Collect, Select and Reflect: Using the Electronic Portfolio in Teacher Preparation

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Traditionally artists used portfolios to demonstrate their work. More recently many artists have created websites to highlight their accomplishments, expand their client base, and increase opportunities for feedback from the art community. The education profession can reap great benefits from shifting from the three-ring binder scrapbook approach for portfolios to a web-based, standards-driven collaborative tool for both pre-service teacher preparation and professional development. The Electronic Portfolio developed by Center for Technology in Education at Johns Hopkins University offers a comprehensive view of a teacher’s performance and potential. This web-based tool hosts selective collected works, interpretations of standards, professional development goals, educational philosophy, journal entries, resume, and the ability to gather feedback from throughout the education community.

Electronic Portfolios have the capability to increase professional growth, improve teacher quality, and ultimately raise student performance. Accessible anywhere users can get to the web the Electronic Portfolio becomes the teacher’s online filing cabinet as they gather potential artifacts. Refinement of these resources involves reflection on the part of the teacher and collaboration with peers and advisors. Reflection is an integral part of the Electronic Portfolio as users seek to interpret program standards and integrate a solid foundation of subject matter expertise with the most current knowledge base on teaching and learning. Being electronic, users have the ability to request feedback from others on any element of their portfolio, without giving access to the entire portfolio. This allows users to craft their interpretations, rationales, reflections, and evidence without surrendering control of their portfolio.

Working with the nationally recognized traditional portfolio structure required in the Masters of Arts in Teaching Program at Hopkins as a foundation, the Center for Technology in Education has created this Electronic Portfolio application that allows teachers to analyze their own practices with the ease of an intuitive, web-based tool. The Masters of Arts in Teaching Program has embraced this solution and now requires all MAT students to use the Electronic Portfolio to collect their evidence and present a finished portfolio to a review team. The review team also benefits from the move to an electronic portfolio conducting preliminary evaluation and scoring prior to a face-to-face presentation.

This presentation will highlight the functionality of this application developed by the Center for Technology in Education (CTE) and the reflective process conducted by the Masters of Arts in Teaching Program (JHU) to implement a program wide electronic solution. Participants will gain an understanding of the promise of Electronic Portfolios and their implementation across an entire program. The presentation (lecture-interactive) will start with an identification and honest appraisal of traditional portfolio programs followed by the goals set out for development of an Electronic Portfolio system. Hurdles such as faculty and student training and implementation will also be discussed.

In that any set of standards or principles can be entered into this application (ATE, INTASC, etc) presenters will use ISTE NETS to showcase the functionality of this tool. Presenters include those who developed/coded the application, those who have implemented it across the MAT program, and MAT faculty to ensure a complete program team capable of engaging a wide audience on a number of levels. Presenters will demonstrate actual teacher portfolios, not just samples. A website explaining the Electronic Portfolio and offering a brief tour will be complete prior to the conference (www.cte.jhu.edu/epweb).

Participants need no prior knowledge of Electronic Portfolios.

References: