E-Portfolios: Dynamic Celebrations of Learning

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ISTE = International Society for Technology in Education

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These Slides will be posted to:
http://electronicportfolios.org/portfolios.html#conf

Legacy from the Portfolio Literature

- Much to learn from the literature on paper-based portfolios
- As adult learners, we have much to learn from how children approach portfolios

“Everything I know about portfolios was confirmed working with a kindergartener”

Contextual Definition

- Bird (1990): "portfolios" communicate meaning only in the specific context in which they are used
- To be meaningful, the portfolio concept needs to be clearly defined as it will be used in education and training

The Power of Portfolios

Author: Elizabeth Hebert
Publisher: Jossey-Bass

The Power of Portfolios

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

Picture courtesy of Amazon.com
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 notation 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… Find a partner and discuss:

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...

Debrief

- 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 collection experiences to help learners as they develop their portfolios?

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)
**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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**Portfolio Processes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>+ Technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collecting</td>
<td>Archiving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selecting</td>
<td>Linking/Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflecting</td>
<td>Storytelling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Projecting</td>
<td>Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Celebrating</td>
<td>Publishing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Purpose & Goals for the portfolio (Determine Content)**

- Many purposes:
  - Learning
  - Assessment
  - Marketing/Showcase

**Learning Portfolios**

- “know thyself” = a lifetime of investigation
- self-knowledge as outcome of learning
- portfolio development study (Brown, 2002)
  - increased students’ understanding of what, why, and how they learned throughout their careers
  - enhanced their communication and organization skills
  - reinforced the importance of reflection in learning.

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**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

More later!

Assessment as Celebration

- Celebrating the successes of what we’ve learned through assessment
- Done through documentation
- Students take charge of their own learning

Portfolios support a Culture of Evidence

- Evidence = Artifacts
  + Reflection (Rationale)
  + Validation (Feedback)

What is an Electronic Portfolio?

- uses electronic technologies as the container
- portfolio artifacts in many media (audio, video, graphics, text)
- hypertext links to organize the material
- and connect evidence to outcomes, goals, or standards (in an assessment portfolio)

Electronic Portfolio Decision Considerations

- Questions to ask:
  1. What is the portfolio’s purpose?
  2. What technology do you have? (and what skills do you have?)
  3. Who is the audience? (and what technology do they have?)

Audience (Determine publishing format)

- Who are the primary audiences for the portfolio?
  - Student
  - Parent
  - Teacher/School community
  - Employer
  - College
- What technologies do they have?
**A Resource on K-12 Portfolios**

- By Evangeline Harris Stefanakis
- Published by Heinemann
- Includes a CD-ROM with examples of student portfolios

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**Assessment for Learning Continuum**

- Learning
- Assessment for Learning
- Accountability
- Self Assessment
- Informal Feedback
- Rubrics
- Performance Based
- Standardized Tests

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**Assessment for Learning Continuum - Enhanced**

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

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**Technology to Support: Self-Assessment**

- Individual or Organization
- Weblogs
- Reflective journals
- Online discussions
- Self-report surveys

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**Technology to Support: Rubric Development**

- RubiStar
  - http://rubistar.4teachers.org/
- TaskStream
  - http://www.taskstream.com

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**Technology to Support: Portfolio Development**

- Generic Tools
  - “worldware”
- Customized Systems
  - Online database
One final thought about the two days ahead…

- Assessment for Learning
- Portfolios for Learning
- Learning for Change

My questions

- Will ePortfolios become another tool by educational organizations for mechanistic forms of high-stakes summative assessment?
- Or will educators recognize that ePortfolios are the best way to recognize and showcase learning in highly complex self-organizing human systems?

ePortfolios and Activity Theory

Activity Theory
Implications for human-computer interaction

“Tools”-->

Where is the revolution?

- Learners taking responsibility for their own learning
- Portfolios providing that mirror, map, and sonnet to celebrate learning and increase self-esteem
- Portfolios embedded as formative assessment support continuous improvement for quality

E-Portfolio Examples

- My portfolio
- Naya’s Portfolio (middle school)
  - Naya’s Video
- Victoria - Kindergarten
- Victoria - First Grade
- Victoria - Second Grade
My Final Wish…

May all your electronic portfolios become dynamic celebrations of learning across the lifespan.

Dr. Helen Barrett

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