AAHE
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION for HIGHER EDUCATION™

National Coalition News
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Inside this Issue

Dear Colleagues,

Members of the first cohort of the National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research recently provided thick descriptions of an artifact from a student portfolio that demonstrated reflection about learning. This cohort is investigating the common question "How does reflection supported by electronic portfolios influence student learning?" To answer that question, a first step is defining reflection and describing its existence.

That work is harder than it might seem. Analyzing the ten thick descriptions, Coalition leaders discovered that we had to be more explicit about distinguishing among artifact, context, and evidence of influence on learning. For a second set of thick descriptions that campuses are doing this Spring, we narrowed the fields of inquiry and expanded the written expectations for each part of the thick description.

I mention this evolution of methodology because the collaborative research we are exploring mirrors what happens when much research gets started. Initial questions and assumptions are modified as the work proceeds, helped by the perspectives and experiences of multiple partners in the effort. The individual research initiatives on Coalition campuses are also evolving, changing in both large and small ways as questions are asked and answers sought.

This is exciting work. And we'll soon welcome another cohort of campuses that are ready to share their accomplishments and challenges with one another and to choose their own common research question in addition to their individual campus focus. By the middle of February, we will announce the ten campuses from a strong pool of applicants.

As our Coalition grows, communication becomes more and more important. This newsletter will help us keep informed about individual campus initiatives, progress on common research, and the wide range of initiatives about eportfolios beyond our own. We invite you to contribute to this newsletter. Do you know of conferences or conference sessions that others might want to attend? Have you discovered a leading-edge article that would benefit others in the Coalition? Has a particular research technique worked well for you? Might it work for others? Do you have a question you'd like to ask members of both cohorts?

We have the wonderful resource of the AAHE WebCenter for communicating as well. Later in the Spring, we will begin a series of chats to engage in real time around topics that you identify. You can post resources on the WebCenter, just as you do the periodic reports about your work. Please use the National Coalition site to be in touch with a specific researcher, your cohort, or the whole Coalition. If you have any questions about the use of the WebCenter, contact Stephanie Lisella at slisella@aahe.org.

Stephanie is also the editor of this newsletter, so she will regularly solicit contributions from you as she puts together this bi-monthly publication. Please let her know how this first issue did or did not meet your needs so that we can make it something you'll want to read.

Best wishes as this new year begins and as you continue your good work. Be in touch.

- Barbara Cambridge, AAHE

In Context: The Power of One

I want to talk about our work together by telling you about some related work I'm doing with some K-12 teachers.

This year I am teaching a year-long Advanced Institute for our site of the National Writing Project that is focused on re-flection, print portfolios, and digital portfolios. The group includes nine teachers, evenly distributed among elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. Together we are learning through portfolios and reflection how we might enhance learning. One of our principles is that we cannot meet this goal without enlisting the help of students, which is one of the reasons we are interested in reflection.

Our first project was a case study. We began with a focus, identifying a student whose progress was gratifying, or whose behavior was puzzling, or whose accomplishment was disappointing. Once chosen, the student was described both "demographically"—in socio-economic terms, in terms of how she or he had performed in school previously, in terms of family support—and personally—what he or she liked or enjoyed. We then thought about how the student was "networked" inside the class. Was she or he a leader? Did he or she get along well with peers? Had his or her behavior changed? We also recorded *how* the student worked, both in process and in achievement.

We wrote up these observations, linked to school samples, in a three to five page case study, and included at the end of the case study questions that our review had prompted. And then we presented it to each other. In the mix of those presenta-tions, we learned much. One teacher had believed that her elementary school students needed the structure she provided; what she found in her case study is that, sometimes at least, less is more. Another teacher is still unable to explain the change in attitude that seemed to account for a student's success, but we raised other questions that can help us explore this further. And another teacher was able to connect a student's leadership in music performance outside of school to leader-ship inside the class, and that too has helped us think about inside-outside school connections that make a difference in student lives and learning.

In other words, these case studies helped us raise questions, make connections, and learn. And you will no doubt recog-nize the process that we used.

• We focused on one student, and we had a guiding question, a real question that we needed to answer.
• We sought to understand that student through many contexts: personal, demographic, school, life.
• We reviewed the student's work for evidence of process and achievement.
• We put all this in dialogue with the student's reflection.
• We explained what we *thought* we had found, we tried to provide an explanation of why that finding might be so, and we raised other questions—and we counted on our peers to help us understand better. We knew that in explaining to others, as Vygotsky says, we are explaining to ourselves.

Put in Donald Schon's and Lee Shulman's terms, what we are doing is (1) occluding the flow of practice, (2) reviewing materials and texts to help us understand, and (3) explaining to others what it is that we think we understand.

