio and video formats (digital storytelling).
- How about beginning the collection process much earlier in life?
Leaving a Legacy Beyond the Classroom

- Couple the interest in **scrapbooking** with the widespread interest in **genealogy**, and you have **Project Progeny**: or genealogy in reverse.
- We have the technology today to begin telling our stories for current and **future** generations, not just in words, but in sounds and images, stored in a media that will last longer than magnetic tape or celluloid.

Beware of the obsolescence of Magnetic Media

**Why Family Stories and History are Lost:**

- **Procrastination**

**Rating the Life of Archival Media**

- Inkjet photos - 5 years
- Audio & video tapes - 25 years
- Boxes of stuff in the attic - 50 years
- Childhood memories - 75 years
- CD-ROMs - Over 100 years
- A well printed and bound book - 100s of years

(Source: Tombo Media: http://www.tombomedia.com/Notes.html)

Issues about File Formats

- Will you be able to read these files 10-15 years from now?
- Are they in a standard, generic or proprietary formats?
- What about text files?
- Make sure word processing files are saved in plain text or RTF formats.

We need a vision of the possible

- We have a baby boom generation who are becoming grandparents
- Many have or can afford the technology
- Their children (and grandchildren) have the technology skills to make it happen.
- Involving our children and grandchildren in building a new family tradition:
  - Documenting our family values and preserving our stories

Cross-Generational Collaboration

- We share the development process and build the younger generation’s commitment
- It is their responsibility for insuring that these digital stories are preserved and transferred to the next appropriate media every decade or so...
  - Whatever that media turns out to be.

Family Storytelling as Life Skill Development

- Lifelong Learning Skills
  - Reflection
  - Storytelling
  - Multimedia authoring
- Genealogy
Process...not product

“Although the historical roadmap may never be complete, it is often the journey that provides the richest rewards.”

Charles Williams
http://homepage.mac.com/williamszone/dostal/dostal.html

A Gift for the Future

What a gift we can give to our descendants: to know us through songs and stories, laughter and tears...to preserve our family values, heritage and the celebrations of our lives.

A Partnership for Today

If we introduce this digital collection/e-portfolio strategy beginning in early childhood classrooms, we give new meaning and definition to family involvement and partnership in our children’s education.

Dr. Helen Barrett

http://digitalfamilystory.com
http://electronicportfolios.org
http://homepage.mac.com/eportfolios/