



# NCEPR Newsletter

## National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research

February, 2006

Volume 1, Issue 3

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### Cohort #1

Alverno College  
Bowling Green University  
IUPUI  
LaGuardia Community College  
Northern Illinois University  
Portland State University  
Stanford University  
Virginia Tech University  
University of Washington

### Cohort #2

Clemson University  
George Mason University  
Kap'olani Community College  
Ohio State University  
St. Olaf College  
Thomas College  
University of Georgia  
University of Illinois Champaign Urbana  
University of Nebraska Omaha  
Washington State University

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## Collaboration: The Whole is More than the Sum of the Parts

Barbara Cambridge, National Council of Teachers of English, NCEPR Co-Director  
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Collaboration is a foundational practice of the National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research. For example, Cohorts One and Two met in early February in Portland, Oregon, to receive feedback on progress with their research projects. Each campus in each cohort addressed specific topics regarding its work, with colleagues providing pointed responses geared to sharpening research questions, establishing sufficient evidence for claims, and reporting to targeted audiences. On a common meeting day, members of both cohorts contributed to a matrix of reflective artifacts and created proposals for sharing work beyond the Coalition.

Both cohorts are planning for their next collaborative meeting on October 27 and 28, prior to the Indianapolis Assessment Conference, which will feature ePortfolios and the work of the Coalition in a pre-conference workshop and a session strand in the conference.

As Cohort One completes its work and Cohort Two continues active research, Cohort Three is being formed in partnership with the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). Applications from campuses committed to engaging student affairs and academic affairs in supporting student learning through electronic portfolios are being reviewed to choose a cohort that features life-wide learning. Life-wide learning highlights the ways in which in-class and out-of-class activities contribute to a comprehensive view of student learning. Cohort Three will be the first to have international participation, an added attribute to the Coalition. Cohort Three participants will be announced publicly by the end of March.

This brief review brings you up-to-date about the progress of the National Coalition. We are excited about the positive effects of the collaborative work that is affecting individual campus projects, generating knowledge possible only because we are pooling ideas and research results, and building connections with others investigating the uses and effects of ePortfolio learning.

Please be in touch with Coalition leaders so that we can learn from and connect with you. Kathy Yancey is available at [kyancey@english.fsu.edu](mailto:kyancey@english.fsu.edu); Darren Cambridge can be reached at [dcambrid@gmu.edu](mailto:dcambrid@gmu.edu); and I am ready to reply from [bcambridge@ncte.org](mailto:bcambridge@ncte.org).

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## Reflection: A Common Focus of NCEPR

Kathleen Yancey, Florida State University, NCEPR Co-Director  
kyancey@english.fsu.edu

When different university and college stakeholders from very different kinds of institutions and from all over the country come together around a common topic, what line of inquiry might they share? As important, what inquiry might they share when the general topic under discussion is very new, one that seems itself still in search of a definition, a topic like electronic portfolios, for example?

These questions were two of many that we put to ourselves at the first Coalition meeting in 2004. Many projects were represented, for example a large urban university was developing an electronic portfolio for general education, a team from a different urban institution was investigating “success” factors in electronic portfolios, and a researcher from a rural school was studying how electronic portfolios foster professional identity. It became apparent that in addition to striving to improve teaching and learning, these and other teams had a common goal around reflection, a defining principle of electronic portfolios.

Attempting to define reflection, we found that what we valued changed given our various contexts. At the same time, we knew that we could learn from one another if we engaged in some of the same processes. To encourage in-depth thinking about reflection, then, all teams completed a heuristic: each team identified a reflective artifact, analyzed it, and began to link that analysis to other evidence of learning. As important, in researching the reflection inside and surrounding electronic portfolios, we relied on student texts of various kinds—from maps to essays—primary sources to help us define, exemplify, and attribute value to reflection.

