It is a pleasure and an honor to introduce a new section in the SITE2001 Annual. This is the first year we have had a strand devoted to electronic portfolios (EP) in teacher education, although a number of past editions have included excellent reports of their development and use. In the mid-90s I was involved in the development of the Teachers for Tomorrow Program at the University of Houston. Our interns collected, sorted, and organized materials, lesson plans, reflections, and other relics of their preservice days. From this they winnowed the best examples and developed a paper portfolio. A few photos, a video, and audio tape or two were the extent of ‘multimedia’ in their presentations. How exciting it is to read the current developments in portfolios and recognize how far we have come in such a short time.

As in all sections this year the papers are arranged alphabetically by first author; however I will introduce them in categories for the reader. The papers in this section may be placed in three groups: Overview and Development, Graduate Program Use, and Preservice Program Use.

Overview and Development

Begin your exploration of this section with an article by Zembal-Saul, Dana, and Haefner, Penn State University, USA. While the authors report a case study of preservice teacher use of EP, their research provides an excellent overview and foundation in the underlying value of EP use. It also emphasizes the reflection of growth that may be shown in this type of portfolio. Having established a foundation look next at the paper by Galloway, Indiana University Northwest, who describes specific issues and procedures for the development and maintenance of EP. Based on the guiding principle that virtually anything can be represented electronically the author provides suggestions for methods and formats, soft as well as hard.

The third article by Rodney, Knee, and Musgrove, Florida Atlantic University, USA, addresses many of the early technical issues encountered when building EPs and outlines a practical solution to creating EP using the CDROM. They note the methods make portability, replication and updating CDROM portfolios easier for students and educators alike. For a final paper in this subsection, read Hornung, Lehigh University, USA. This report forms an excellent parallel to the third article in that the author addresses the human issues. She provides ten guidelines for the collection, selection, reflection and presentation of a portfolio. Although initially designed for a preK-5 setting these guidelines are of equal value for teacher educators planning the implementation of electronic portfolio.

Graduate Program Use

Two papers in this section of the Annual are centered on the use of electronic portfolios in graduate teacher education. Interestingly, both are web-based. The first, by Pierson and Rapp, University of Houston, USA, reports use of EP in a Master’s program where the students develop their portfolio throughout their master’s work and then compose a summative “epilogue” as one part of their comprehensive exam. In the second article, Sparrow, Florida Gulf Coast University, USA, describes how students are required to create and maintain an online portfolio as an alternative to a traditional comprehensive examination. Their program is delivered in an online format, and students are located around the world. Portfolio assessment provides an attractive alternative to exams by offering an authentic assessment of student knowledge in the quickly changing world of educational technology.

Preservice Program Use

The remaining six papers look at the development and application of Electronic Portfolios in preservice teacher education. The first two articles describe how EPs are developed throughout the students’ college education. Christensen, Gegelman, Groeters, and Holcomb, Valley City State University, USA; report on the EP structure and guidelines that are built around the adopted VCSU Abilities of aesthetic engagement, collaboration, effective citizenship, global awareness, problem solving, technology, and wellness. This university provides each and every student with a laptop computer and requires all graduating