

e-Portfolios using Blackboard's *Portfolio Creation Wizard*...
an interactive teaching & learning tool...

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Goals of the e-Portfolio initiative at OISE and University of Toronto are to:

- ▶ develop an interactive teaching and learning tool to encourage integration of learning across courses, reflection, depth of learning, and demonstration of growth over time
- ▶ support the goal of increasing faculty and student technological expertise
- ▶ initiate a process for faculty collaboration and shared student outcomes
- ▶ support the goal of program coherence
- ▶ develop technologically-literate and reflective educators

Contexts for e-Portfolio Use

Master of Teaching Program (MT)

- Is an OISE 2-year post-degree initial teacher education program (began 2002).
- Candidates graduate with a Master degree and provincial teaching certification in Primary/Junior or Junior/Intermediate divisions (Kindergarten to Grade 10).
- 81 students were enrolled in 2007-2008, 100 students are enrolled for 2008-2009, and numbers will increase by approximately 40 more students in Sept. 2009 as a secondary school (up to grade 12) component will be added.
- Instructors and candidates have been experimenting with the use of e-Portfolios since 2003.
- Use of Blackboard's *Portfolio Creation Wizard* began in Sept. 2007 to the present.
- Is used in one course each year and integrates learning across courses.
- The e-Portfolio process is used as a performance assessment tool for reflection, self-assessment, developing skills/creativity with technology, documenting growth and learning in relation to the 5 Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession in Ontario.
- In the final year, candidates create a new stream-lined career e-Portfolio targeting a teaching position.

Concurrent Teacher Education Program (CTEP)

- Is a new 5-year undergraduate University of Toronto initial teacher education program (began Sept. 2007).
- Is being implemented in 7 faculties/units across the University of Toronto.
- 135 students were enrolled in 2007-2008, an additional 300 are enrolled for 2008-2009, and numbers will increase each year – expecting about 1000 to 1500 first graduates in June 2012.
- Use of Blackboard's *Portfolio Creation Wizard* was envisioned during the planning stages and began September 2007.
- The e-Portfolio is implemented as a program requirement in which candidates meet expectations and integrate learning across courses and across the 5 years in the program.
- The e-Portfolio is used as a performance assessment tool for reflection, self-assessment, developing skills/creativity with technology, documenting growth and learning in relation to the 6 Knowledge Base Strands of CTEP.
- In the final year, candidates will create a new stream-lined career e-Portfolio targeting a teaching position.

Potential Pilots in schools, September 2008

- 20 Grade 5 and 6 students attending a private school in the Toronto area will use e-Portfolios in much the same way as teacher candidates – for reflection, self-assessment, developing skills/creativity with technology, documenting growth and learning in relation to Knowledge Base Strands based on the mission statement of the school.
- A novice Vice-Principal is planning to use Blackboard's e-Portfolio to reflect on her role and the balance of work and home in relation to Ontario's leadership competencies. Support from the Ontario Principals' Council is currently being negotiated involving other administrators.

Milestones of Development and Implementation of Portfolios and e-Portfolios at OISE and University of Toronto

- ▶ **1995 - 1997** – a 2-year Ontario Ministry of Education pilot saw the implementation of a portfolio process/assignment (using boxes and binder formats) for teacher candidates, including small group sharing/interviews with 1-2 facilitators. This pilot was initiated by Elementary Coordinator: Carol Rolheiser; Secondary Coordinator: Ian Hundey .

Note: Dr. Carol Rolheiser is currently Associate Dean, Teacher Education, of OISE.

- ▶ **1998 - present** – The portfolio process (binder format) was used with a specific cohort of 60 students (The North Option) in the 9-month post-degree Bachelor of Education program, coordinated by Dr. Carol Rolheiser and Susan Schwartz.
- ▶ **1999 - present** – A Portfolio process was included as a course assignment in the post-degree 9-month Secondary program.
- ▶ **2000** – The text *The Portfolio Organizer: Succeeding with portfolios in your classroom* (Rolheiser, Bower & Stevahn, ASCD) elaborates the process used above and outlines the use of the following 10-step organizer:

Implementation of portfolios/e-Portfolios using a10-step organizer:

