



NCEPR Newsletter

National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research

November, 2005

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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
Kapi'olani Community College
St. Olaf College
The Ohio State University
Thomas College
University of Georgia
University of Illinois Champaign Urbana
University of Nebraska Omaha
University of Texas San Antonio
Washington State University

Contact Us

<http://ncepr.org/ncepr/drupal/>
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NCEPR: Continuing Progress

The work of the National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research is important for many reasons. Two significant reasons are 1) bringing together teams from twenty institutions to discuss ePortfolio projects helps all to understand that much can be learned by sharing successes and challenges, and 2) focusing on researching the impact of ePortfolios is valuable as there can be a tendency for institutions to put research on the back burner as much energy is placed on implementing ePortfolio initiatives.

NCEPR Meeting, February 2-4, Portland, OR

Portland State University will host the next meeting of NCEPR February 2-4. The discussions will include the revision of research plans, the impact of reflection on learning, and the process of implementing ePortfolios.

Third Cohort to Focus on Bridging Curricular and Co-Curricular Learning

Barbara Cambridge and Darren Cambridge, bcambridge@ncepr.org

Speaking broadly, three current national emphases in electronic portfolios are uses for 1) generating, documenting, and assessing learning outcomes; 2) advising; and 3) preparing for careers. In some instances, co-curricular learning is showcased, but it has yet to become a consistent focus. Cohort III will address this need by bringing together the curricular with the co-curricular, thus enhancing the work of the institutions that participate while collectively they make visible the kinds of learning that go on everyday outside the classroom and that can be integrated with in-class learning in a productive way. As the research is reported out, the vision of integrative learning that we intuitively share but that is not yet fully understood or documented is thus enlarged for all institutions.

Third Cohort -- Continued

The Coalition has established a partnership with the National Association of Student and Personnel Administrators (NASPA) to support this focus. Like the first two cohorts, the third will be composed of ten campuses. However, while past cohorts have been composed of teams with several years of experience, campuses in early stages of projects with goals that correspond to the cohort's themes will be encouraged to participate. New Century College of George Mason University will provide administrative support for the project, in collaboration with the Office of University Life. A call for proposals will be issued in late December. If you are interested in participating in the third cohort or know of another campus we should recruit, please contact Barbara Cambridge at bcambridge@ncte.org.

National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research Website

Darren Cambridge, George Mason University, dcambrid@gmu.edu

The new NCEPR website was launched in September at <http://ncepr.org/ncepr/drupal/>. It offers several means for Coalition participants to collaborate and to disseminate their work. Features include:

CHAT – A text chat tool supports our monthly chats. Transcripts of past chats, as well as links to the articles discussed, are posted on the site.

COMMENTS - You can post a comment on almost anything posted on the website. Look for a comment box at the bottom of the document on which you'd like to comment.

BLOGS - Each member of the coalition can post entries to a personal blog on the new site. In addition, all of our blog postings are collected on the Blogs page. I've been posting many of my thoughts and writings about ePortfolios on my blog on the site throughout the Fall. In the future, we'll use the blogs as a way for teams to share their progress with a wider audience.

AGGREGATOR - The site can aggregate feeds from other blogs of interest to us. Currently, such blogs as Helen Barrett's ePortfolios for Learning and the Apple Digital Campus Exchange blog run by Helen Chen and Steve Acker are featured. If you know of other blogs that discuss topics relevant to the work of the Coalition, please contact Darren Cambridge at dcambrid@gmu.edu to get them added.

WIKI – Our wiki enables highly-collaborative, open authoring, useful for such activities as building glossaries and lists of resources.

LISTS – The archives of the email lists for participants in each cohort are accessible via the site using the passwords emailed to participants when they were subscribed.

NEWS – Copies of this publication will be posted on the site. Participants and other readers can comment on them.

We invite you to visit the new website: <http://ncepr.org/ncepr/drupal/>. Please send your comments and suggestions about the website to Darren Cambridge, dcambrid@gmu.edu.

Spotlight on ePortfolio Websites

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

EPAC International – http://epacinternational.org/mailman/listinfo/eportfolios_epacinternational.org

EDUCAUSE ePortfolio Website -- http://www.educause.edu/Browse/645?PARENT_ID=475

ePortfolio Organizations - EPAC International and EPAC

Barbara Cambridge, Darren Cambridge and Helen Chen

Based on growing practice and research around ePortfolios worldwide, a new non-profit organization is being formed to provide communication across projects, programs, institutions, and countries. EPAC International will begin with the focused agenda of cultivating information-sharing. Incorporation and tax exemption paperwork is in process, and we hope to officially launch EPAC International activities in early 2006.

EPAC International will build on the success of the original EPAC, the international virtual community of practice, and will involve from the beginning the Centre for Recording Quality in the UK and our National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research in the US. It will expand quickly to serve as an umbrella organization for many other initiatives to share information about their work. Beyond the US and UK, colleagues from the Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, and the Netherlands already been involved in advising our work.

The original EPAC is alive and well. We've resumed monthly chats, and launched a series of webcasts co-sponsored by the Apple Digital Campus Exchange. Toru Iiyoshi of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching was the presenter for the first webcast in November, "Electronic Portfolios for Making Invisible Teaching and Learning Visible: Issues, Cases, and Possibilities." The event was well-attended and enthusiastically received. To be informed about future EPAC and EPAC International events, subscribe to the EPAC email list at http://epacinternational.org/mailman/listinfo/eportfolios_epacinternational.org.

NCEPR Member Publications

Stephens, B.R. and Weaver, B. E. (2005) Integrating learning, reflective e-portfolios, undergraduate research, and assessment. In Chambers, J.A. (Ed.) *Selected Papers from the 16th International Conference on College Teaching and Learning* (pp 185-202). Jacksonville: Florida Community College.

Stephens, B.R. (2005) Laptops in psychology: conducting flexible in-class research and writing laboratories, In Neilson, L. and Weaver, B (Eds) *New Directions for Teaching and Learning. Special Issue: Enhancing learning using laptops in the classroom* (pp15-26). Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.

Reardon, R. C., Lumsden, J. A., & Meyer, K. E. (2005). Developing an e-portfolio program: Providing a comprehensive tool for student development, reflection, and integration. *NASPA Journal*, 42(3), 368-380.

NCEPR Member Participates in Conference on English Education

Carl Young, Virginia Tech, cayoung3@vt.edu

Carl Young, NCEPR member from Virginia Tech, participated in the May 2005 Conference on English Education (CEE) Leadership and Policy Summit as a contributing member of the multimodal literacies and digital technologies strand. As a result of his work at the summit, he has coauthored a recently published NCTE beliefs statement on technology and the preparation of English teachers.

The May 2005 Conference on English Education Leadership and Policy Summit (<http://www.ncte.org/groups/cee/featuredinfo/122844.htm>) brought together over 75 past, present, and future leaders of CEE from across the United States to Georgia State University to rethink issues related to the preparation and continuing professional development of English language arts teachers and teacher educators. The goal of the working meeting was to assemble a collective knowledge base and a series of written position papers to guide future policy efforts of English teacher preparation and development in this country. For more details on the summit itself, see “Reconstructing English Education for the 21st Century: A Report on the CEE Leadership and Policy Summit,” (2005) (<http://www.ncte.org/groups/cee/featuredinfo/122846.htm>) co-authored by Suzanne Miller, CEE Chair, and Dana Fox, CEE Leadership and Policy Summit Chair.

As Miller and Fox (2005) explain, “The CEE Summit was not merely an intellectual retreat but a working meeting consisting of small group sessions for discussion and writing as well as plenary sessions for critical conversations on vital issues and reporting out to whole group. Collaborating in small thematic inquiry groups, invited participants from various educational institutions across the United States worked together electronically for two months prior to the Summit and then face-to-face in Atlanta for three days to develop a framework of critical CEE issues and ideas and to begin to develop an action agenda.”

“Beliefs about Technology and the Preparation of English Teachers: Beginning the Conversation” is the initial draft of one of the position papers resulting from the work of participants in the “What do we know and believe about multimodal literacies and digital technologies in English education?” thematic strand group of the CEE summit. This initial beliefs statement is being co-published online by both the English section of *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education (CITE Journal)*, and CEE. The original draft can be located on the NCTE CEE website at the following URL: <http://www.ncte.org/groups/cee/positions/122936.htm>. The *CITE Journal* version has been revised further and will appear online in early December 2005 at <http://www.citejournal.org>.

As part of the rationale for this tentative beliefs document being published in the *CITE Journal*, the participants in the CEE Summit multimodal literacies and digital technologies strand are inviting and encouraging short responses to this initial draft in the form of commentaries, which will be reviewed for publication in a commentary strand linked to the original article. The commentary feature takes advantage of an interactive medium to develop an ongoing, peer-reviewed dialog that, in this case, will be used to inform the revision of this tentative beliefs statement about technology and the preparation of English teachers.

Commentaries for this call for submissions should be submitted for review by February 1st, 2006, and they may be submitted online by clicking on the submissions link on the *CITE Journal* homepage, <http://www.citejournal.org>. Reviews for these commentaries will be expedited, and commentaries accepted for publication will appear in the March 2006 issue of the *CITE Journal*. With the next revision of the beliefs statement, Young sees the importance of making electronic portfolios a much more explicit reference for the document. Young also delivered a research presentation building on his coalition work entitled, “What Pre-Service English Teachers Can Teach Us About Effective Technology Preparation and Integration” at the November 2005, National Council of Teachers of English Annual Convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

NCEPR Member Presentations

Cambridge, D. (October, 2005) Research driving policy: Implications of research on eFolio Minnesota for supporting lifelong and lifewide learning with ePortfolios. EIFEL ePortfolio 2005 Conference. Cambridge, UK.

Cambridge, B. (October, 2005) Asking important questions: Research on the influence of electronic portfolios on student learning. EIFEL ePortfolio 2005 Conference. Cambridge, UK

Stephens, B.R. (October, 2005) Embedded advising: Integrating advising, class activated, e-portfolios, and assessment. National Academic Advising Association, Las Vegas.

Topp, N. (May, 2005) ePortfolios to show progress: Informing student, the institution, and the community. Constructing, using and evaluating e-portfolios seminar. London, UK.

Klein, N.D. & Stephens, B.R. (April, 2005) Assessment of a summer program for undergraduate research experiences. Southeastern Psychological Association, Nashville.

Topp, N. & Roger, S. (April, 2005) Vital planning questions for well designed, meaningful, and successful campus portfolio initiatives. The Higher Learning Commission Annual Meeting. Chicago, IL.

Stephens, B.R. and Weaver, B.E. (March, 2005) Integrating learning, e-portfolios, undergraduate research, and assessment. Sixteenth Annual Conference on Teaching and Learning, Jacksonville.

Topp, N. & Roger, S. (March, 2005). ePortfolios to show progress: Informing student, the institution, and the community. American Association for Higher Education 2005 National Conference on Higher Education. Atlanta, GA.

NCEPR Presentation at upcoming 2006 AERA

William H. Rickards, Alverno College, william.rickards@alverno.edu

The proposal has been accepted for the 2006 AERA Meeting in San Francisco called "Studying the Roads We Make: The National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research."

Future Conferences

Helen Chen, Stanford University, hlchen@stanford.edu

Educause Learning Initiative

Advancing Learning: Insights and Innovations

January 29–31, 2006

Westin Horton Plaza Hotel, San Diego, CA

1) Facilitating Deep Learning with E-Portfolios

Speaker(s)

Helen L. Chen, Research Scientist, Stanford Center for Innovations in Learning, Stanford University

Tracy Penny-Light, Acting Associate Director, TRACE, University of Waterloo

Cheryl Richardson, Research Scholar, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Abstract: E-portfolios can facilitate deep learning if they allow students to document and share their learning beyond the confines of the classroom. Example e-portfolios will demonstrate our model for facilitating this type of learning in several disciplines. Potential strategies for incorporating this approach into different contexts will also be presented.

2) Accountability in Higher Education: Addressing the Innovator's Dilemma Through Authentic Assessment
Speaker(s)

Stephen R. Acker, Director, Learning Technologies Research and Innovation, The Ohio State University

David M. Barber, Director, Information Technology Programs, Ohio Board of Regents
Cable Green, Director of Technology, Ohio Learning Network

Peter E. Murray, Assistant Director of Library Systems-OhioLINK, Wright State University

Abstract: The Ohio Board of Regents sponsors a statewide team to experiment with disruptive technologies, a novel response to our multiple publics' call for accountability in higher education. Our high school-to-college writing transition e-portfolio project captures authentic student learning and documents cross-organizational efficiencies and concrete evidence desired by students, parents, and legislators.

3) Planning for E-Portfolios: Bridging the Gap Between Learning and Assessment
Speaker(s)

Paul E. Fisher, Jr., Director, Teaching, Learning & Technology Center, Seton Hall University

Tracy Gottlieb, Dean, Freshman Studies, Seton Hall University

David W. Middleton, Associate Director, TLTC, Seton Hall University

Abstract: The evolution of e-portfolios has sparked great debate regarding strategic initiatives, best practices, and uses for formative and summative assessment. Seton Hall University has developed the tools and strategy for the successful institutional implementation of e-portfolios as a device for promoting student learning and assessing institutional effectiveness.

AAC&U's Network for Academic Renewal Conference –

Learning and Technology: Implications for Liberal Education and the Disciplines

April 20 - 22, 2006 | Seattle, Washington

1) Disciplinary Approaches to Using ePortfolios to Advance Reflective Thinking and Integrative Learning

Helen L. Chen, Research Scientist, Stanford University, CA

Tracy Penny-Light, Acting Associate Director/Assistant Professor, Teaching Resources and Continuing Education (TRACE)/Department of History, University of Waterloo

Janice Fournier, Research Scientist, Catalyst Research and Development, University of Washington, Seattle

Session Description: What does reflection mean to a historian compared to an engineer? How can faculty teach and model the skills of effective communication and integration of learning in a language and format that is relevant to how today's students understand and live their lives? Stanford University, University of Washington, and the University of Waterloo describe three approaches for using ePortfolios as the medium to facilitate reflection and synthesis in mechanical engineering, art, technical communication, and history.

2) Student Eportfolios: UW, Stanford and PSU Talk about Quality and Scale

Judy P Patton, Director of University Studies, Portland State University, OR

Cara Lane, Research Scientist, Educational Partnerships and Learning Technologies, University of Washington

Helen Chen, Research Scientist, Evaluation, Stanford University

Candyce Reynolds, Director of Mentor Programs, University Studies, Portland State University, OR

Yves Labissiere, Assistant Professor in University Studies, Portland State University, OR

Session Description: Two questions have emerged as more institutions begin thinking about implementing eportfolios: how to achieve quality and at what scale. These three institutions are engaged in eportfolio initiatives; each effort located and initiated differently. All three are also members of the National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research and EPAC and are researching effects of eportfolios on learning. The experience at each institution offers lessons, mistakes and successes to assist others in similar efforts.

ePortfolio Publications of Interest

An Overview of E-Portfolios

George Lorenzo and John Ittelson

Three types of e-portfolios are described in this report: student e-portfolios, teaching e-portfolios, and institutional e-portfolios. E-portfolios can support student advisement, career preparation, and credential documentation; the sharing of teaching philosophies and practices; department and program self-studies; and institutional and program accreditation processes. This report defines and categorizes e-portfolios, offers examples of higher education e-portfolio implementations, reviews e-portfolio technology, and addresses adoption issues. <http://www.educause.edu/LibraryDetailPage/666?ID=ELI3001>

