

Researching High School ePortfolios

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The REFLECT Initiative

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/>**
– Under Online Publications

A tale of two paper portfolios

- High School graduates in Washington state (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?

A Need for Balance!!!

- How do we balance **learner individual ownership** of e-portfolios in systems with institutional mandates for accountability?
- Levels of Maturation (Love, McKean & Gathercoal, 2004) = institution-centered model
- Contrast with Hebert's (2001) Stages of Ownership of the Portfolio = learner-centered model

Stages of Ownership of the Portfolio (K-6 perspective)

(read from bottom to top in order of maturity)

- Child-organized portfolio
- Teacher-and-child-organized portfolio
- Progress portfolio
- Showcase portfolio or achievement portfolio
- Teacher-organized portfolio or curriculum portfolio
- Collection of child's work
- Folder of child's work

↑

Hebert, E. (2001) *The Power of Portfolios*. Jossey-Bass, p.45

Think about the differences between:

- Learning Portfolio *and* Portfolio Learning
- Assessment Portfolio *and* Portfolio Assessment
- One is more **Product**, the other is more **Process**

Purpose & Goals for the portfolio (Determine Content)

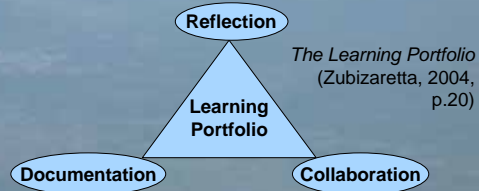
- Multiple purposes:
 - Learning/Process
 - Assessment
 - Marketing/Showcase

“The Blind Men and the Elephant”

- Eskimos having 49 different words for “snow”
- Those who don’t live in that environment tend to see it all as the same cold white stuff
- Same goes with “portfolio”

Learning Portfolios

- *“know thyself” = a lifetime of investigation*
- *self-knowledge as outcome of learning*



Which approach should you take?

- Are you looking for an **electronic portfolio...**
- Or an **assessment management system?**
- What’s the difference?
Along a Continuum

Contrasting Paradigms of Portfolios

- **Positivism**
- **Constructivism**

F. Leon Paulson & Pearl Paulson (1994)
“Assessing Portfolios Using the Constructivist Paradigm”
in Fogarty, R. (ed.) (1996) *Student Portfolios*.
Palatine: IRI Skylight Training & Publishing

Tension between two approaches

“The two paradigms produce portfolio activities that are entirely different.”

“The positivist approach puts a premium on the selection of items that reflect **outside standards and interests.**”

“The constructivist approach puts a premium on the selection of items that reflect learning **from the student’s perspective.**”

F. Leon Paulson & Pearl Paulson (1994)
“Assessing Portfolios Using the Constructivist Paradigm”
in Fogarty, R. (ed.) (1996) *Student Portfolios*.
Palatine: IRI Skylight Training & Publishing

What is your portfolio?

- A standardized **checklist** of skills? (Positivist)

or

- A reflective **story** of deep learning? (Constructivist)

Some concerns...

- **Assessment for Learning**
- **Portfolios for Learning**
- **What about Motivation?**

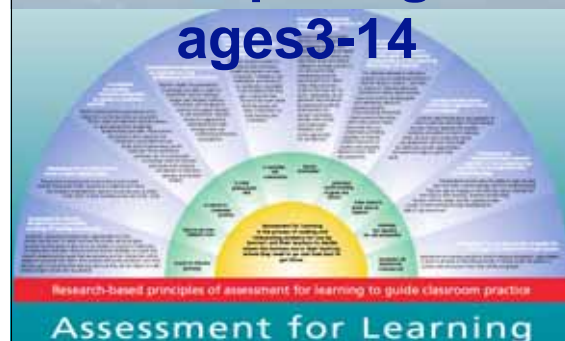
Purposes for Assessment

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

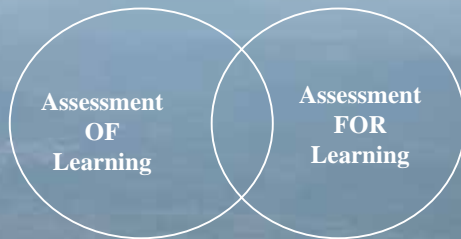
Principles of Assessment FOR Learning

- **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.