1. Determining the basics of student portfolios (deciding purpose, type, audience, time frame)
 2. Selecting categories for entries (e.g., Ontario Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession, Knowledge Base Strands of CTEP, mission statement of school/district, or Ontario's leadership Competencies, etc.)
 3. Identifying learning expectations and criteria at the beginning of the process (rubric)
 4. Learning samples (artifacts)
 5. Reflections/Reflective Writing (use of frameworks/templates)
 6. Storing and organizing (deciding to use of binders, PowerPoint, Blackboard, etc.)
 7. Sharing the learning (peer sharing, peer feedback, use of prompts, celebrations, interviews)
 8. Setting goals (checklist, self-assessment rubric, peer and instructor feedback)
 9. Evaluation and grading (rubric)
 10. Getting started with students/teacher candidates/faculty
- ▶ **2002 - present** – The 2-year Master of Teaching program was initiated and the portfolio process was continued in one course integrating other courses across the program.
 - ▶ **2003 - present** – The portfolio process was transferred to electronic format and explored by the candidates in the North Option and Master of Teaching programs. Technology explored included the use of hyperlinks, Hyperstudio, Powerpoint, websites.
 - ▶ **Sept. 2007 - present** – The 5-year Concurrent Teacher Education Program was initiated, including the use of the e-Portfolio and Blackboard's *Portfolio Creation Wizard* with the Year 1 students AND a similar e-Portfolio process using Blackboard was initiated with the Year 1 students in the MT program.
- Note: The e-Portfolio process includes:
- faculty collaboration
 - workshops for staff and students
 - instructional materials posted to a Blackboard community website (e.g., manual, resources, self-assessment rubrics, templates for reflection and peer feedback, scavenger hunts, podcasts)
 - student mentors
 - peer sharing and feedback (using the *Comments* feature of the Portfolio tools)
 - instructor feedback
 - sharing/celebrations of learning.
- ▶ **Sept. 2008 - onward** – Continuing use of the e-Portfolio and Blackboard with MT and CTEP students, and initiation of a number of pilots using e-Portfolios with young students and with administrators.

Technology Input using Blackboard's *Portfolio Creation Wizard*

- ▶ Students are introduced to the portfolio process, expectations, templates, rubrics, and Blackboard Tools through a series of workshops and instructional materials posted to a *Blackboard community* website.
- ▶ Students identify artifacts they wish to present and load them into Blackboard's *Content Management System*.
- ▶ The e-Portfolio framework is designed and established by using the *Portfolio Creation Wizard*.
- ▶ The e-Portfolio content is designed and organized by students using Blackboard's *Portfolio Tools*
- ▶ Peer and instructor feedback is solicited by students using the *Comments feature* of the Portfolio tool.
- ▶ Wider sharing and learning takes place at e-Portfolio celebration events where students present their e-Portfolios and learning in small groups with 1-2 facilitators.

e-Portfolio Creation and Use

- ▶ Using Blackboard's *Portfolio Creation Wizard*, students create e-Portfolio structure
 - Welcome page (welcome message, photo, contact info)
 - 6 sections re: Knowledge Base Strands in CTEP, or 5 Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession + Philosophy in MT program
 - Self-assessment section
 - Comments section
- ▶ Students add comments and share with peers, coordinators/facilitators – using *Peer Prompts* as support, they give/receive feedback
- ▶ Students continue to add entries linked from *Content Collection*
- ▶ Students self-assess using rubric

Sample CTEP Timeline

- ▶ September Jump Start Day: Introduction to e-Portfolio expectations, tools, and Blackboard environment
- ▶ October: Focus on understanding what is a portfolio reflective process, reflective writing, and structure of e-Portfolio – students use *Portfolio Creation Wizard* to create e-Portfolio and complete 1-2 entries
- ▶ November: Sharing e-Portfolio – giving/receiving peer feedback and support
- ▶ January: Focus on reflective writing and self-assessment – students complete 1-2 additional entries
- ▶ February: Continuation of e-Portfolio process and self-assessment – students add entries for a total of 3 or 4 for 2007-2008 school year, complete self-assessment, and receive instructor feedback
- ▶ March: CTEP e-Portfolio Celebration of Learning – Small-group sharing and feedback, students complete end-of-year self-assessment, e-Portfolio facilitators provide individualized feedback

Challenges

- Time needed for:

- Developing portfolio shared knowledge and technological proficiency with staff and students – often a steep learning curve (e.g., teaching the technology, deepening quality of reflective writing, peer sharing, understanding rubric and self-assessment, clarifying expectations, etc.)
- Creation, maintenance, monitoring, and feedback

- Support for:

- Faculty and students in developing technological proficiency
- Students experiencing technology difficulties
- Technological glitches – during presentations, down times
- Student creativity in portfolio development
- Independent online learning
- Continuing development and sharing of resources (e.g., manual, resources, scavenger hunts, podcasts, screencasting, etc.)

- Confidentiality and professionalism issues in the online environment – need to be clearly addressed.

- Diversity in:

- Knowledge levels and technological proficiency
- Attitudes including *staff* reluctance/resistance – see research on ‘organizational change’ – e.g., Fullan (1999, 2001, 2002, 2003).
- Attitudes including *student* reluctance/resistance – see research on portfolio implementation – e.g., Zidon (1996) reports that many of her teacher candidates experienced 3 stages:
 - 1) “**frustration**,” – gripped by “fear” and “panic,” thinking portfolios were “a lot of work” and an “ominous task” (p. 61).
 - 2) “**exploration**” (p. 62) – selected artifacts, began to assemble their portfolios, and became “especially proud” of their artifacts and the portfolios they were creating (p. 63).
 - 3) “**demonstration and celebration**” (p. 64) – became excited, filled with pride and enthusiasm.

Zidon suggests that instructors:

- provide candidates with clear expectations and information about the usefulness of professional portfolios right at the *beginning* of the process
- ensure that adequate in-class time is spent on the process
- build in more sharing time with peers
- focus on the reflective aspects of the portfolio process rather than on career advancement
- provide coaching regarding reflection and reflective writing
- give some “guiding questions” (p. 66), to spark candidates’ thinking about each artifact.

Successes

- The creation of a common and consistent process and tool:
 - to encourage teacher candidate reflection, self-assessment, goal-setting, communication, and integration of learning across courses
 - to facilitate the integration of technology with learning across courses and program component
 - that embodies the 5 Ontario Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession or the 6 Knowledge Base Strands in CTEP (provides the e-Portfolio organization as well as encourages reflection and attention to goals)
 - to be used across units/courses during the 5 years of CTEP and the 2 years in the MT program
- Use of rubrics and templates for reflective writing and peer responses/feedback, based on a framework, 'retelling, relating, reflecting' (Schwartz & Bone, 1995; Rolheiser, Bower, & Stevahn, 2001) – includes questions and sentence starters to scaffold learning, encourages students to make connections to self, text, and issues, encourages critical thinking and depth of thinking in writing
- Continuing development of online learning supports, resources, and processes for students (e.g., e-Portfolio manual, rubrics, templates, scavenger hunts, podcasts, etc.).
- Students acting as mentors/supports for other students
- Increased use of graduate students as teaching/tracking support
- Use of portfolios/e-Portfolios with young students when teacher candidates bring a portfolio focus to schools during their field experiences
- Potential pilots to be initiated in schools September 2008.

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Appendix: Sample Student Materials

Reflective Writing – Questions and Sentence Starters

**Remember not to include the headings but write freely using some of the sentence starters.*

Retell: *What is your artifact and the experience it represents?*

- This is/was about...The most significant part was...
- I noticed that...Something I especially liked, valued, enjoyed was...
- Key words for me were...Something I would like others to notice about this entry is...
- This entry demonstrates my understanding of...
-

Relate: *Why did you choose this as an entry for your e-Portfolio? Why is it meaningful to you? What connections can you make (to self, text, issues, learning strands)? How does it relate to or address the learning strands?*

- I chose this for an entry because it reminds me of...
- It is meaningful to me because it makes me think of...
- What I found especially meaningful or significant for me was...because...
- This reminds me of...This makes me think of...Something I identify with is...
- This entry relates to...This entry addresses the learning goal of...because...
- I see connections to...It makes me feel...
-

Reflect: *What did you learn? What are your insights? Your aha's? How did you grow? What are your next steps (goal-setting)? What are your questions? What are some possible answers?*

- I learned that...Now I understand that...I realize now that...
- A 'lightbulb moment' for me was...Something that pushed my thinking was...
- I realized how important it was that...I think that... Maybe...
- This entry shows evidence of my growth toward my goal because...
- This entry demonstrates a challenge because...
- I have gained insight as a result of this entry because...
- I am very proud of this entry because...I am not satisfied with this entry because...
- I wonder why or if...? How...?
- A question raised in my mind is...A question I want to pursue as a result of this entry is...
- Possible answers to my questions include...
- I would like to pursue additional learning in this area because...
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Adapted from *The Portfolio Organizer: Succeeding with Portfolios in Your Classroom*, Rolheiser, Bower, & Stevahn (ASCD), and from *Retelling, Relating, Reflecting: Beyond the 3R's*, Schwartz & Bone, & *Creating the Dynamic Classroom* by Schwartz & Pollishuke (Pearson).

Peer Prompts to provide feedback on a peer's reflective writing

Retell:

- I like...I especially liked/particularly valued/enjoyed...
- I noticed that...I was intrigued by...
- Something that captured my attention was...Key words for me were...
- An idea that 'sparkled' for me was...You have shown that you understand...
-

Relate:

- Something that I identify with is...What I found especially meaningful for me was...
- Something you wrote that pushed my own thinking was...
- A connection I made was...You made me think of...You reminded me that...
- I agree that...What you validated for me was...I also think that...
-

Reflect:

- This is a great idea for an entry because...I learned that you... (*something positive!*)
- Thank you for reminding me how important it is to...
- A question raised in my mind is... I wonder why you said that...
- Another perspective might be...I want to know more about...
- I wonder if...I wonder if you might have...I wonder why...You might want to consider...
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