

## **Electronic Portfolios: Decisions, and Dilemmas**

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## **What are your Decisions & Dilemmas about Electronic Portfolios?**

My Questions:

**Is the addition of technology  
changing the definition of what  
a portfolio is or can be?**

**How can we create an  
electronic portfolio that our  
students want to maintain as a  
lifelong learning tool?**

**Turn to a partner**

**Talk about your questions about e-  
portfolios**

**Share a few with the large group.**

## **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**
- portfolio artifacts in many media (**audio, video, graphics, text**)
- **hypertext links** to organize the material
- and **connect evidence** to standards  
*(in an assessment portfolio)*

## Decisions

## Electronic Portfolio Decision Considerations

### Questions to ask:

Stage 1

1. **What is the portfolio's purpose?**
2. **Who is the audience?**
3. **What technology do you have? (and what skills?)**

## 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?

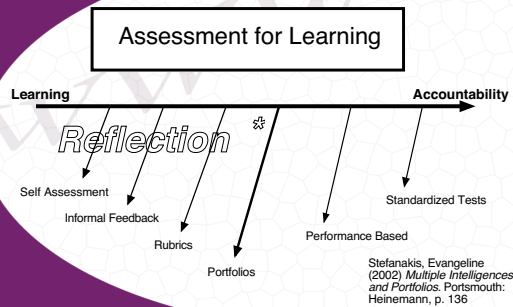
- Student
- Parent
- Teacher/School community
- Employer
- College

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?**

## Assessment for Learning Continuum



## Culture

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

**Collaboration  
Partnerships  
Leverage**

## Curriculum Issues

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?

## 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

Stage 3  
Constructing the Reflective Portfolio  
Stage 4  
Connections

## Reflections

- The Heart and Soul of the Portfolio

## Making Connections

- Linking artifacts to standards, outcomes or goals.

## What Tools to Use?

What is the best electronic portfolio program???

**IT DEPENDS . . .**

- on the assessment context
- + variety of other factors, human and technological

Directions in Electronic Portfolio Development

**GT**

**Generic/Common Tools Approach**

- MS Office: Word/Excel/PowerPoint
- Higher level tool software
- Portable Document Format
- HTML
- Multimedia authoring

+ **Low startup costs**  
 + **Replicate process in classrooms**  
 - **Ability to aggregate data for assessment**

Directions in Electronic Portfolio Development

**CS**

**IT Customized Systems Approach**

- Online database
- Assessment Management Systems
- Examples of commercial companies: **LiveText**, **TaskStream**, **Edmin.com's V-ED**,
- **Northwestern University's Collaboratory**

- Server programming/purchase (or student fee subscription), maintenance & Internet access requirements  
 + Ability to aggregate data for assessment

Show Examples

Which approach should you take?

Are you looking for an **electronic portfolio...**

Or an **assessment management system?**

What's the difference?

**Purpose**

<b>Electronic Portfolio</b>	$\longleftrightarrow$	<b>Assessment Management System</b>
<p><b>Multiple:</b>          Learning          Assessment          Employment</p>		<p><b>Single:</b>          Assessment</p>

**Data Structure**

<b>Electronic Portfolio</b>	$\longleftrightarrow$	<b>Assessment Management System</b>
<p>varies with the tools used to create the portfolio; most often common data formats (documents often converted to HTML, PDF)</p>		<p>most often uses a relational database to record, report data</p>

## Data Storage

**Electronic Portfolio**

multiple options:  
CD-ROM,  
videotape, DVD,  
WWW server,  
LAN

**Assessment Management System**

LAN or  
secure WWW  
server

•Digital Divide Issues

## Primary Type of Data

**Electronic Portfolio**

Qualitative

**Assessment Management System**

Quantitative  
and  
Qualitative

## Control of Design & Links

**Electronic Portfolio**

under control  
of portfolio  
developer

**Assessment Management System**

controlled by  
database  
structure

•Hyperlinking reinforces metacognition\*  
•Design=Individuality

\*Portland State University

## Technology Skills Required

**Electronic Portfolio**

Medium→High

More advanced skills:  
information design  
through hyper  
linking, digital  
publishing strategies,  
file management

**Assessment Management System**

Low→Medium

Minimal skills,  
equivalent to using a  
web browser and  
adding attachments  
to an e-mail message