Demonstrating and Assessing Student Learning with E-Portfolios

George Lorenzo and John Ittelson

E-portfolios allow students to demonstrate competencies and reflect upon experiences, documenting academic preparation and career readiness. Creating e-portfolios enables students to enhance their learning by giving them a better understanding of their skills, as well as where and how they need to improve to meet academic and career goals. Additionally, the digital artifacts that students accumulate can be used to assess learning at the course, program, department, and institutional level. This report reviews how selected higher education institutions have implemented assessment e-portfolio systems that demonstrate and assess learning. <http://www.educause.edu/LibraryDetailPage/666?ID=ELI3003>

An Overview of Institutional E-Portfolios

George Lorenzo and John Ittelson

Web-based institutional e-portfolios allow colleges and universities to share information about their missions, goals, accomplishments, and challenges. Institutional e-portfolios typically consist of reaccreditations self-studies and other information that supports an institution's accomplishments. This report provides an overview of institutional e-portfolios, highlighting three specific projects. It also explores the use of e-portfolios by regional accrediting agencies. Finally, the report examines the challenges in developing and implementing institutional e-portfolios. <http://www.educause.edu/LibraryDetailPage/666?ID=ELI3002>

Article Review

G. Todd Vanek, Ph.D., Washington State University, gtvanek@wsu.edu

“Implementing and Managing E-Portfolios in Career Services” by Reardon, Lumsden and Meyer

The Florida State University (FSU) Career Center has managed the implementation and growth of the Career Portfolio Program (CPP) for the past 8 years. In *Developing an E-Portfolio Program: Providing a Comprehensive Tool for Student Development, Reflection, and Integration*, Reardon, Lumsden and Meyer discuss the creation, implementation, and management of the CPP system. Their work was guided by four philosophical principles. This article provides evidence of the potential for E-Portfolios in career services through two of these principles, which are providing “... a system that enabled students to develop and pursue a personal, strategic career vision” and the notion “...that career-planning services are a boundary spanning function linking education and employment...” (p. 371).

The CPP project was a collaborative effort among many student affairs offices, led by top-level administration. That effort models a “boundary spanning function” and is evidenced by the creation of the *Opportunities for Experience* page where students are provided a list of career and life skill development opportunities on campus and in the community. Another vital tool in the FSU CPP is the skills matrix, which allows students (and others) to track and manage learning toward career and personal goals.

The authors close their article with suggestions for much-needed research in several areas. One area is the use of and reactions to portfolios by employers and graduate school admissions offices. The authors suggest that the E-Portfolio is effective in representing an individual; however, its potential has yet to be recognized by employers and other “reviewers.”

This article provides a glimpse at the potential that E-Portfolios hold in helping students recognize learning, but more research is needed on the “...extent to which an e-portfolio helps students conceptualize strategies for acquiring and documenting general skills from available educational experiences within and outside of the formal curriculum” (p. 379).

Developing an E-Portfolio Program: Providing a Comprehensive Tool for Student Development, Reflection, and Integration is a good read for understanding the implementation and management of an E-Portfolio system through career services. You can visit the FSU E-Portfolio at <http://www.career.fsu.edu/portfolio/index.html>.

Coalition Member Spotlight

Darren Cambridge, George Mason University, dcambrid@gmu.edu

George Mason University -- A Focus on Process

George Mason University’s research focuses on the process through which students make choices about how they compose their portfolios. Many portfolio experts emphasize that the portfolio process is a primary site of learning and is as important to the success of a portfolio as the quality of the finished portfolio itself. However, most existing research on the impact of electronic portfolios on learning either analyzes primarily the final product, the portfolios student produce, or relies on students’ recollections after the fact. While the

later approach yields some insight into the composition process, we know that the mind tends to reconstruct memories of past events based on present understanding. Therefore, the Mason team's research project draws on data gathered during the process of electronic portfolio development to yield a more accurate account of the patterns of choices portfolio authors make in composing their digital texts and the impact of those choices on their learning.

Our team's experiences suggest that students at different points in their intellectual development and in varied disciplinary contexts make choices differently and that understanding these choices may be crucial to supporting their growth. In order to begin to articulate these differences, the Mason research will involve students in both the New Century College first year learning communities and senior capstone course; and in both the College of Education and Human Development MA program in educational technology and Ph.D. program in Higher Education.

