

Title of Session: Pre-Service Teachers - ePortfolios
Moderators: Janet Naher-Snowden and Marianne Handler
Guest Speaker: Helen Barrett
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Jan_NS: I am Jan Naher-Snowden, facilitator for Preservice Teachers and part-time faculty at the Univ. of Akron, OH.

MarianneH: Jan... do you want to remind folks how to detach and have more space.

BJ: good suggestion, Marianne

RichardSE: I'm Richard, and I'm a student and a GA at the University of Akron.

HelenCB: Ok, for introductions, I am Helen Barrett, friend of Marianne, and on leave from University of Alaska Anchorage...

BJ: to make your text window larger click on the ACTIONS drop down menu and scroll down to larger text...

BJ: or all the way down to DETACH

TinaRGuest1: I am also from Jan's class at the U of Akron

KrissyL: I'm Krissy & teach instructional technology w/in the teacher ed. program at St. Norbert College, WI. I work w/ students & faculty.

MarianneH: I am Marianne and on the Technology in Education Faculty at National Louis

University. And, Helen is my friend BUT more importantly has done a LOT with eportfolios and can be a wonderful resource to us all in this discussion.

HelenCB: I have spent the last two years working with ISTE under a PT3 Catalyst grant.

Jan_NS is very glad that Helen decided to give Tapped In a try, especially with this discussion.

HelenCB: A major focus of my grant has been to work with Teacher Education programs on electronic portfolios.

MarianneH: Some of you may not know there is a Preservice Group and I have entered the resources about portfolios they we talked about last month.... and Helen's web site is one of them.

KrissyL: I'm very excited to participate in this discussion - we have been doing a lot w/ eportfolios, but I'm always anxious to learn/discuss more.

HelenCB: I was in Chicago two weeks ago where Marianne gave me a quick intro to TappedIn

HelenCB: Where do you want to start the discussion?

MarianneH: Last month some of the concerns were about the difference between creating from scratch (so to speak) and using some of the new commercial containers for portfolios... the plusses and minuses of each and perhaps we want to start there.

Jan_NS listens intently

MarianneH: How do you all think that would work?

KrissyL: I would be very interested in what others have decided . . .

MarianneH: Helen, the floor is yours for a bit on how folks decide if you would like.

HelenCB: The issues are complex... the first question to ask yourself is, "What is the purpose for your portfolio?"

Jan_NS listens even more intently.

MarianneH: A lot of us last month had a problem between meeting a students need and assessment for the university

HelenCB: Also, maybe a more basic question is how do you define what a portfolio is (or can be)?

HelenCB: There is an inherent tension between student needs and institutional needs.

KrissyL: Our purposes for portfolios are multiple - our students must pass their portfolio before they can be certified to teach. Our students must write a "mediation" (reflective essay) for each standard, as well as support it w/ an artifact.

HelenCB: This is what Carney calls the multiple purpose dilemma.

MarianneH: did many PT3 grants use portfolios in their work and what were those purposes?

HelenCB: Perhaps while students are writing their rationale on how they think they have met the standards, they come to a better understanding in their own minds.

KrissyL: We use the 10 Wisconsin Teacher standards & have added 2 of our own.

Students do grumble about this, but I think we're coming a long way, in terms of them beginning to appreciate the importance of this.

TinaRGuest1: Can you tell me what you mean by "support it with an artifact"?

MarianneH: Krissy, what format are your portfolios... paper or eportfolios?

HelenCB: Many authors think that the highest and best use of the portfolio is to support learning and reflection.

KrissyL: originally paper, but as of next year, all of our seniors will have eportfolios

MarianneH: Tina, many places where standards are key....

HelenCB: The portfolio may be an organized collection of artifacts, but the heart and soul of the portfolio are the reflections.

KrissyL: supporting learning & reflection - one of our struggles is multiple assessments along the way & how much time this takes

MarianneH: require that understanding of the standard is demonstrated by something that the learner has created... that is the artifact.

KrissyL: Sorry Tina, didn't get to your question sooner, but Marianne & Helen have done a wonderful job answering it.

MarianneH: Krissy, How are your students going to build their eportfolios?

HelenCB: Time is a major issue, and one of the scarcest resources. That is why the portfolio needs to be embedded into a program, not just another add-on.

MarianneH . o O (thinks YEAH Helen... ain't that the truth!)

Jan_NS: Unfortunately the reflective piece is being overlooked at my univ. Not sure what the rationale is for that omission.

KrissyL: The TIME it takes to assess & be able to draw some conclusions/reports from those assessments is what has driven us to use one of the "canned" programs out on the market.

KrissyL agrees w/ Helen in imbedding the portfolio w/in the program content

HelenCB: The balancing act is to find strategies that are more natural. Do you find the canned programs to be a natural process?

RichardSE: Do students have problems understanding what they are learning by keeping a portfolio? I mean how are they encouraged to see/view their progression?

KrissyL: We're piloting College LiveText next yr. w/ about 50 students, so I'm not sure yet what my feelings are.

HelenCB: It depends on how the portfolio is introduced to students.

KrissyL: Richard, I actually think it HELPS students understand their learning

KrissyL: But, again, for us, it's important that they receive feedback along the way.

HelenCB: Another issue is how the portfolio is treated... is it high stakes (assessment) or low stakes?

MarianneH: Helen, can you define low stakes... I think we all know high stakes?

TinaRGuest1: As a student, hope I don't offend anyone by saying that I'm sick of reflecting on everything I'm taught.

HelenCB: If students see the portfolio as a gatekeeper, that is high stakes. Low stakes is really a student-centered, focus on learning.

BJ chuckles...kiddo, wait till you reflect on everything you teach!

MarianneH . o O (is not offended but wonders how we can help Tina and other students value reflection.)

KrissyL: Good point Helen - sometimes I feel bad for our students, because for us, it's become SUCH high stakes, that our students DREAD it & loose sleep over it - it's worse than a final in a course.

HelenCB: John Dewey once said that we don't learn from experience, but from REFLECTING on experience.

KrissyL: Tina, if it's any consolation, I felt the same way as a student (I graduated 10 yrs. ago), but I now wish I would have been forced to do that more.

Jan_NS: If we don't take the time to reflect on the value or meaning of an experience, the power and opportunity for personal transformation and understanding is lost.

HelenCB: I get upset when students see the portfolio as a negative. A portfolio should be a CELEBRATION of learning.

KrissyL: How do we help students see it this way?

MarianneH: Perhaps one of the issues, and I don't know if Helen has run into this, is how do we help folks learn the reflective process... notice I didn't say teach... on purpose.

Jan_NS agrees with Helen.

HelenCB: That is one of the reasons I have been working with early childhood portfolios. Talk about a celebration!

KrissyL: I think Tina's feelings are not unique.

TinaRGuest1: I feel that I do learn from the things I have to create in my education classes, it's just that a reflection always seems to me like telling the teacher what they want to hear.

KrissyL . o O (likes where Marianne is going w/ this)

MarianneH . o O (wonders if Helen is going to tell them about who is celebrating those portfolios)

HelenCB: I have several good resources on reflection on my website. The best one is from the NC schools.

HelenCB: OK, Marianne, I admit. I am celebrating with my granddaughters.

Jan_NS: Perhaps thinking of reflection as reflecting on the personal process and the changes that we notice in ourselves during that process might put a better light on it.

KrissyL smiles - grandkids are great! So are grandparents!

BJ . o O (and that process continues for all lifelong learners)

MarianneH . o O (anyone who is going to NECC can see Helen present WITH her granddaughter and see the portfolio.)

Jan_NS understands where Tina is coming from.

KrissyL: Oh, I'm so sorry I'll miss you all at NECC - can't go this yr.

HelenCB: One of the problems with reflection is how it is "assessed."

MarianneH: Tina, what troubles you about reflecting on your work... is the reflection guideline prescriptive?

Jan_NS: or maybe whether or not the reflection is "accepted or judged" by the person reading it.

HelenCB: If reflections are graded, like any other assignment, I think it diminishes the process.

TinaRGuest1: It's just that everything I do in every education class requires a reflection. I know that I have learned something. I take responsibility for my learning. I just always see the reflective part as telling the instructor what he or she wants to hear.

RichardSE: I think that pre-service teachers have a problem seeing what they are learning. I don't think they understand that they are being trained sort of like a firefighter. A firefighter doesn't stop and think about running into a building that is on fire. He or she just does it. Learning to teach seems to be the same way. Reflections help this understanding, but if the students do not have the big picture of what is happening, it sometimes seems pointless.

EdwardA: I don't think they necessary need to be graded, just reviewed for content.

KrissyL: For our students, doing reflections, it is somewhat prescriptive in the sense that we ask them to explain the standard in their own words, what it means to them personally, support it w/ theory, and then describe their artifact as evidence of their understanding of the standard.

KrissyL: I certainly hope they are not putting down "what we want to hear", but it wouldn't surprise me if some of them are.

Jan_NS: Perhaps the distinction might be the learning - is it learning the content of the course or learning about my personal responses or insights about that content learning.

EdwardA: right, so you know that they understand the information taught, comprehension

HelenCB: Krissy, your portfolio purpose is assessment, so the reflection would be fairly prescriptive... to meet that purpose.

Jan_NS: my being the student, not me personally. <grin>

MarianneH: How does that help know if they understand why the standard has been designed to guide better teaching and learning by future students... does that ever enter?

MarianneH: Helen, how would the reflection look different if it were NOT for assessment?

KrissyL: We are changing our rubrics for assessment to now include measuring knowledge, skills & dispositions of each standard. Dispositions is the tricky one.

HelenCB: Reflection on the actual experience represented by the artifact and what was learned.

MarianneH . o O (Ah, Krissy, I see NCATE in your future)

KrissyL: sorry, but no thanks.

Jan_NS: How are you defining "experience" Helen?

KrissyL: I love what I do

HelenCB: Marianne, what about assessing dispositions?

HelenCB: When I was talking about experience, I am referring to the overall learning experience that resulted in the artifact in the portfolio. We can't put the entire experience into the portfolio... just the artifact or our reflection on our learning.

MarianneH: That is probably the hardest part... and happens in field experiences

MarianneH: We are finding that it also can be show... to a bit... is the design of lesson plans but mostly from the experience in the field and interactions with children.

HelenCB: How do you put that interaction into a portfolio?

MarianneH: It may be in images, movies or tapes

MarianneH: Or including the comments of others as a part of an artifact... which does not have to be a single item.

KrissyL: Next semester, we are going to require all of our sophomores to include a video of a "best teaching practice" in their portfolio.

HelenCB: What form will that video take? a tape? a file on a computer?

KrissyL: QuickTime movie

RichardSE: Wow.

MarianneH: where does the definition come from? I have also heard evidence-based practice.

KrissyL: Hopefully as sophomores they will learn the process & as Sr.'s they will video more of their student teaching experiences.

HelenCB: When I was in Europe, I was told that the term "best practice" was educational imperialism!

KrissyL: I've seen a lot of pictures, but what does that really show? I like the idea of including comments others have said, better than simply pictures (plus you don't have to worry about as much about parental permission.)

MarianneH: or elitism. Although we use it too. Several of my colleagues developed Best Practice High School in Chicago and have written a book on best practice. I have learned another term recently... digital story telling.... may not be a video but can provide evidence and reflection on an experience.

HelenCB: Alverno College videotapes students throughout their undergraduate experience. The comparison between the first semester and toward the end of their program.

KrissyL: Yes, I don't necessarily like the term best practice either

HelenCB: Ah, Marianne, you pushed one of my favorite buttons. Digital Storytelling!

HelenCB: Shall we define the term?

BJ . o O (there is a digital storytelling group here in TI)

Jan_NS: please

KrissyL . o O (would like to know)

MarianneH . o O (and Helen has started a group on eportfolios)

HelenCB: There may be a group, but it is closed, and I haven't been "accepted" yet.

MarianneH: me, either

MarianneH: tell us a little and how it links to portfolios

HelenCB: Digital Storytelling is the process of telling a short story (2-3 minutes) using mostly still images, your voice, and a sound track for the emotional content.

Jan_NS: iMovie is great for Digital Storytelling.

HelenCB: It's like doing a short documentary, but without expensive digital video cameras.

HelenCB: Students found doing a digital story about their student teaching experience was one of their favorite activities.

KrissyL: That's a GREAT idea

RichardSE: Yes, wow again.

KrissyL: Something I think they would have a lot of fun w/.

KrissyL: Might put the "fun" back into the portfolio

HelenCB: It provides a more creative format for reflection. In fact, I call it a reflective digital storytelling artifact.

KrissyL: . o O (Hmmm, one more thing to add to next semester)

HelenCB: The process begins with a narrative that the student writes. One of my students took her text from her reflective journal!

KrissyL: Helen, do you have examples of these somewhere

HelenCB: I have one example on my CD. I also have a few hidden on my Mac account.

HelenCB: You can also go to the Center for Digital Storytelling website.

HelenCB: <http://www.storycenter.org/>

Jan_NS: How is the learning curve for creating these Digital stories, Helen?

KrissyL: Great - will do

MarianneH: I will add it to the Preservice Group links area.

HelenCB: I just finished a distance-delivered e-portfolio class and one of the requirements was at least one digital story.