## Technology Skills Demonstrated

**Electronic Portfolio**

Medium → High

depending on tools  
used to create  
portfolio

**Assessment Management System**

Low → Medium

depending on the  
sophistication of the  
artifacts added to  
the portfolio

## Locus of Control

**Electronic Portfolio**

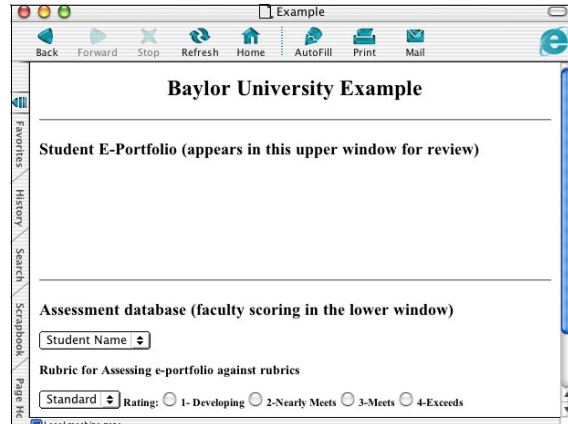
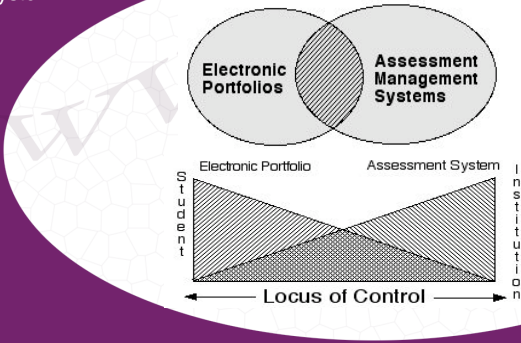
Student-  
Centered

**Assessment Management System**

Institution-  
Centered



## Electronic Portfolio or Assessment Management System?



## Lee Shulman's 5 dangers of portfolios

1. **"lamination"** - a portfolio becomes a mere exhibition, a self-advertisement, to show off
2. **"heavy lifting"** - a portfolio done well is hard work. Is it worth the extra effort?
3. **"trivialization"** - documenting stuff that isn't worth reflecting upon
4. **"perversion"** - when used as a form of high stakes assessment "why will portfolios be more resistant to perversion than all other forms of assessment have been?"
5. **"misrepresentation"** - does "best work" misrepresent "typical work" -- not a true picture of competency

Shulman, Lee (1998). "Teacher Portfolios: A Theoretical Activity" in N. Lyons (ed.) *With Portfolio in Hand*, (pp. 23-37) New York: Teachers College Press.

## Lee Shulman's 5 dangers of portfolios

"... And if one of the requirements ... is that you develop a sufficiently objective scoring system [for portfolios] so you can fairly compare people with one another, will your scoring system end up objectifying what's in the portfolio to the point where the portfolio will be nothing but a very, very cumbersome multiple choice test?" (p. 35)

Shulman, Lee (1998). "Teacher Portfolios: A Theoretical Activity" in N. Lyons (ed.) *With Portfolio in Hand*, (pp. 23-37) New York: Teachers College Press.

## Lee Shulman's 5 benefits of portfolios

1. tracking and documentation of longer episodes of teaching and learning
2. encourage the reconnection between process and product. - very best teaching portfolios consist predominantly of student portfolios" & highlight the results of teaching that lead to student learning.
3. institutionalize norms of collaboration, reflection, and discussion
4. a portable residency... introduces structure to the field experience
5. (most important) shifts the agency from an observer back to the teacher interns...

Shulman, Lee (1998). "Teacher Portfolios: A Theoretical Activity" in N. Lyons (ed.) *With Portfolio in Hand*, (pp. 23-37) New York: Teachers College Press.

## Lee Shulman's 5 benefits of portfolios

"Portfolios are owned and operated by teachers; they organize the portfolios; they decide what goes in them." (p.36)

Shulman, Lee (1998). "Teacher Portfolios: A Theoretical Activity" in N. Lyons (ed.) *With Portfolio in Hand*, (pp. 23-37) New York: Teachers College Press.

## Pedagogical Requirements

An online portfolio system needs to support a **CULTURE** of **EVIDENCE**:

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

## Questions to the audience:

**What do you think about my distinctions between e-portfolios and assessment management systems?**

**Is there any evidence of how the decisions we make about electronic portfolio systems impact the learners and the institutions?**

## Dilemmas

## 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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