As teams in Cohort One worked in parallel, new ways of thinking about reflection emerged within each context. At Stanford, for example, previous work on *folio thinking* was applied in an engineering design class where students used the concept of *design thinking* as a means of understanding. At Alverno, faculty members reviewed multiple samples of student work to develop a scaffold articulating *reflective development* over time. And at LaGuardia Community College, faculty members conducted an in-depth analysis of the reflective thinking of one student as she created three iterations of her electronic portfolio, discovering that the *re-iterative process* was itself a means of reflection. Cohort Two has likewise engaged in activities informing our common Coalition focus on reflection.

At the Portland meeting, teams began to consolidate and share what they have learned about reflection. First, each campus listed *the kinds of reflective artifacts* included in their electronic portfolios. For each item, they described the artifact itself, the medium in which it is created or represented, the context in which it occurs, its focus and intent, the practices that surround and support it, and special features that are associated with it. Taken together, these lists create a first-of-its-kind map of the kinds and uses of reflection in electronic portfolios. Second, teams linked their claims about reflection and its influence on learning to evidence of student learning. Taken together, these statements provide a map of claims and sources of evidence about the role reflection plays in learning as seen in electronic portfolios.

These two maps, when developed and shared with Coalition members at our October meeting, will advance what we know about reflection in electronic portfolios and will be a significant outcome for the Coalition to share publicly.

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## NCEPR Logo

The National Consortium for ePortfolio Research has a new logo. The Coalition thanks its partner for Cohort Three, The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) for the design. NCEPR members are encouraged to include the logo in materials, presentations, and websites where they are presenting work developed while members of the Coalition. It is available for download at <http://ncepr.org/ncepr/drupal/> or email Neal Topp at [ntopp@mail.unomaha.edu](mailto:ntopp@mail.unomaha.edu).



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## Help Develop a Select ePortfolio Bibliography

Brad Peters, Northern Illinois University, NCEPR Cohort One  
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The NCEPR is in the process of assembling a select bibliography on ePortfolios as a resource to the ePortfolio community.

Please email the sources you've found most useful in your research on ePortfolios to either Darren Cambridge at [dcambrid@gmu.edu](mailto:dcambrid@gmu.edu) or Brad Peters at [bpeters@niu.edu](mailto:bpeters@niu.edu)

A Wiki page on the NCEPR website contains a rough sketch of what cites has been gathered so far. At <http://ncepr.org/ncepr/drupal>, click on the "Wiki" tab and then choose the link for "Bibliography."

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## NCEPR Ad Hoc Work Group to Study Social Networking Software

Michael Day, Northern Illinois University, NCEPR Cohort One  
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After a rousing discussion of online social networking forums such as MySpace, Friendster, and Facebook at the February meeting of the NCEPR, team members Darren Cambridge, Helen Chen, Bob Cummings, Michael Day, Cara Lane, and Kathleen Yancey decided to take up a research question for further study. Interested in why people feel so strongly motivated to put up pages and connect with others in these forums, the members of the group want to study existing uses of the forums with an eye toward how practices and software environments might be translated into electronic portfolio pedagogy and interfaces.

Although they are still working out the specific research questions, the group will be investigating features of online social networking software that might either be incorporated into existing electronic portfolio systems, or linked to them, as a way of increasing student motivation and connection to wider audiences for reflection and assessment purposes. As a first step, the group plans to apply to present at the 2006 Assessment Institute in Indianapolis in October on aspects of the study that relate specifically to electronic portfolio assessment practices.

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## Spotlight on ePortfolio Websites

NCEPR -- <http://ncepr.org/ncepr/drupal/>

EPAC International – [http://epacinternational.org/mailman/listinfo/ePortfolios\\_epacinternational.org](http://epacinternational.org/mailman/listinfo/ePortfolios_epacinternational.org)

EDUCAUSE ePortfolio -- [http://www.educause.edu/Browse/645?PARENT\\_ID=475](http://www.educause.edu/Browse/645?PARENT_ID=475)

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## Upcoming NCEPR Meeting, October 27 and 28, 2006

Hosted by Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, Indianapolis, Indiana

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## Upcoming Conferences and Meetings of Interest

### ■ LIfIA International Conference on ePortfolios

April 6-8, 2006

The LIfIA international conference on ePortfolios, the Third PanAmerican Forum, will be held in Vancouver, Canada, April 6-8, 2006. More information and a registration form can be located at <http://www.lifia.ca/>

### ■ Dalhousie Conference on University Teaching and Learning/McGraw-Hill Ryerson Teaching, Learning, and Technology Conference Series 2006.

