

## Enhancing Student Voices in ePortfolios through Blogging and Digital Storytelling

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### 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  
– Slides under Recent Conference Presentations

### 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 “pod-casting”)

### 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)

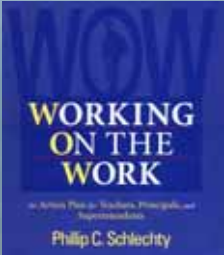


### What’s the difference between those two stories?

- 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>

## Constructed Meaning

"The portfolio is a **laboratory** where students **construct meaning** from their accumulated experience."

(Paulson & Paulson, 1991, p.5)

## 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)

## 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)

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

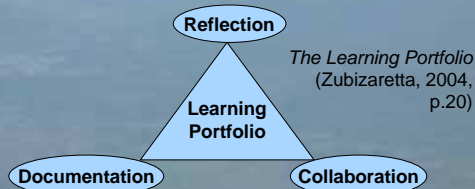
- Multiple purposes:
  - Learning/Process
  - Assessment
  - Marketing/Showcase

## "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*



## 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

More later!

## A few thoughts about Assessment -- What Type?

- Assessment OF Learning? or
- Assessment FOR Learning?

## Purposes for Assessment

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

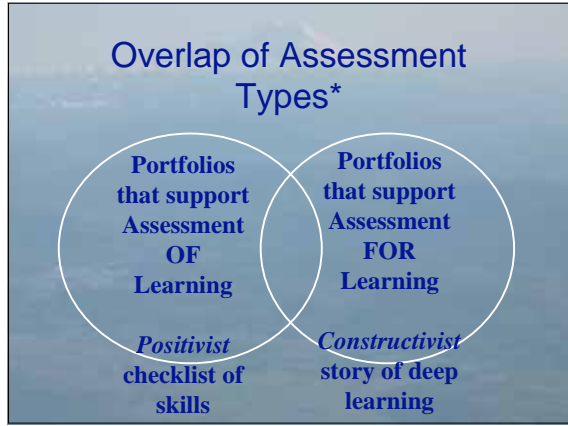
## Principles of Assessment FOR Learning

- **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**

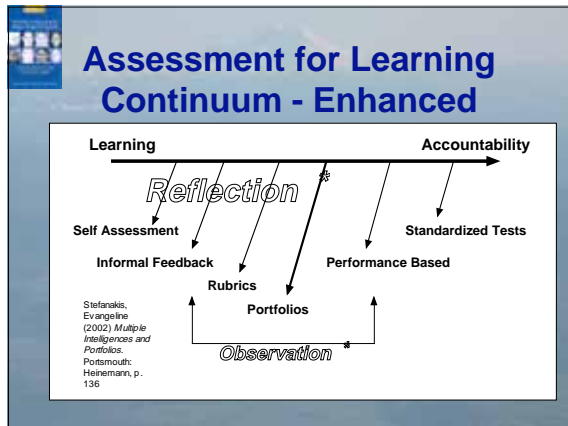
Research-based principles of assessment for learning to guide classroom practice

**Assessment for Learning**



**A Resource on K-12 Portfolios**

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

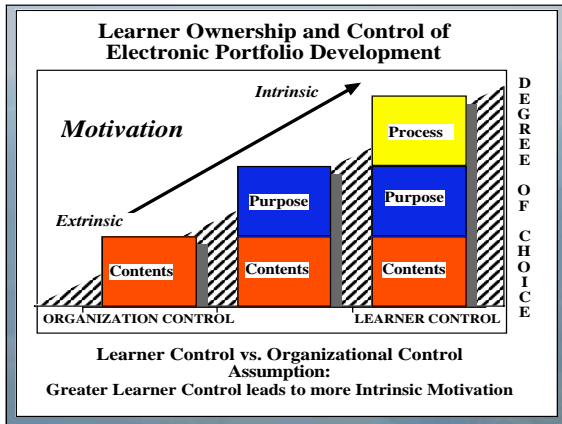


**Some concerns...**

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

**Components of Portfolio Development**

- **Content**
- **Purpose**
- **Process**



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

- ### Linked to...
- Strategies that promote Intrinsic Motivation to maintain the process for Lifelong Learning*
- #### 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**

- ### Open Source & Free Online Portfolio Tools I Tried
- | Open Source        | Free Tools         |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| • Mozilla Composer | • GeoCities        |
| • Plone (CMS)      | • Tripod           |
| • OSPI 1.5         | • Maricopa CC      |
| • (to come) Elgg   | • eFolio Minnesota |

## 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 data-base.”*

## 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!*

## Sessions on Blogging

- Will Richardson panel, Thursday, 8:30 AM
- Birds-of-a-Feather, Wednesday, 4:30 PM

## Free or Open Source Tools

### Free Blog Services

- Blogger (by Google)
- LiveJournal
- Tripod

### Open Source Tools

- Word Press
- Drupal
- Bloxom
- 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

## 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

## “Free” Digital Storytelling Tools

<http://electronicportfolios.org/digistory/tools.html>

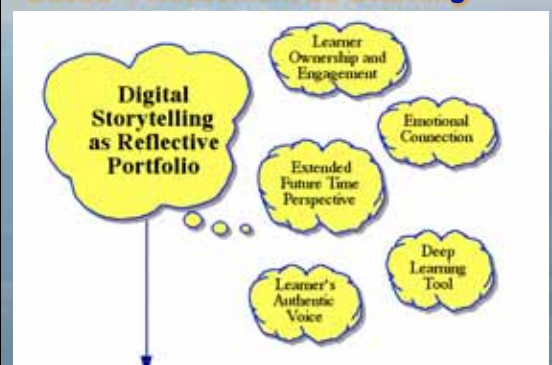
### Macintosh

- *Audio recording*  
**Audacity**
- *Image editing*  
**iPhoto, GIMP**
- *Video editing*  
**iMovie**

### Windows

- *Audio recording*  
**Audacity**
- *Image editing*  
**GIMP**
- *Video editing*  
**MovieMaker2**

## Constructivist Approach to Project-Based "Assessment-as-Learning"



## 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

Cambridge (2004)

## 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

## K-12 Digital Stories

- Victoria: K, 1, 2
- Naya: 7th



## Digital Paper or Digital Story?

Digital paper = text and images only

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

**Multimedia** = audio and video

## 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)

## 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



## My Website and my CD



A brief look at the tools

More in-depth tutorials and examples

## 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



## 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"