www.qca.org.uk
ages3-14



Overlap of Assessment Types*



*Alberta Assessment Consortium

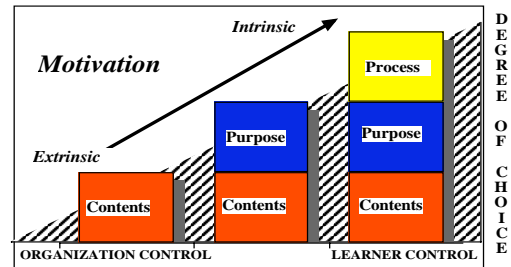
Portfolios used for Assessment OF Learning

- Purpose of portfolio prescribed by institution
- Artifacts mandated by institution to determine outcomes of instruction
- Portfolio usually developed at the end of a class, term or program - time limited
- Portfolio and/or artifacts usually "scored" based on a rubric and quantitative data is collected for external audiences
- Portfolio is usually structured around a set of outcomes, goals or standards
- Sometimes used to make high stakes decisions
- Summative - what has been learned to date? (Past to present)
- Requires Extrinsic motivation
- Audience: external - little choice

Portfolios that support Assessment FOR Learning

- Purpose of portfolio agreed upon with learner
- Artifacts selected by learner to tell the story of their learning
- Portfolio maintained on an ongoing basis throughout the class, term or program - time flexible
- Portfolio and artifacts reviewed with learner and used to provide feedback to improve learning
- Portfolio organization is determined by learner or negotiated with mentor/advisor/teacher
- Rarely used for high stakes decisions
- Formative - what are the learning needs in the future? (Present to future)
- Fosters Intrinsic motivation - engages the learner
- Audience: learner, family, friends - learner can choose

Learner Ownership and Control of Electronic Portfolio Development



Portfolio Processes

Traditional + Technology

- Collecting
- Archiving
- Selecting
- Linking/Thinking
- Reflecting
- Storytelling
- Directing
- Collaborating
- Celebrating
- Publishing

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)

from
“Presentation Guidelines”

- ...tell your high school life **story** to a “panel”
- Remember—this is meant to be your **story**, tell it with pride.
- You are telling us a **story**, and not just any **story**. This is the **story** of your life the last four years as well as the **story** of where your life might be going the next four years.

Mead School District, Washington

from
“Presentation Guidelines”

- This **story** should be told with confidence and pride...
- The content needs to be organized, interesting, and about you.
- ...this presentation is all about...the knowledge of your current self, as well as your past and future self.

Mead School District, Washington

from
“Presentation Guidelines”

- All great **stories** (and yours is great) have some sort of history to them, and these **stories** leave us also with some sort of look to the future.

Mead School District, Washington

Essential Questions

- 9th Grade Focus:
“Who Am I” & “What do I want to be?”
- 10th and 11th Grade Focus:
“How do I get there?”
- 12th Grade Focus:
“Am I in a position to pursue my goals?”

Mead School District, Washington

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

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.

Reflection


The "Heart and Soul" of a Portfolio

The REFLECT Initiative

eportfolios@comcast.net
<http://electronicportfolios.org/reflect/>


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




Key elements of The REFLECT Initiative

- Two-year research and professional development initiative
- Free access for up to 50,000 high school student participants
- Free on-site and online staff development
- Underwritten by: TaskStream - *Tools of Engagement*
- Applications due **April 21, 2005**
- E-mail: reflect@taskstream.com
- <http://www.taskstream.com/reflect/>



Key Research Questions

- What is the impact of electronic portfolios on student learning, motivation, and engagement in secondary schools?
- What are the perceived benefits of and obstacles to effective implementation of ePortfolios?
- How do ePortfolios provide evidence of deep learning?
- Under what conditions do students take ownership of their ePortfolios?



Linked to...



Digital Tools to Support Reflection:

- Online Portfolios
- Blogs & Wikis
- Digital Storytelling
- Games

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**

What is a blog?

- Abbreviation for “web log” which is an online journal organized in reverse chronological order...the most recent entry on top
- 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

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/reflections

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/>

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)

Digital Paper or Digital Story?

Digital paper = text and images only

Digital story = tell your story **in your own voice**.

Multimedia = audio and video

Digital Storytelling Process

- Learners create a 2-4 minute digital **video** clip
 - First person narrative
 - Told in their own voice
 - Illustrated by (mostly) still images
 - Music track to add emotional tone

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

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



My Final Wish...

May all your
electronic portfolios
become dynamic
celebrations and **stories**
of deep learning
across the lifespan.