

**Title of Session:** ePortfolios  
**Moderator:** David Weksler  
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Room: ePortfolios Group

**BJB2:** if you're here for ePortfolios you're in the right place

**BJB2** . o O ( all we need is the discussion leader )

**DonO:** Thanks ...

**DonO** waits patiently

**BJB2:** some of the faces look new? Anyone here for their first discussion?

**LyndseyZ:** me

**LindyF:** yes...me

**BJB2:** great!

**DonO:** I'm a newbie too.

**LyndseyZ:** I'm doing this for one of my college classes

**DonO:** Me too...

**BJB2** nods to Don, but you participated in Tips and Tricks so you're a pro!

**LindyF:** me too

**RobinOr:** I came to a Tapped In Tips section that you led BJ. It was excellent.

**BJB2:** let's start with introductions, please.

**BJB2** blushes. Thanks, Robin

**BJB2:** tell me where you are located and what is your interest in ePortfolios

**LindyF:** I'm in North Carolina, Raleigh...i'm getting my masters at Meredith College and teach 2nd grade.. I'm interested in ways to get students at my very rural school more involved with technology and thought this might be helpful

**LyndseyZ:** I'm in Odem Texas and we are learning about eportfolios in class so I thought it would be good to do

**RobinOr:** I am in Denver, but am in a Master's program at San Diego State for Educational Tech. They are starting to do eportfolios rather than comp exams, so I wanted to learn a little more about what is out there. I also would like to use them in the after school program that I work for with the middle schoolers.

**DonO:** I'm taking a technology in education class in California to clear my preliminary credential. I'm a retired and I substitute teach for fun.

**BJB2:** whooooo...we're spread across the country!

**DonO:** When I got my credential (2004) we were required to create portfolios. I thought an ePortfolio would be easier.

**BJB2:** I'm in Pennsylvania

**BJB2** nods to Don

**DavidWe** joined the room.

**DavidWe** waves

**BJB2** hopes David brought his tap shoes with him

**DavidWe:** Hi, folks. I'm David Weksler. I'm a HelpDesk volunteer

**DavidWe:** I know a little about E-Portfolios, although I'll call them "digital portfolios" if no one minds

**DavidWe:** I've started to do some work with a colleague of mine who is very interested in helping schools use digital portfolios

**DavidWe:** We're both going to be at the NECC conference (National Educational Computing Conference) in Atlanta this coming weekend

**DavidWe:** Since I missed the intros, would you mind just mentioning what you either know about digital portfolios or are interested in learning about them?

**DavidWe:** Gives me something to respond to...hi, Lindy

**LyndseyZ:** we are learning about them in my college class

**RobinOr:** I have 2 interests - first my Master's program is moving to e-portfolios rather than comp exams and I work with an afterschool tech program for inner city kids where I would like to start using eportfolios to demonstrate their progress

**LindyF:** what classroom application that they might have and what exactly they are-bring it down to my level please

**DonO:** When I think about ePortfolios (apologies to David, but this is easier to type), I think of two questions? Why create portfolios at all? What form should ePortfolios take?

**DavidWe** reads and thinks

**DavidWe:** Lindy, what do you mean by "bring it down to my level"?

**DavidWe:** So, let me mention a couple of things

**BJB2** . o O ( second grade )

**BJB2** . o O ( for Lindy )

**LindyF:** I mean does this have an application for second graders

**DavidWe:** Rhode Island is going to require that students...

**DavidWe** nods to BJ and Lindy

**DavidWe:** Thanks

**DavidWe:** ...have a portfolio of their work to graduate from high school in 2008

**DavidWe:** It doesn't have to be digital, per se, but it needs to be a representative sample of real work

**DavidWe:** They will require 4 years of English, etc., but they feel that portfolios are an additional way to evaluate student work

**DavidWe:** So, if the state mandates it, that's one reason to create a portfolio

**DonO:** Portfolios can be an alternative assessment to testing. Students who do not perform well on tests, might better demonstrate their achievement with a report, art projects, or something else without the emotional stress of a test.