The other steps here are important as well: identifying a student who raises questions for us, counting on the student to help us understand, and linking our own observations and explanations to larger questions and other contexts.

These are the steps, of course, that we hope you will engage in during this second iteration of your research on reflection. What distinguishes this iteration, as you know, is that you'll want to link what you find with other sources of evidence—available perhaps in a program office, in an office of institutional research, or even through the National Center for Educa-tional Statistics. To help with this and to discuss your campus projects, I'll be talking with each of you during the next couple of weeks. I'm very much looking forward to our discussions.

And we'll begin by focusing on that student who interests you.

 - Kathleen Blake Yancey, Clemson University

Clearinghouse Update

The AAHE Electronic Portfolio Clearinghouse is a great resource site for anyone interested in creating electronic portfolios or showcasing completed portfolio programs. The Clearinghouse features a wide variety of electronic portfolios including course portfolios, institutional and inter-institutional portfolios, independent portfolios, and program portfolios. Individuals, campuses, and cohorts are encouraged to enter data about their work to promote open channels of communication and resource sharing.

Please visit the AAHE Electronic Portfolio Clearinghouse at http://ctl.du.edu/portfolioclearinghouse/index.cfm to view current electronic portfolios or to submit your own work.

The following four electronic portfolio profiles have been taken directly from the Clearinghouse. Check out the Clearinghouse to learn more about these and other portfolio projects. The **National Coalition News** *will continue to highlight work submitted to the Clearinghouse.*

The FSU Career Portfolio
Florida State University
http://portfolio.fsu.edu
The FSU Career Portfolio enables students in all majors to develop a strategic career vision, pursue learning activities that will enhance the likelihood of their achieving personal and professional goals, and document their skills. It also provides employers with evidence that students are ready to make effective contributions in the workplace.

Capstone Project Electronic Portfolios
Department of Architectural Engineering, The Pennsylvania State University
http://www.arche.psu.edu/thesis
The Department of Architectural Engineering at Penn State University has begun an implementation of learning-based Information and Communication Technologies as a part of the senior capstone design experience, a two semester course sequence. Each senior student enrolled in the course is required to design and maintain a Capstone Project Electronic Portfolio, or CPEP. The portfolios include all aspects of the capstone project from student resumes to project abstracts, technical assignments, and progress reports.

Connecticut College e-Portfolio
Connecticut College
http://eportfolio.conncoll.edu/
The Connecticut College e-Portfolio, developed through the Career Enhancing Life Skills (CELS) program, is an online tool that allows students to document their academic planning processes, academic and cocurricular accomplishments, and their career development experiences during their undergraduate years. This innovative online resource enables students to document and present information to their CELS counselors, center and certificate program advisors, and faculty advisors; prepare for their funded internship experience; participate in career development processes through online modules; and present evidence of their skill development through academic, internship, and cocurricular experiences.

WebFolio Electronic Portfolio Project
Tidewater Community College (VA)
http://wordsworth2.net/webfolio/
This project highlights work done by students enrolled in composition and content classes at Tidewater Community College. The WebFolio, an instructional digital portfolio, is centered around a substantial reflective hypertext essay where students synthesize and publish their thinking and writing, thereby demonstrating learning as both process and product.

International News

EPortfolio 2004
Transforming Individual and Organizational Learning

The second international conference on eportfolios was held in La Rochelle, France, on October 28-29, 2004. The subtitle of the conference boldly acclaimed, "In 2010, every citizen will have an eportfolio." To that end, keynotes focused on forward momentum regarding new ways of learning, interoperability of eportfolios, and implementing eportfolios in higher education in different countries. National Coalition leader Barbara Cambridge and consultant Darren Cambridge presented and participated. Interested in more details about this or future meetings? Contact Martine Legris at martine.legris@eife-l.org.

Darren Cambridge (center) on panel at EPortfolio 2004 conference in La Rochelle, France.

Featured Country: The Netherlands
Contact: Marij Veugelers (m.h.c.h.veugelers@uva.nl)

Institutions of higher education in the Netherlands have been making leaps and bounds with regard to their support of electronic portfolio research and their dedication to promoting teaching and learning. The SURF Foundation, the partnership organization for Information and Communications Technology in the Netherlands, supports a special interest group dedicated to the expansion and implementation of digital portfolios. This special interest group, NL-Portfolio, has prepared an English version collection of a variety of Dutch papers concerning electronic portfolio issues. This collection of works, entitled "Electronic Portfolio in the Netherlands," can be found at http://www.surf.nl/en/download/Electronic_Portfolio_Netherlands.pdf.

