Stage 2: The Working Portfolio – Archive Creation and Digital Conversion

This stage of the electronic portfolio development process occupies the longest span of time and is the stage I call, "Becoming a Digital Packrat!" Knowing which goals or standards you are trying to demonstrate should help determine the types of portfolio artifacts to be collected and then selected.

Select the software development tools most appropriate for the portfolio context and the resources available. Just as McLuhan said, "The medium is the message", the software used to create the electronic portfolio will control, restrict, or enhance the portfolio development process. Form should follow function as well, and the electronic portfolio software should match the vision and style of the portfolio developer.

Use whatever software tools are currently being used to collect artifacts, storing them on a hard drive, a server, or videotape. Set up electronic folders to organize the artifacts (any type of electronic document) and use a word processor, database, hypermedia software or slide show to articulate the goals/standards to be demonstrated in the portfolio and to organize the artifacts.

Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, Adobe Acrobat and WWW pages created with HTML editors are the most common software packages used for electronic portfolio development. The primary advantage of Word and Acrobat is ease of use, and Acrobat files can be created from any application. Creating a portfolio in HTML, even with the many tools available, has a higher cost in terms of effort to convert documents and organization of the large number of files usually generated. Creating a portfolio in PowerPoint can emphasize the portfolio as "multimedia presentation," rather than as reflective tool.

Identify the storage and presentation medium most appropriate for the situation (i.e., computer hard disk, videotape, local-area network, a WWW server, CD-ROM, etc.). There are also multiple options, depending on the software chosen.

Gather the multimedia materials that represent your achievement. You will want to collect artifacts from different points of time to demonstrate growth and learning that has taken place. Write short reflective statements with each artifact stored, to capture its significance at the time it is created. You might convert significant documents into Adobe Acrobat format and attach electronic "sticky notes" with your immediate reflections.

Use everyday software, such as Word Processing, Slide Shows, Hypermedia, or Database programs to list and organize the artifacts that are placed in the Working Portfolio.

Convert your work into digital format

Use appropriate multimedia to add style and individuality to your portfolio. Save your work in a format that can be easily used. (Throughout the year, I convert a variety of files in my own

Working Portfolio into Adobe Acrobat format, attaching electronic "sticky notes" with my reflections, and store them in a "new items" folder for later use. This includes word processing files, web pages I create, e-mail messages I might want to include, all stored for use in later stages.) Use a scanner (or camera) to digitize images, including documents that come to you in paper form. Use a microphone and sound digitizing program to digitize audio artifacts. Use a video camera, digitizing hardware and software to digitize video artifacts.

Here are some specific questions to answer from the EPPlanningWorksheet for this stage:

> What are the content of portfolio items (determined by the assessment context) and the types of evidence to be collected?

>> *This is where the standards become a very important part of the planning process. Knowing which standards you are trying to demonstrate should help determine the types of portfolio artifacts are to be collected. For example, if the portfolio goal is to demonstrate the standard of clear communication, then examples should include examples of the student's writing (scanned if handwritten; imported from a word processing document if created on a computer) as well as examples of the student's speaking abilities (sound only, or video clips if the technology exists to record and store digitized movies).*

> Which software tools are most appropriate for the portfolio context and the resources available?

>> *Just as McLuhan said, "The medium is the message", the software used to create the electronic portfolio will control, restrict, or enhance the portfolio development process. Form should follow function as well, and the electronic portfolio software should match the vision and style of the portfolio developer.*

> Which storage and presentation medium is most appropriate for the situation (will you use computer hard disk, videotape, local-area network, a WWW server, CD-ROM, etc.)? *The audience for the portfolio will have a major impact on this answer.*

> What multimedia materials will you gather that represent a learner's achievement? *You will want to collect artifacts from different points of time to demonstrate growth and learning that has taken place.*

> Once you have answered the questions on portfolio context and content, as well as the limitations on the type of equipment available and the skills of the users (teachers and students), you will be able to determine the type of materials you will digitize, such as: student written work, images of student projects, sounds of students speaking or reading, and video clips of student performances.

> Use some of the graphics capabilities of current computer systems to add style and flair to the portfolio, and to interject personality and individuality.

You will know you are ready for the next stage when:

> You have a collection of digital portfolio artifacts that represent your efforts and achievement throughout the course of your learning experiences.

> You have used the graphics and layout capability of the chosen software to interject your personality into the portfolio artifacts.

> It is time to turn this collection into a portfolio.

Creating your Working Portfolio – some practical tips using common tools:

Begin collecting the evidence that demonstrates that you are making progress toward meeting your selected set of standards or goals.

Portfolio-at-a-Glance

You should set up a recordkeeping system to keep track of the evidence that is collected. An Excel spreadsheet allows you to print out and use for recording the evidence being collected and how each matches the standards.

Create archive folders to store artifacts online

You should create archive folders to store final versions of the assignments for the portfolio. It is suggested that at least two folders be created: Work in Progress and Portfolio. Most of the files may be stored on a laptop or home computer, but an online server should be used for backing up important files.

Types of Evidence in Portfolios

Barton & Collins (1997) have identified four types of evidence that can be placed in a portfolio:

- Artifacts: documents produced during normal academic work
- Reproductions: documents of student work outside the classroom
- Attestations: documentation generated about student's academic progress
- Productions: documents prepared just for the portfolios. These productions include:
  - Goal Statements: Student's personal interpretations of each specific purpose for the portfolios
  - Reflective Statements: Students write as they review and organize the evidence in their portfolios
  - Captions: Statement attached to each piece of portfolio evidence, articulating what it is, why it is evidence, and of what it is evidence.

Possible types of artifacts to include:
significant papers, projects
evaluations from all practicum/field experiences
professional correspondence, letters of reference
letters of recognition, awards, certificates, etc.
samples of effective and reflective writing
stories, journal entries, articles, manuals
photographs, drawings, sketches
lesson plans/curriculum that you have created
audio, video, or other electronic evidence

Look in the **Step Guides** for a series of short "At-a-Glance Guides" that describe the strategies that you could use to create your Digital Archive. These one-page summaries provide a quick guide to the process. A comprehensive handbook with more detailed instructions and videos is available on CD-ROM. Permission is granted to educational institutions to print each page for non-profit educational purposes only. All other rights reserved.

Digitizing Images for your Electronic Portfolio using Digital Still Cameras

Digitizing Images for your Electronic Portfolio using a Scanner

Digitizing Images for your Electronic Portfolio from 35mm Film and Prints

Editing Digital Images using a Graphics Program

Digitizing Sound for your Electronic Portfolio

Importing Music into your Electronic Portfolio

Storing your Digital Artifacts