**DavidWe:** Some schools find portfolios may help them demonstrate student learning directly to parents

**DavidWe:** Thanks, Don. Well said

**DavidWe:** The other real issue is what does it mean to get an "A" in Algebra II in New York City and how does that compare to a student who gets an "A" in Algebra II in Wichita Falls, Texas?

**DavidWe:** A portfolio of work gives some better way to gauge what students can actually do

**BJB2:** I think portfolios should also show progress

**DavidWe:** How does that sound

**DavidWe:** Yes, BJ, EXACTLY!

**DavidWe:** For young students, schools have videotaped students reading a selected passage

**RobinOr:** I definitely think the comparison of scores state to state and even district to district is an issue

**DonO:** I'm at Cal State University and none of the classes uses exams - all assessment is papers and projects.

**DavidWe:** I actually have a demo of a first grader at the beginning of the year reading haltingly, pointing at words, making mistakes with words beginning with the same letter...6 months later she is reading much more fluently

**DavidWe:** The video clips make it VERY APPARENT the progress she has made

**DavidWe:** That's interesting Don - which Cal State campus are you attending?

**DonO:** San Marcos (north San Diego county)

**RobinOr:** I'm in an online program through San Diego State and they are going to eportfolios as the measure of whether you receive your Master's or not, rather than exams.

**BJB2:** Don, unfortunately, K-12 schools aren't that enlightened yet

**DavidWe:** I've heard that campus does some things differently than other campuses

**DavidWe:** Some schools are moving there, BJ

**DonO:** Student work can be more authentic than test scores. If assessment was portfolio based, we'd spend less time on test strategies.

**BJB2** nods to David.

**DavidWe:** Let me share with you the web page for my colleague, David Niguidula's, company

**DavidWe:** It's called Richer Picture

**DavidWe:** Take a look at:

**DavidWe:** <http://www.richerpicture.com>

**DavidWe:** Take a few minutes to poke around there then come back to the discussion

**LybryaWi:** Are you only to use these to seek employment?

**DavidWe:** Excuse me, Lybrya?

**BJB2:** Portfolios can be used throughout a school career, Lybrya

**LybryaWi:** o

**DavidWe:** K-12

**LindyF:** so how are all these portfolio pieces stored or put together...like if I had a cumulative record for a child who's portfolio had been started it would look like what exactly

**DavidWe:** That's what Richer Picture provides to schools, Lindy - software and training for how to use a proprietary system of web-based portfolios

**DavidWe:** students can view work and annotate it - teachers can make assignments and comment on student work, etc.

**LybryaWi:** does it take up a lot of space? will it be slow if too many users are on at once

**DavidWe:** Well, if everyone uses it exactly at the same time, it may slow down, but that's unlikely

**LybryaWi:** ok

**RobinOr:** Yes, I was wondering that too, especially with the art portfolio that is there as an example.

**DavidWe:** Robin, are you asking me a question?

**LybryaWi:** I am going to look around on the site. brb

**DavidWe:** Please do

**RobinOr:** I was referring to Lybrya's question above mine.

**RobinOr:** The art portfolio has so many images.

**DavidWe:** is that a problem?

**DavidWe:** Storage space is allocated on a per student basis - something like 50 MB per student

**DavidWe:** I'm not sure if this is a problem for any school already using this system.

**RobinOr:** That makes sense. I was mostly wondering because our afterschool program does lots of images, videos, etc that the students create.

**DavidWe:** sure

**DonO:** I doubt if storage would be a problem for anything short of a video class. Storage is plentiful these days.

**DavidWe:** but you don't want hour-long videos in a portfolio - you want some examples of work - not ALL the work

**DavidWe:** I think as people are starting to think of collecting student work in this way, then storage will grow to support more data-intensive applications (sound, video, multi-media, etc.)