NL-Portfolio is seeking recognition in the international arena of electronic portfolio research as a group that is dedicated to furthering the knowledge technology and digital portfolios. An example of NL-Portfolio's quest for international partnerships is its participation in the meeting between experts from the Netherlands and from the United Kingdom in April of 2004. You may order or download the briefing paper from this meeting. The paper, "ePortfolios and Digital Repositories," may be accessed on the SURF website at http://www.surf.nl/en/download/ALT_SURF_briefingpaper2004.pdf.

More information regarding NL-Portfolio's work with electronic portfolios can be found on the English version of their Portfolioportal http://e-learning.surf.nl/portfolio.

Eyes on EPAC

EPAC is a community of practice focused on electronic portfolios. It provides a crucial bridge between researchers, faculty, assessment experts, and technology developers and support staff. This coordination, within institutions and across the globe, is essential to the effective creation, use, publication, and evaluation of electronic portfolio projects and tools in higher education and beyond for teaching, learning, and assessment. Founded in 2001, EPAC now has more than 650 members. The EPAC community is facilitated by Darren Cambridge, George Mason University; Helen Chen, Stanford University; and John Ittelson, California State University Monterey Bay.

Benefits to members include:

Face-to-face and virtual opportunities for discussion and networking

Shared resources and tracking of national and international meetings, funding opportunities, and collaboration related to portfolios

Experimentation with portfolio-related technologies and practices to support implementation, adoption, and use

Opportunities to inform and shape the agendas of AAHE, other educational associations, standards bodies, funding agencies, and portfolio developers and vendors

In addition to formal meetings at AAHE conferences and informal meetings at other events where portfolios are discussed, EPAC meets monthly for a chat on a topic of community interest on the AAHE WebCenter. Past chat topics have included digital storytelling and portfolios, the implications of generational differences in attitudes to technology, and portfolios in learning communities.

On a regular basis, EPAC convenes audio and video conferences that usually feature short presentations from developers and implementers and organizes working groups that produce white papers and other resources. Many participants in the National Coalition are already active EPAC participants, and others are encouraged to join. In the coming year, the EPAC leadership will work with the Coalition to feature the work of Coalition members throughout its activities.

 - Darren Cambridge on behalf of the Cambridge/Chen/Ittleson leadership team of EPAC

> **Would you like to join this AAHE Community of Practice?**
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> AAHE's Communities of Practice are open for registration on the AAHE WebCenter. To join one or more community of practice, create an account on the WebCenter. Once registered, click the Membership button in My Workspace to select a Community of Practice to Join. Visit the AAHE WebCenter at http://webcenter.aahe.org/chef/portal.

Student Voices

The ePortfolio program at LaGuardia encourages students to think about their learning in a broad context of family, career, culture, and experience. While at LaGuardia, the majority of students are required to complete cooperative education internships as part of their associate degree. While students are enrolled in an internship, they must also take a seven-week seminar that focuses on career development. In the capstone seminar, students must write an essay reflecting on their career goals, current employment opportunities, education needed, salaries, and what is required to stay updated in their field of choice. Kyoung Kang and Angelica Serrano, former students at LaGuardia Community College, describe their experience using electronic portfolios within their individual academic disciplines and professional development.

The contents of my ePortfolio were built based on my all class work at LaGuardia Community College. The "Classes and Projects" page displays my paintings and drawings that I did for my studio art classes. The story about my ancestor on the "About Me" page was one of my research projects for my English composition class. On the "Educational Goals" page, I put my career research for one of my internship classes. The "Museum Report" page, which is a page I customized for my own needs, has my essays from my art history classes. I collected all my class work from one semester and started posting this information using one of the college's ePortfolio templates. I used my first ePortfolio during my interview for an internship as a Student Technology Mentor (STM), which is an important program at LaGuardia Community College offering students and faculty professional assistance using digital technology and especially in creating electronic portfolios. My own ePortfolio helped me to get this internship position.

During my work as an STM, I kept enhancing the contents and design of my ePortfolio for the later edition to reflect my work experiences from my internship. I wrote all about my work experiences, and these writings became part of my digital "Resume" to show what I had done and learned through taking the internship courses offered by our co-op program. Now my resume is interactive and links to my various internship experiences and writings. I also learned more advanced computer skills to create WebPages as I worked on developing my new versions of my ePortfolio. My latest version uses flash. My ePortfolio serves as a very effective digital tool to display my art work and educational achievements to share with selected prospective viewers.

 - Kyoung Kang, former student at LaGuardia Community College

The following link will connect you to one iteration of Kyoung's electronic portfolio from the selection of student samples at LaGuardia Community College.
http://www.eportfolio.lagcc.cuny.edu/esamples/Kyoung_Kang3/index.html

If you know students who would like to describe their experiences with electronic portfolios, please contact Stephanie Lisella at slisella@aahe.org.