May 3-4, 2006

The conference will be held at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia on May 3 and 4, 2006, with pre-conference workshops on May 2nd. The conference theme is: The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: Enhancing Learning through Inquiry. Information can be found at [http://learningandteaching.dal.ca/dcutl\\_mhr](http://learningandteaching.dal.ca/dcutl_mhr).

### ■ We're Teaching, but Are Students Learning: A Colloquium on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

June 2, 2006

The New England Faculty Development Consortium (NEFDC), together with the Middlesex Community College (MA) COPPER Cluster, announces "We're Teaching, But Are Students Learning: A Colloquium on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning." Scheduled for June 2, 2006 at Middlesex Community College in Lowell, MA, this collaborative venture brings together faculty, administrators and faculty developers for a one-day, interactive conference featuring the best practices in teaching and learning. The keynote speaker for the event will be Barbara Cambridge, president of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and co-director of the National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research. For registration information, please see <http://www.nefdc.org/events.htm> or contact Thomas Edwards, Thomas College, NCEPR Cohort Two at [edwardst@thomas.edu](mailto:edwardst@thomas.edu)

### ■ 2006 Assessment Institute in Indianapolis

October 29-31, 2006 (immediately following the NCEPR Meeting).

Proposals are welcomed for any of ten tracks. Sharon Hamilton and Susan Kahn of Cohort One are overseeing the track on electronic portfolios for which Kathy Yancey, NCEPR co-director, will provide a keynote. Featured track plenary sessions and workshops throughout the conference will emphasize assessment in:

- Civic Engagement
- Portfolios
- Faculty Development
- First Year Experience
- Student Development and Diversity

The institute will also present sessions with national assessment leaders, the Best Practices Fair, and additional learning opportunities emphasizing:

- Accreditation
- All Majors
- Assessment Methods
- Community Colleges
- General Education

For more information consult the website: <http://www.planning.iupui.edu> (click on 'Conferences') or contact Sharon J. Hamilton at [shamilto@iupui.edu](mailto:shamilto@iupui.edu).

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## NCEPR Member Publications

Cara Lane, University of Washington, NCEPR Cohort One  
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The University of Washington recently released a report of findings from instructor and student surveys on educational technology, with Cara Lane as lead author. A key finding was a strong interest in Web-based tools, including e-portfolios, among all members of the campus community. The majority of students and instructors indicated that they would like University to provide students with guidance in building electronic portfolios: 52% of undergraduates supported this goal, as did 56% of faculty. Considering that 86% of faculty members indicated that they had no experience with electronic portfolios, their level of interest was noteworthy. To access the complete report visit go to:  
[http://catalyst.washington.edu/projects/edtech\\_2005report.html](http://catalyst.washington.edu/projects/edtech_2005report.html)

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## NCEPR Member Presentations