KrissyL: Helen, Jan has suggested iMovie, what have your students used? I would imagine that you could really use anything. Our students have developed e-stories, using HyperStudio, but they still used text.

HelenCB: We use iMovie, but my husband has used Pinnacle Studio and Adobe Premiere. The end product is a video.

KrissyL: OK, thanks.

HelenCB: We are adapting this process from education to a more lifelong learning approach: digital family stories.

Jan_NS: I guess a lot would depend on the software that is available to the students.

HelenCB: My husband has put up a website with lots of links:

<http://www.digitalfamilystory.com>

KrissyL: Yes, seems very appropriate - kind of like the lifelong sports concept.

MarianneH: You know, Bank Street has their preservice teachers in small groups over a year. They could tell their own group-growth story and it would be really neat!!

TinaRGuest1: These digital stories sound fun but do they require any special equipment? A digital camera?

HelenCB: If you are using Windows XP, Microsoft has some new software out. Check my website.

KrissyL: Tina, a digital camera would be ideal.

MarianneH: BUT if you finish in XP aren't you limited in where it can be shown?

TinaRGuest1: But what if poor college students don't own one?

KrissyL: scanners work too.

MarianneH: Your college should have one available for students to borrow.

HelenCB: You can use a digital camera (even the cheapest ones work fine). You can also use

35mm film and scan, or have the pictures developed online.

KrissyL: Yes, do you have a media services dept. or something similar that checks out this equipment?

MarianneH: And I think...haven't seen... there are disposable digital cameras now.

KrissyL: REALLY! would love to find out about that!

Jan_NS: yes, I have seen them.

MarianneH: Our dept has loaned to students.

HelenCB: My website has some "at-a-glance guides" that cover three different ways that you can digitize images.

KrissyL: Someone just asked me if those were available & I hadn't heard about them.

Jan_NS: Kodak makes a disposable digital camera

MarianneH: But Helen is right.. there are great online sources (Ofoto and others) where you can send film and have it sent back as digital images on a cd.

Jan_NS: scanners are a great solution and usually available

MarianneH: Helen... would you post your URL so everyone will have it. You listed some great resources.

HelenCB: You can also preview the images online and order hi-res versions, or the CD that Marianne mentioned.

KrissyL: Although, Tina, since our students have begun working on eportfolios, many have asked for a digital camera for Christmas, B-day, etc. or have saved up for one, and I think have found it to be an indispensable item that they use throughout their education career.

HelenCB: My URL: <http://electronicportfolios.org> or .com (either one gets you there as well as <http://helenbarrett.com/>

KrissyL: Highly worth the investment

HelenCB: Oregon Scientific sells a digital camera at Wal-Mart for less than \$60, I think. And then, there is the JamCam or the Barbie camera.

KrissyL: It will probably pay for itself in a yr. or 2 w/ what you save on picture developing

Jan_NS: We are just about out of time for this evening. I want to thank Helen for a stimulating discussion and one we may want to revisit next year.

Jan_NS: any comments to wrap up, Helen?

RichardSE: Yes, thank you. I didn't want it to end.

HelenCB: The major difference is in the quality of the images. Digital camera images are not as good as scanning 25mm.

MarianneH: my bias is... not to use the commercial holders for portfolios... my university has adopted one. And while I know there are storage, learning curve, time issues... I think the others are more creative.

KrissyL: It was very nice meeting all of you & I will certainly be joining the e-portfolio group.

MarianneH: Yes, Let's come back to this next year if others agree... And I , too, want to thank Helen for being a part of our session tonight!

Jan_NS: We can continue the discussion through the discussion boards for either preservice teachers or the e-portfolio group

KrissyL: Thank you Helen!

MarianneH . o O (and or in both groups..)

HelenCB: On my website, I have posted an article that discusses the differences between e-portfolios and assessment systems. That should provoke another dialogue!

MarianneH: And thanks to Jan and BJ who really make this happen HelenCB: This was not as disjointed as other chats that I have been on! HelenCB: Thanks!!

Jan_NS: Good topic and presenter, Helen!

BJ applauds

KrissyL: Thanks everyone - must now get my 5 yr. old to bed - she's been very patient w/ me!

Jan_NS: Preservice teacher discussion will be on vacation until September. So watch for more info.

MarianneH: Thanks to all our guests who added lots of good thoughts

KrissyL waves good bye

TinaRGuest1: Thanks Good night

MarianneH waves to all

Jan_NS: Yes, thanks to all who participated tonight.