In each program, students will be asked to document their digital portfolio composition through methods such as thinking sheets and talk-aloud protocols, using audio and screen capture software. We are currently seeking funding to employ methods that yield data that is richer, but more costly to collect and analyze. The resulting body of evidence will be examined using a grounded theory technique in order to develop an account of electronic portfolio composition that emerges from actual practice at our institution. Pending human subjects review board approval, pilot data collection and analysis will be conducted in the Spring of 2006 in selected programs and expanded to the full range in 2006-2007.

Use of and interest in electronic portfolios is growing across our campus, from English to Engineering. What we learn from this project—and from the collective work of the Coalition—will be invaluable to ensuring that this growth is guided by a clear picture of how the electronic portfolio composition process supports student learning.

Coalition Member Spotlight

Neal W. Topp, University of Nebraska at Omaha, ntopp@mail.unomaha.edu

The University of Nebraska at Omaha, Comprehensive Campus Wide ePortfolios

The UNO ePortfolio project is a comprehensive campus-wide project that started in Fall 2003 and is one of the Academic Quality Improvement Projects (AQIP -- Higher Learning Commission) accreditation action plans for the campus. The project, named *myMAPP* (Mapping Academic Performance through ePortfolios), involves several offices, departments, and all colleges. The Information Technology Services (ITS) division is charged with the development of the technical aspects and is the project manager for the program. The advisory committee is comprised of administrators, faculty, and staff from several colleges, units, and offices.

The project is designed to develop an ePortfolio culture across the university, with all students, faculty, staff, departments, colleges, and the campus eventually populating ePortfolios. The primary goal of the project is to improve the educational experience for UNO students, while improving student learning, the institution's systems, and its programs. Secondary goals include 1) more effective student learning assessment, 2) a shift from what students know, to what they can do with their knowledge and 3) improved accountability.

The project's progress has included the formation and subsequent Regent's approval of the Center for ePortfolio-Based Assessment (CEBA). Also, over 200 persons used the faculty and staff ePortfolio, *myMAPP-Faculty/Staff* in Spring 2005, with about 400 more populating the ePortfolio for the 2005/2006

annual review process. All faculty and staff are scheduled to use the system by the end of the 2006/2007 academic year. <http://mymapp.unomaha.edu/demo.php>

Student ePortfolios have been used by over 2000 students from several departments in the College of Education for the past five years. This ePortfolio experience is leading the student ePortfolio, *myMAPP-Student* in its development with a Fall 2006 target date for population. <http://mymapp.unomaha.edu/demo.php>

In addition, the campus has developed an institutional ePortfolio, *myMAPP-Campus*, which is designed to identify and communicate the progress of the campus on indicators aligned with the strategic plan. <http://unoportfolio.unomaha.edu/>. Currently, this ePortfolio is being revised and will soon include a narrative-type reflection for each artifact.

This campus wide initiative has impacted the institution in several significant ways and at several levels. First, at the department and faculty level, more attention has turned toward meaningful assessment of learning and communication of accomplishments of students and faculty. The conversations on what should students be able to know and do when they complete their degree has been interesting and productive. The alignment of department curriculum to help meet the general education objectives was also an important change in the culture. In addition, many departments have revived their discussions about aligning with campus and college strategic plans.

One of the important aspects of implementing a comprehensive ePortfolio system is the focusing of discussions that takes place in order to design and refine ePortfolios. At the campus level, four major examples of impact have been 1) the revisiting and revision of the campus general education objectives, 2) the coordination of student course evaluation formats, 3) the renewed focus on how technology can be used to improve student learning and institution efficiency and 4) the bringing together of administration, faculty, staff (including information technology) to work together to develop and implement a large campus-wide initiative.

As the thoughtful process for developing the ePortfolio culture on the UNO campus continues, the changes for improvement will be documented and shared with the ePortfolio community. Also, the results of the research projects focusing on ePortfolios will be important resources for other institutions that are in the same type of process.

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