1. In October 2005, San Jose State University organized a two day conference on "What are Electronic Portfolios? Should SJSU Adopt Them?" Presenters included Helen Barrett, Research Project Director for the REFLECT Initiative; Helen L. Chen, Stanford University; John Ittelson, California State University Monterey Bay; and Toru Iiyoshi, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Also featured was a vendor panel with Adobe Acrobat, LiveText, TaskStream, and Carnegie's KEEP Toolkit. The conference proceedings include streaming video and PowerPoint presentations which can be viewed at <http://www.sjsu.edu/cfd/docs/schedule.htm>. These proceedings are an excellent resource for institutions contemplating the adoption of ePortfolio tools and exploring their implications for assessment, curriculum, and teaching and learning practices.
2. The annual meeting of the Educause Learning Initiative in January 2006 featured a pre-conference workshop which included presentations by John Ittelson of California State University Monterey Bay, Toru Iiyoshi and Cheryl Richardson of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Helen L. Chen of the Stanford Center for Innovations in Learning, and Tracy Penny-Light of the University of Waterloo. Attendees included faculty members, instructional specialists, and academic technology administrators and staff from a wide range of institutions including the Elmira College, University of Central Florida, University of Dayton, University of Mary Washington, University of Nebraska at Omaha, SUNY College at Brockport, and Western Washington University. The conversations centered around issues relating to implementation of ePortfolio tools, the contribution ePortfolios can make to the accreditation process, fostering buy-in at various levels (student, faculty, administration, and other stakeholders), and exchange of success stories, case studies, and models of ePortfolio use. Some of the issues and questions posed will be explored further in future EPAC International chats, webcasts, and meetings.
3. David Conway and Paul Clark of the University of Nebraska at Omaha made a presentation titled *TE@M: Collaborative teacher preparation with the community college* at the 11th Annual International Conference of the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities held in Torrance, CA. The presentation discussed a joint ePortfolio project between a community college and a university's college of education designed to encourage community college students, particularly minorities and first generation college students, to continue on to the university by making the transition much more comfortable and seamless.

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## NCEPR Member Future Presentations

- Rickards, W. et al (March, 2006) *Studying the Roads We Make: The National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research*. Symposium at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), San Francisco, CA.
- Clark, P., Goeman, R., Carnevalo, M., & Day, S. (2006, March). *Bringing electronic portfolios to middle school students: A collaborative effort with higher education*. Paper presented at the 17th Annual Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education Conference, Orlando, FL.
- Topp, N., & Clark, P. (2006, March). *Student ePortfolio implementation: Important impact beyond assessment*. Paper presented at the 17th Annual Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education Conference, Orlando, FL.
- Chen, H., Penny-Light, T., & Fournier, J. (April, 2006) *Disciplinary approaches to using ePortfolios to advance reflective thinking and integrative learning*. Seminar at the Association of American Colleges and Universities' Network for Academic Renewal Conference-Learning and Technology, Seattle, WA.
- Topp, N., & Rogers, S. (April, 2006) *Coordinated campus ePortfolio initiatives: A Catalyst for Institutional Improvement*. Third LIIA PanAmerican ePortfolio Working Forum, Vancouver, BC.
- Clark, P., Goeman, R., Carnevalo, M., & Day, S.(2006, April). *Development and Implementation of Magnet Middle School Electronic Portfolio*. Presentation at the 24th Annual Magnet Schools of America Conference, Omaha, NE.
- Rogers, S., & Topp, N. (April, 2006). *Implementing ePortfolios for Faculty/Staff for Annual Review: Process & Outcomes*. 2006 Annual Meeting of the Higher Learning Commission, Chicago, IL.

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## Clemson Students Present their Eportfolio Research

Ben Stephen, Clemson University, NCEPR Cohort Two  
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In the Clemson Psychology Department, the Undergraduate Creativity Initiative dovetails with the Psychology Program ePortfolio Project to produce some interesting work on ePortfolios. In the Creative Inquiry Initiative, students are encouraged to join research teams with faculty mentors for a 2-3 year project. Last Spring, we recruited freshman, sophomore, and upper level undergraduates to join our research team from classes in which they produced lab, course, and/or program ePortfolios. These students brought an important perspective to the research questions we explore, since they turned from producers of ePortfolios to researchers of ePortfolios. Their efforts are bearing fruit. This Spring, they are scheduled to discuss their findings in four presentations of the meetings of the Southeastern Psychological Association:

Psychology laboratory electronic portfolios: Views from self and others. Kristen Purvis, Tristan Shaffer, Coryne Smith, Jordan Vogt, Brigetta Wilson, and Benjamin R. Stephens.

The structure of student electronic portfolios from introductory and senior laboratories. Brigetta Wilson, Jordan Vogt, Coryne Smith, Kristen Purvis, Tristan Shaffer and Benjamin R. Stephens.

Self-report and portfolio assessment of a summer REU program. Coryne Smith, Jordan Vogt, Brigetta Wilson, Kristen Purvis, Tristan Shaffer and Benjamin R. Stephens.

Is there a preference for ePortfolios over resumes? Kimberly Brown, Hallie Dempsey, Kristin Stadler, Tiffany M. Green, and Benjamin R. Stephens.



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## Invitation to Publish

Sharon J. Hamilton, IUPUI, NCEPR Cohort One  
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*About Campus*, published by Jossey-Bass, has a regular feature called "Assessment Matters." You are invited to submit articles of 2500 words or less on some aspect of assessment that is of broad interest to both faculty members and to academic staff in student affairs. Electronic student portfolios offer fertile ground for appropriate articles. If you are interested, contact feature editor Sharon Hamilton at [shamilto@iupui.edu](mailto:shamilto@iupui.edu) to receive a CD with full information about style, length, and other considerations, as well as sample articles.

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## Recommended Readings

Mary E. Zamon, George Mason University, NCEPR Cohort Two  
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*Portfolio Plus: A critical guide to alternative assessment*. 1999. Linda Mabry. Corwin Press (Sage): Thousand Oaks CA.

This book first presents a strong review of assessment methods and theory. It is a good source when a faculty member or administrator wants to support using portfolios. The second half of the book includes many examples. Although not all examples are ePortfolios, the ideas are transferable and offer depth to research work, including possible inquiry methods.

For those interested in the developmental levels of college students for tracking development through eportfolios, I suggest *Forms of ethical and intellectual development in the college years: A scheme*. (1999). William G. Perry, Jr. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco. The book, especially Chapter 5, provides good ideas on how to look at reflections to see intellectual development.

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## Book Review

Reviewed by Steve Acker, Ohio State University, NCEPR Cohort Two  
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*The Advancement of Learning: Building the Teaching Commons* by Mary Taylor Huber and Pat Hutchings. San Francisco: Josey Bass (2005).

*The advancement of learning* is a highly engaging book that takes its readers on a journey that begins with the early history of the scholarship of teaching and concludes with a chapter detailing what academic communities need to do to maintain the momentum associated with today's rising interest and practice of the scholarship of teaching. In between, often relying on examples and case studies taken from CASTL (the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching), Huber and Hutchings introduce us to the practicalities, struggles, stories, and data that make this a meaningful endeavor for those interested in learning and how to teach toward those ends.

The book's subtitle *building the teaching commons* is another lens into the topics covered. It begins with a rationale for the work stated early on by Lee Shulman: teaching can be a solitary vocation, a process unsupported by community, a lonely endeavor. Whereas each of us has colleagues who support our disciplinary interests and provide us vehicles to engage this community in our thinking, challenges, and contributions, there has been only an episodic and hard to find forum for these same community functions associated with teaching. The authors, Barbara Cambridge in her role guiding the institutional CASTL program, and others engaged in the scholarship of teaching have set out to remedy this sense of isolation. A community focused on the scholarship of teaching serves both those who join and other teachers who read and reflect on

the discourse generated within the community. The student is yet another benefactor, as well as subject of scrutiny, to those in the teaching commons.

Dennis Jacobs, a Notre Dame chemist, makes four demands of the Teaching Commons: that it frame salient questions, gather and explore evidence relevant to these questions, offer practical suggestions for teaching and learning based on the research, and importantly make it publicly accountable and discussable through publication, conferences, and campus conversations. Others cited in the book value the public nature of the community as an approach to preserve the wisdom and insights into student learning now lost every time the teacher closes the door as the class begins.

Among the several case studies and topics explored in the middle of the book, that of the *role of difficulty in student learning* told through the research and story of University of Pittsburgh's Mariolina Salvatori particularly caught my eye. Her central research question, one that drives her teaching practice, is: what aspects of a subject are difficult for students? The question serves as the foil for assignments in which students explore why they find those aspects challenging, confusing, or boring. Their responses point Salvatori toward areas she needs to engage in with her teaching and also insights that should help students overcome those difficulties once identified.

