

## ePortfolio as a Pedagogy, Not a Technology

August 7, 2013

Lehman Urban Transformative Education School of Education  
Lehman College

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LEHMAN COLLEGE ePortfolio

taskstream

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Graduate Childhood Education Capstone SP 201

Template: Sp 13 Graduate Childhood Education capstone

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A Connect to Learning Campus ePortfolio

*"It is understandable that there would be some faculty fall off of interest in utilizing ePortfolio if they felt they'd invested time and energy in one tool, only to have to switch gears to another. The fact that you continue to move forward underscores, in my mind, the fact that you have been approaching ePortfolio as a pedagogy rather than as a technology." ~ C2L Colleague*

Our technology story demonstrates that we consider “ePortfolio as a pedagogy rather than as a technology.”

The Lehman College: School of Education is currently using Taskstream as the ePortfolio provider. It has been quite a journey since 2008, when initial discussions about piloting ePortfolios began.

In the first efforts to select a platform, the Educational Technology Coordinator and faculty from Lehman College and Bronx Community College colleagues (an interested and invested group of faculty and staff), invited the following vendors to present to our group: Digication, Epsilen, ExpoLX-Bb, Serensoft/OpenSource. We scoured information that was available at the time about features and implementation on other campuses. We developed a rubric to compare features. Much has changed since then.

In the beginning, Lehman College School of Education selected [Digication](#) as our platform for many reasons. It was flexible, student centered, easy to manage, WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) tools, and more. Perhaps most importantly, as a new company to the New York area, Digication was willing to give us a “deal” on cost per person. It was a perfect platform for the School of Education in the early pilot years. However, some of their assessment tools were still in development (beta mode) when the School of Education needed to prepare for a national accreditation visit. Our pilot ePortfolio projects had focused on student learning, developing professional identity, and a place for students to collect and reflect on required assignments. It was a fantastic tool for collaboration. But we did not have a systematic “back end” way to collect or evaluate data. Digication was a fairly new company at the time, and their assessment options were still in beta mode.

Thus, the administration made a decision to switch to [Taskstream](#) as a vendor. We needed a system that would offer a way for students to have the traditional relationship of ePortfolios: select, collect and reflect. But we also needed specific assignments to be submitted and graded with a rubric, aligned with standards to meet program specific and national requirements. And finally, the School of Education needed a system that would allow us to aggregate data for a full unit review.

Taskstream had been working with schools of education since the company's beginning, and they "spoke" the language of standards, assessment and accreditation. They had ways to input past data (enabling submission of information about students who had already graduated), forms to collect general student information upon registration, local, state and national standards built into the system, ways to include mentor teachers or supervisors outside our faculty and school personnel to engage with students and more. Taskstream is *much* more expensive than Digication, but the large support offered through the 800 number help desk, was a feature we needed to consider given the limited support we would be able to provide for any large scale roll out.

Our switch to TaskStream provided increased opportunities to assess student learning outcomes as well as meet program and larger institutional goals. From the very beginning of our ePortfolio pilot projects, ePortfolios were introduced as a course requirement. Taskstream's "Directed Response Folios" or DRFs are containers for requirements that must be graded to a rubric, designated as met/not met, etc. This feature has enabled the unit to design, for example, a DRF for student teaching or intern requirements that is uniform across disciplines and content areas. This gives us the ability to aggregate and dis-aggregate data in new and effective ways to help in curriculum planning and program development (in addition to accreditation reports).

Finally, Taskstream has improved its ePortfolio "showcase" options. Many of our students have added dimensions of visual design and personalization to their ePortfolios. Many have described using their ePortfolios in job interviews or for tenure.

### **Faculty Buy-In (and the switch in platforms)**

[NCATE/CAEP](#) accreditation requires a tremendous amount of data and evidence to support learning objectives. And the new Teacher Performance Assessments required for New York State Teaching Certification will require an ePortfolio submission (responding to specific prompts). With our move to Taskstream, the new [edTPA](#) requirements, the support of the School of Education Dean and other staff, there is a strong foundation to bring new faculty onboard. TaskStream has developed a partnership with Pearson (the New York State Teacher Certification scoring vendor), so that our students can complete the NYS Certification submission through a single click from Taskstream. This is an extremely valuable feature. The School of Education ePortfolio Leadership Team continues to work hard to keep the integrity and best practice ePortfolio theories in focus, so that we are not solely driven by the certification requirements.

As a supportive colleague pointed out, "It is understandable that there would be some faculty fall off of interest in utilizing ePortfolio if they felt they'd invested time and energy in one tool, only to have to switch gears to another. The fact that you continue to move forward underscores, in my mind, the fact that you have been approaching ePortfolio as a pedagogy rather than as a technology."