Student Voices (continued)

My name is Angelica Serrano and I was a student at LaGuardia Community College studying for a profession in human services. I had the opportunity to create an electronic portfolio of my work while I was doing my internship preparation course.

Publishing my work and my reflections on my ePortfolio has been very exciting. It has changed the way I think about my writing. Throughout my life as a student, I've been asked to write about my future goals. After a while, my response became routine; I would answer within minutes, without much thought. This all changed when I wrote a reflective essay for my ePortfolio. I knew that my essay would be read not only by my professor, but by a much broader audience. I couldn't be so facile; now my life, my self-perception and my goals would be revealed to everyone.

As I tried to write, days passed and I found that I was still staring at a blank screen. I have always believed words are powerful and can be used for negative or positive motives. Words can help us attain respectable positions; they can give us incentive to get up and try again. Sharing my dreams and visions with the world, I knew that my words would gain in significance and impact.

Thinking about this, I decided to share certain very personal and painful episodes of my life in my writing, to show my readers that although we face many tribulations in life, we have to rise above them and look ahead. We cannot let our past or present negative situations determine who we become. We have the power and the ability to take positive strides toward our goals.

I have always known what career I wanted. However, I had never really looked into it or understood how difficult it would be to get there. Doing the ePortfolio took me, step-by-step, into this process and made me realize the importance of looking into and thinking deeply about it. Choosing a wrong path can cost me years of unnecessary struggle. Choosing the correct path can lead to and get me closer and closer to my career.

Doing my ePortfolio also made me more knowledgeable about computers. It also brought back the feeling I had when I first wrote about my aspirations. It's ironic to think that initially I had a blank canvas – and now I'm sharing my thoughts with you and the world through my work on my ePortfolio. To me, that proves that if we keep an open mind and strive to attain our goals, the outcome can be larger than anything we have envisioned.

- Angelica Serrano, former student at LaGuardia Community College

The following link will connect you to one iteration of Angelica's electronic portfolio from the selection of student samples at LaGuardia Community College.
http://www.eportfolio.lagcc.cuny. /esamples/Angelica/index.html

Upcoming Convenings

AAHE National Conference on Higher Education
March 17-20, 2005
Atlanta Marriott Marquis
Atlanta, GA
The theme for 2005 is Courage, Imagination, Action: Rallying the Trendsetters in Higher Education. For more information, see http://www.aahe.org/National/2005.htm. Conference registration deadlines: standard registration through March 1, 2005 and onsite registration after March 1, 2005.

PanAmerican ePortfolio Working Forum
April 18-19, 2005
Vancouver, Canada
The Learning Innovations Forum (LIfIA) invites proposals to make a presentation focusing on applications of the ePortfolio in all types of learning environments. This forum will be held in conjunction with the LIfIA Working Forum on eLearning Quality and ROI Assurance, which will take place on April 20, 2005. Send a brief proposal to LIfIA Chair, Dr. Kathryn Chang Barker via Joan McCorry at jmccorry@lifia.ca on or before February 15, 2005. Include in your proposal which conference stream you feel is applicable to your presentation.
 - ePortfolio applications in Formal Learning
 - Workplace ePortfolio applications
 - Non-formal learning ePortfolio applications
 - ePortfolio leadership (research, policy, strategy)

Visit www.lifia.ca for more information and for registration.

EDUCAUSE Western Regional Conference
"Winds of Change: Charting the Course for Technology in Challenging Times"
April 26-28, 2005
San Francisco, CA
Early bird registration will continue through April 4, 2005. Please visit http://www.educause.edu/WRC05/ for more information.

AAHE 20th Anniversary Assessment Conference
"Charting New Territory"
June 12-14, 2005
Sheraton Centre
Toronto, Canada
Cohort 1 will meet Sunday, June 12 from 9 a.m.-noon. Cohort 2 will meet Monday, June 13 from 7-10 p.m. Also, there will be three sessions dedicated to electronic portfolios. These sessions will be presented by Sharon Hamilton, Kathleen Yancey, and Terrell Rhodes on June 11 and June 12. For more information regarding the conference, please visit http://www.aahe.org/assessment/2005/Assessment2005.htm.

Summer National Coalition Meetings
July 27-30, 2005
Clemson University
Clemson, SC
The first cohort of the National Coalition will meet July 27-28. Members of the second cohort will convene July 28-30.

Submit Your Work!

To Improve The Academy is a resource dedicated to professionals interested in the areas of instructional, faculty, and organization development in higher education. Submissions for manuscripts are collected in December of each year.

This is a good publication for reporting on your National Coalition work. Anyone interested in submitting work to be reviewed for Volume 24 should write:

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