We're also introduced to Peter Gallison's notion of academic trading zones, an explicit acknowledgement that teaching is an interdisciplinary area for research and that insights can be drawn well beyond the Colleges of Education. I have found this to be true at Ohio State University where our Faculty and TA Development group has brought together a scholarship of teaching community that involves faculty from Communication, Chemical Engineering, Education, Nursing, Public Health, and Veterinary Medicine. As the community member from Communication, I have learned much from all of these colleagues, but in particular have gained new insights from practices used by my Engineering and Veterinary Medicine community members. Who would have thought that using mnemonics and dramatic plots from old television shows (Mission Impossible for example) could provide a framework for teaching the digestive system of a horse? "Any social constructivist" retorted our Education colleague and off we go on a generalized discussion of theory and practice for effective teaching and learning. Perhaps not surprisingly, each of us is documenting our vision, design, methods, outcomes, and analysis of our own practice within ePortfolio for public view, comment, and reflection.

While there is much rich content I have not reviewed here, the account so far helps me frame the value of the book. Hearing, testing, and sharing experiences from my teaching and my students' difficulties with learning with others from disparate academic backgrounds and training is immensely valuable and rewarding. However, it is not easy and too often one feels as if teaching is distinct from disciplinary (rewarded) scholarship and, therefore, is a conflicting use of time. If we can't respond to the call for action from this book, and the literature from which it draws its legacy, to make teaching and learning public and thus "value-able," we will continue to work in relative isolation. The call to action is to develop respected journals, conferences, and other vehicles for sharing and testing our findings. This expectation should mark our efforts within the National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research as we are often gently reminded by our leadership trio- what is your question, what is your evidence, how can it help teaching and student learning- where will you share your findings? See you all at the 2006 Assessment Conference in Indianapolis.

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## Tool Review

Todd Vanek, Washington State University, NCEPR Cohort Two  
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### Elgg: A Learning Landscape

"Elgg is a **learning landscape** with the goal of ...creating communities of learning."

Elgg is an open-source software that supports blogging, portfolio thinking and social networking. I began exploring elgg as a blogging tool about nine months ago. I quickly became engaged in a community of learners through interactions with blog posts. My first attempt at group and community functions in elgg was unsuccessful. I attribute my failure to "playing," as I didn't have a specific purpose for creating a group or community. However, once I began using elgg in my class, my students and I figured out groups and communities rather quickly. One advantage elgg has over course



management systems (CMS) is that the user can choose to stay in a “class” community, like a CMS, or expand that community beyond the classroom, like engaging with professionals out in the field. The group function allows individual users to choose groups of people that they can share their blog posts (and/or documents) with. Elgg also has a file repository, a search function, a calendar tool, tagging, and RSS. Elgg is very flexible and allows users to shape the learning landscape that they need to support an effective and efficient learning experience.

If you view elgg as only a blogging tool or simply an ePortfolio, you may miss the power of its social networking. If you view elgg only for its social networking, you may miss the personal ownership it supports. It is important to view elgg for its “collective” potential. Explore elgg yourself at [elgg.net](http://elgg.net).

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## Coalition Member Spotlight

Nancy Gross, LaGuardia Community College/CUNY, NCEPR Cohort One  
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### LaGuardia Community College

As the ePortfolio initiative has grown over the past 5 years at LaGuardia Community College and is becoming a recognized component of the educational experience, we see that it is being interpreted and used in specific and unique ways by different academic disciplines. Although the college as a whole has begun to integrate ePortfolio practice across the curriculum, we are seeing ePortfolio growth and development in specific areas such as Cooperative Education, Academic ESL, the Allied Health fields, Business and Management, Mathematics, Oral Communication and Art. We are focusing on the various ways that ePortfolio is being expressed in these specific disciplines during the next phase of our ePortfolio research within the National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research.

Because of the work of one of our leading ePortfolio faculty practitioners, Professor Michael Rodriguez, we have begun to look at how the Art faculty is interpreting ePortfolio. The creation of a portfolio is customary for artists who traditionally have shown their body of work to be considered for exhibition. Whether the actual work is placed within a portfolio or represented by photographs, artists are quite comfortable with the portfolio concept. The work has traditionally stood on its own, however, with no reflection by the artist. For students who are developing an identity as an artist, Professor Rodriguez strongly believes that students’ writing and speaking about their work are integrally related to their thinking like an artist and developing their creativity. Thus, having an ePortfolio practice that explicitly prompts students to comment on their work strengthens their development of artistic identity. ePortfolio creation also gives student artists the possibility to present their work in digital format, allowing them a new ease of portability and a mechanism to showcase their work to a much broader audience. These features of ePortfolio are particularly attractive to Professor Rodriguez as he works with his art students in creating ePortfolios as a final class project.

The following interview with Rodriguez on January 6, 2006, illuminates the value of ePortfolios for fine arts students.

#### ***How is the electronic portfolio similar to and different from a traditional portfolio that artists are accustomed to preparing?***

The similarity is that both function as a repository of student work. In a digital portfolio, however, the true materiality of the work is not represented. This disadvantage, however, is overcome by the advantages of eportfolios. The ability of students to juxtapose their writing with their art work is of huge value. Although artists are generally not asked to speak or write about their work, Rodriguez strongly believes that this process of explanation and reflection supports the creativity of art students. Of course the portability of the electronic portfolio is also a tremendous advantage.

#### ***How are you currently developing your pedagogical practice through the integration of ePortfolio?***

Although ePortfolio practice is not currently integrated into Rodriguez’ studio time with his art students, it is a culminating activity for graduating students, a capstone experience which helps them organize all their work at the college. It also asks them to look at their work over time to understand their evolving focus and technique. Creating the ePortfolio gives students an opportunity to interact with the computer in new ways and especially gives them marketable skills in graphic

and web design. In addition to the college-wide goals around ePortfolio, this work benefits students in realizing their art talents in the workplace. Rodriguez reiterated the value of challenging students to critically think, write and speak about their artwork, and to showcase it. Although most students have computers at home, the college offers them a greater range of software applications for creating an ePortfolio. This experience makes them competitive with students from other institutions that are generally associated with greater affluence and access.

***What excites you about the integration of ePortfolio for your students and the art department in general?***

The portability of a digital portfolio is a real asset so that students can showcase their work. It also enables the art faculty to make visible to other faculty and administrators what “we do in art”. It helps others to understand the discipline of art as well as showing the growth and development of art students. ePortfolios show students’ artistic creations coupled with reflections about what they have created to provide a view into an artist’s inner world.

***What has been the students’ response to have an ePortfolio to showcase their work?***

The students love it. This enthusiasm seems to be generational. Because students have grown up in the visual world of multimedia, seeing their work displayed digitally seems to signal more authority and validity than just seeing it hanging on a wall in the college. The understanding that their work is hooked up to a virtual network seems to be powerful to them. In addition, the illumination of the screen-the light- makes the work look terrific, and the students understand that. Also the ePortfolio allows students to view their work in its entirety; seeing the pieces together creates excitement.

***What role is reflection playing as you ask students to talk/write about their work? Through the ePortfolio, do they see their identities as artists beginning to develop?***

Rodriguez learns more about students when they write about their technique and how they work. Although he generally feels quite sensitive to students’ unique styles and needs while they are working, he feels they reveal even more through reflections about their work in their ePortfolios. They can contradict themselves and can see their artistic voices emerging. It is important for them to write about their work as they are developing their talent.

***What do you foresee as the potential for electronic portfolios and your discipline and growth within your department?***

Only a very few students may actually make their livings as artists; however, many students will be able to use their talents as web designers and graphic designers. The experience of creating an ePortfolio gives them a leg up in closing the gap between themselves and students at private, more elite institutions. It gives them greater fluency with advanced computer applications, design aesthetics, and navigation techniques. ePortfolio is a meaningful way to finish their experience at LaGuardia because it not only gives them a greater technical expertise, but also demands that they think critically about their work. Rodriguez feels that it is important to give students the vocabulary of art and to encourage them to integrate that vocabulary into their own language. ePortfolio encourages students to move forward in expressing their creativity through language. Students discover new things about themselves as artists and about their own work. He sees the potential of ePortfolio as a powerful capstone experience for art majors.

