

FETC2003  
**Electronic Portfolios in Education:**  
Definitions, Dilemmas and Decisions

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# Definitions

## What is a Portfolio?

**A purposeful  
collection of  
students' work that  
illustrates efforts,  
progress, and  
achievement [over  
time]** (NW Eval Assoc.)

## What is an Electronic Portfolio?

uses electronic technologies as the  
container  
which allows students/teachers to collect  
and organize portfolio artifacts in many  
media types (audio, video, graphics, text)  
using hypertext links to organize the  
material  
connecting evidence to appropriate  
standards (*in a standards-based  
portfolio*)

Dr. Mary Diez' Metaphors  
(Alverno College)



## The portfolio as **Mirror**

**Captures the reflective  
nature of the portfolio  
Allows students to "see"  
themselves over time**

Diez, Mary (1996). "The Portfolio: Senses, Mirror and Map." In Burke, Kay (ed.) (1996). *Professional Portfolios*. Skylight Training & Publishing.

Dr. Mary Diez' Metaphors  
(Alverno College)



## The portfolio as **Map**

**Creating a plan and  
setting goals**

Diez, Mary (1996). "The Portfolio: Senses, Mirror and Map." In Burke, Kay (ed.) (1996). *Professional Portfolios*. Skylight Training & Publishing.

Dr. Mary Diez' Metaphors  
(Alverno College)



## The portfolio as **Sonnet**

Provides a framework,  
but the contents can  
showcase creativity and  
diversity

Diez, Mary (1995). 'The Portfolio, Sonnet, Mirror and Map' in Baker, Kay (ed.) (1995). *Professional Portfolios*. Skylight Training & Publishing

Financial or Professional  
Portfolio?

A **financial portfolio**  
documents the  
accumulation of **fiscal**  
capital or **monetary assets**

A **professional portfolio**  
documents the development  
of **human capital** or  
**intellectual assets**

Professional Portfolios for  
Teachers

Wilcox & Tomei (1999) Christopher-Gordon  
Publishers, Inc.

...extends the possibilities  
for portfolios in education by  
going beyond assessment,  
learning, and professional  
development to the use of  
the portfolio as  
**a living history of a  
teaching-learning life.**

(p.5)

## Decisions

Electronic Portfolio Decision  
Considerations

**PT3 Catalyst Grant focusing on  
Supporting Technology and  
Assessment in Teacher Education**

## Questions to ask

Basic Structure for Implementing Electronic  
Portfolios

– Credit to David Niguidula and Hilarie Davis for the basic  
structure to think about implementing electronic  
portfolios:

**Vision**  
**Culture**  
**Assessment**  
**Logistics**  
**Use of Technology**

Purpose & Goals for the portfolio  
(Determine Content)

Many purposes:

- Learning
- Assessment
- Marketing/Showcase

Audience

(Determine publishing format)

Who are the primary audiences for the portfolio?

- Student
- Parent
- Faculty
- Employer
- College

What technologies do they have?

Assessment - What are the goals for students?  
How is the work assessed?

- Standards
- Rubrics
- Is there a need to aggregate portfolio/assessment data for program assessment purposes?

Implementing Large Scale Change

- Vision** (not confusion)
- Skills** (not anxiety)
- Incentives** (not gradual change)
- Resources** (not frustration)
- Action Plan** (no false starts)

Curriculum Issues  
in Teacher Education

- Where is the concept of the e-portfolio introduced to students?
- Does the curriculum require "appropriate digital artifacts for electronic portfolio?"
- Is there a course in the curriculum where the students develop their electronic portfolios?
- How are the portfolios assessed?

Culture

What else has to change for the portfolio to be valued AND valuable?

**Collaboration**

## Technology - Storage

How much storage to make available per student?

- 5 MB
- 20-30 MB
- 650 MB
- Unlimited

## Type of Technology

What MEDIA best convey the messages of the learning journey?

- Text
- Images
- Audio
- Video



"Portfolios tell a story...put in anything that helps to tell the story"

- Pearl & Leon Paulson, 1991

## Scarcest Resource: Time

FACULTY	STUDENTS
- Professional Development	- Collection
- Implementation	- Selection
- Planning	- Reflection
- Reflection	- Direction
- Assessment	

## Directions in Electronic Portfolio Development

### Generic/Common Tools Approach

- β MS Office: Word/Excel/PowerPoint
- β Higher level tool software
- β Portable Document Format
- β HTML
- β Multimedia authoring
- + Low startup and maintenance costs
- Ability to aggregate data for assessment