**DonO:** David: Can you recommend some ePortfolio approaches short of purchasing special software?

**RobinOr:** You will probably get to this at some point, so I don't want to jump ahead, but how do you decide or help students decide which work to include?

**DavidWe:** Well, Don...try to answer your own question, okay?

**DavidWe:** Robin, part of the philosophy that David Niguidula (my colleague) has is that students are given the job of selecting some of their "best" work

**DavidWe:** They need to explain WHY they chose the work they will include

**DonO:** Robin: The first idea is to have students select what they think is their best work and the work that best demonstrates their progress.

**DavidWe:** Students in Rhode Island, at one high school where I was in May, gave a presentation to two teachers using the digital portfolio software - they need to explain what they include, why they include it, what they think they've learned, etc.

**DavidWe** appreciates Don's comment

**RobinOr:** If you are using it to show that students have mastered certain objectives, then do you ask them to relate their best work to those?

**LindyF:** I like that some of the portfolio examples on the website include standardized test results but only present them as part of the package...not the sum of the parts....that is what they should be anyway

**DonO** . o O ( So a portfolio not only demonstrates the student's work but also shows analytical and evaluative skills in the selection )

**DavidWe:** "Reflective practice", too

**DonO:** Portfolios are much better for higher level skills, while tests are better for lower level skills (e.g. math facts).

**DavidWe** agrees

**DavidWe:** So, it becomes a system that can serve several roles

**LybryaWi:** I think that we do not give enough opportunity for higher functioning students to be challenged in low SES areas.

**DavidWe:** You are going to have to say a bit more about that, Lybrya, if you don't mind

**DavidWe:** I think students should be challenge at all levels, in all areas - isn't that what education is all about?

**RobinOr:** I had an earlier question, if you are using the eportfolio in part to show that a student has mastered certain objectives, then do you ask the student to pick their best work based on those?

**LybryaWi:** The district where I work has several schools in PI. Hence, their focus is on students who are underperforming.

**DonO:** Robin: Of course you ask them to show their best work. In the real work world, the same procedure exists.

**DavidWe** agrees with Don

**DonO:** If I know my principal is going to observe, I use one of my best lesson plans.-:)

**DavidWe:** Robin, the point is the responsibility for presenting the work and justifying its inclusion starts to fall more on the students

**LindyF:** thanks for the information guys...I'm going to keep looking at the website

**LybryaWi:** I agree Don

**DavidWe:** The teacher isn't driving the education - the students are (hopefully) deciding what they are going to achieve and provide the evidence on whether they did/did not achieve it

**BJB2:** . o O ( which is one reason why the portfolio process should start in the lower grades )

**DavidWe:** No reason not to start the portfolios at the beginning of school (K)

**DonO:** Actually I see portfolios most often in K!!!

**RobinOr:** So are eportfolios more for the students to see their own progress or for the teacher to see what progress a student has made compared to the objectives that are determined by the district or state?

**BJB2:** the ideal situation is for students to present their own portfolios during parent conferences

**DonO:** Lybrya - say more about your low SES student, please

**StaceyS:** Does anyone use Blackboard as a vehicle for their students' eportfolios?

**LybryaWi:** Well, was a former student in the District and I just remember being bored

**BJB2:** would blackboard allow portfolios to follow the student throughout school?

**DonO:** Is this a GATE vs low-performer issue?

**BJB2:** Lybrya, maybe a definition of SES?

**LybryaWi:** yes.

**DavidWe:** . o O ( Socio-Economic Status == SES )

**LybryaWi:** free and reduced lunch most often used

**BJB2:** thanks, David



**DavidWe** smiles

**StaceyS:** good question BJB...it allows teachers to store things, but not nec students...

**DavidWe:** Richer Picture has developed this software over the past 10-15 years - David has been very interested in digital portfolios and is giving several presentations on it at the NECC conference in Atlanta

**DavidWe:** He comes at this from the school reform movement, the Coalition of Essential Schools, where he was the ed. tech director for a number of years

**DavidWe:** Part of the strategy of using digital portfolios is to get teachers to start looking at students and the dynamics of the classroom in different ways

**DonO:** As a sub, I see teachers challenged to meeting the need of high-performers with low language skills - perhaps a portfolios project would allow the high performers to be more creative and challenged instead of the rigid textbook lessons.

**DavidWe:** interesting idea, Don

**LybryaWi:** good Don

**LybryaWi:** It would allow me more time for small group instruction

**DonO:** OFF TOPIC - I imagine NCLB, with its emphasis on low-performers, makes it even harder for teachers to meet the need of the Gate population.

**BJB2:** I think that problem based curriculum also provides more opportunity for getting students engaged in their learning

**StaceyS:** I agree...

**DonO** wonders what BJ does with her unique student population

**BJB2:** I use lots of art

**DonO:** Do you create portfolios

**BJB2:** no, the students aren't with us long enough

**LybryaWi:** the goal should be for all learners to be proficient and computer savvy, but one kid at a time you know?

**DonO** is sad

**BJB2:** and there are too many social and emotional issues to work with

**StaceyS:** could these portfolios include group projects that could help them work through all the issues?

**LybryaWi:** good ?

**BJB2:** I think students should also have more of a say in their IEPs...and portfolios would meld with that idea

**RobinOr:** Like an eportfolio with a blog that they could use to express themselves...

**RobinOr:** I agree BJ

**StaceyS:** or photojournals

**BJB2:** Robin, a wiki might also work for that

**LybryaWi:** it would get them off of myspace

**DonO:** I know a 3rd grade/low SES/low English teacher that uses [www.blogspot.com](http://www.blogspot.com) in her class to encourage reading and writing.

**DavidWe:** David's software has been working on all sorts of ways of allowing students to customize their portfolio spaces - (skins, images, decorative touches, but it allows for personalization)

**BJB2:** Don, I use a blog with my kids too...

**DavidWe:** The trick is, folks....

**DavidWe** pauses for dramatic purpose

**DavidWe:** The technology is a TOOL

**DavidWe:** How you use the tool is what is really important

**BJB2:** <http://voicesfromloysville.blogspot.com/>

**BJB2** agrees with David

**DavidWe:** There are all sorts of tools - the trick is to pick and choose the ones that are effective, are easy to use and lead to student learning

**DavidWe:** That's the bottom line, right?

**BJB2** nods solemnly

**RobinOr:** Definitely

**StaceyS:** Yes...

**StaceyS:** How do you get "permission" to use the tools in your Districts?

**DonO** . o O ( BJ - great blog )

**RobinOr:** Teachers have to be knowledgeable in the tools though so they can help direct students to the options - it seems like that is where we are lacking to a certain extent in schools.

**LybryaWi:** that will change with every set, too

**LybryaWi:** effective, easy and learning

**BJB2:** thanks, Don

**DonO:** technology let us recognize the unique part of each child

**DavidWe** smiles

**BJB2:** Stacey, sometimes you just have use what you can until something better is available

**LybryaWi:** The portfolio will be great, since our district is rolling out laptops to every student over the next 5-6 years

**DonO:** David and BJ - Tell Joseph he missed at great session

**DavidWe** smiles

**LybryaWi:** thanks for your input all

**DavidWe:** Thanks, Don. We'll try to find out what happened to him

**BJB2** smiles...I'll forward the transcript to him

**DavidWe:** Any last questions?

**LybryaWi:** BYE

**StaceyS:** thanks

**BJB2:** Thanks, everyone, for your great participation

**LybryaWi** smiles

**StaceyS:** bye

**RobinOr:** Thanks

**DonO:** Out

**LyndseyZ:** bye