## Directions in Electronic Portfolio Development

### IT Customized Systems Approach

- β Online database
- β Assessment Management Systems
- β Examples of commercial companies: LiveText, TaskStream, Chalk & Wire, McGraw-Hill's FolioLive, ePortaro, True Outcomes
- Server programming/purchase (or student fee subscription), maintenance & Internet access requirements
- + Ability to aggregate data for assessment

## Pedagogical Requirements

An online portfolio system needs to support a culture of EVIDENCE:

**Evidence =**  
**Artifacts +**  
**Learner Reflections +**  
**Validation or Feedback**

## Pedagogical Requirements

**Storage Space**  
**Security**  
**Linking and Grouping Artifacts**  
**Reflection**  
**Publishing**  
**Portability**

## Storage Space

To store digital artifacts (with meta-tags)  
To store learner self-reflection and self-assessment on each artifact  
To store feedback on each artifact from assessor(s) (independent validation)  
To store details of the assignment with criteria for assessment (rubrics)

## Security

Ability to restrict access, setting permissions to view:

- Artifact only
- Artifact with reflection
- Artifact with reflection and feedback

Ability to set permissions separately for faculty to view portfolio and provide feedback on work.

## Linking and Grouping Artifacts

Ability to organize portfolio in a variety of ways (flexibility in organization)

- By standards or learning outcomes
- By course
- By date (entered, last updated, etc.)
- By status of work (Work in progress, ready for assessment, ready for publication)

Ability to include:

- Goals for portfolio, Contents of portfolio
- Learning Goals or Standards
- Resume

## Reflection

Ability to reflect on a specific grouping of artifacts to make a particular case (i.e., how this collection demonstrates achievement of standards or learning goals)

Ability to set learning goals and future direction

## Publishing

Ability to create a variety of portfolios, depending on audience and purpose

Ability to individualize the portfolio, to allow creativity of expression in the presentation (how to avoid the “cookie cutter” effect or identical “look and feel” of a data-base or template-based portfolio)

## Portability

Ability to archive work in a portable format such as:

- CD-ROM
- HTML or PDF Archive
- DVD

Learners can take their portfolio to another institution or maintain it on their own.

## Dilemmas

Joanne Carney's Dilemmas on Electronic Portfolios

1. Multiple Purpose Dilemma
2. Personal Revelation Dilemma
3. Cognitive Overload Dilemma
4. Self-Expression Dilemma
5. Dead-End Dilemma
6. Data-Aggregation Dilemma

Carney, Joanne (in development) "Campfires Around Which We Tell Our Stories: Confronting the Dilemmas of Teacher Portfolios and New Technologies"

## SITUATING PORTFOLIOS

FOUR PERSPECTIVES

Edited by  
Kathleen Blake Yancey  
Irwin Weiser

## Cautions about Portfolio Use (Lucas, 1992)

1. The weakening of effect through careless imitation
2. The failure of research to validate the pedagogy
3. The co-option by large-scale external testing programs

(Lucas, Catharine. 1992. Introduction: Writing Portfolios - Changes and Challenges. *Portfolios in the Writing Classroom: An Introduction*, ed. Kathleen Blake Yancey. Urbana, Illinois: NCTE: 1-11)

## SITUATING PORTFOLIOS

"...as portfolio systems are developed and implemented, teachers need to maintain as much power as possible over how these systems work if portfolios are to deliver on their potential to create important connections among teaching, learning, and assessing."

Yancey & Weiser (1997) *Situating Portfolios: An Introduction. Situating portfolios: four perspectives*. Ed. Kathleen Blake Yancey & Irwin Weiser, Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, p. 14.

## SITUATING PORTFOLIOS

Lucas (1992):

- ...will [portfolios] become merely the newest vehicle to perform the old task, with the result that portfolios will become standardized--with "common assignments" and "clearly defined criteria" and restricting conditions...
- ...resist the standardization characteristics of mass testing

Yancey & Weiser (1997) Situating Portfolios: An Introduction. Situating portfolios: four perspectives. Ed. Kathleen Blake Yancey & Irwin Weiser, Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, p. 13, 14.

## Let's See Some Examples

Teaching Portfolios

Early Childhood Portfolios

## Above all else...

**Electronic portfolios  
should provide a  
dynamic environment  
for learners to  
document and  
celebrate their learning  
across the lifespan**

## Contact Information

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<http://electronicportfolios.com>  
<http://helenbarrett.com>

## Planning Documents

<http://helenbarrett.com/EPDirections.pdf>  
a paper by David Gibson that  
outlines issues between generic  
tools and computer systems  
approaches

<http://helenbarrett.com/EPpedissues.pdf>  
a list of pedagogical issues to  
address when planning for  
electronic portfolios.