

Technology–Purpose, Platforms, and Access

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ePortfolio is a concept, pedagogy and technology. At Three Rivers Community College we began using Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium's (CTDLC) ePortfolio platform. ePortfolio.org stated "Students could showcase achievements on individualized guest pages, collect and reflect on work, share educational and work experience, create dynamic resumes and create a plan of study working online with advisors. Faculty could create portfolio projects with scoring rubrics, create joint projects with other Instructors, comment and score students' work online, create teaching or promotion portfolios and showcase achievements. While institutions could collect student work for outcome assessment, select work randomly and anonymously, use scoring rubrics, generate reports and export raw data for further analysis."



In 2004 [Three Rivers Community College](#) began exploring ePortfolio technology with [CTDLC](#). A faculty member (L. Rafeldt) and the Dean of Technology (S. Goetchius) developed a collaborative plan with Diane Goldsmith and the consortium to pilot use. The Nursing Director (A. Branchini, now the Academic Dean) supported use of an ePortfolio platform as a potential assessment tool. **The focus initially was on technology.** In monthly meetings members created orientation strategies, gave feedback related to use and began asking for technology to meet varied pedagogical needs. Students controlled the portfolio, as it was private to them until they sent an "invitation" via email to view the whole or a portion of the portfolio. The administrator could not see directly into a portfolio but could create assessment modules for students to submit assignments into.

The technology was introduced to first semester nursing students in a computer lab by faculty. Receiving an account and learning about its' use with supervised hands on work continues to be important. The Director of Educational Technology (K. Barfield) presented sample portfolios and blog sites to students in a subsequent class. Support was continued with students who needed tutoring in basic computer applications. Students learned the catchphrase "collect, select, reflect and showcase" using the system as a "file cabinet" for their work but through coaching used the tool to develop their cognitive and emotional abilities. **Access to ePortfolio was within the course shell and directly through www.ePortfolio.org** **This continues to be important today with subsequent platforms.** Accounts purchased by the school for each student were 25MB which students filled with mainly print artifacts and linkages to early *YouTube* work.

Initially new assignments were created but it was quickly realized this was not needed and actually a road block to faculty adopting the change. Assignments within the nursing program already utilized active learning and reflective strategies. **The change was connecting students to faculty, librarians and resources of the college through an electronic tool increasing feedback perspectives.**

Guest View | ePortfolio.org

of my passion for continuing my journey through nursing school. I value the opportunities obtaining a higher education offers, both personally and with regards to my career. By continuing my education in nursing, I will help to be one that works towards elevating our profession by expanding my knowledge base in pathology, research, empathy, holism, and critical thinking. Some of the attached works highlight the tasks I have undertaken to pursue and share my appreciation of my educatio, including testimony provided to the Connecticut State Legislature regarding budget cuts to state higher learning institutions, and an article for the Connecticut Nursing News which describes the value I place on higher education.

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WORK: Testimony from CT State Legislature 2009/2011

FILES:
Testimony.doc

INTRODUCTION:

With our economy still recovering from otis mode, higher education has become a target for state budget cuts. An educated and skilled workforce is the key to economic recovery, yet paradoxically, deep budget cuts and tuition hikes are being proposed for our higher education institutions, effectively pricing out the very workforce that we need. I spoke before the appropriations committee in the CT State Legislature on February 26, 2011 to oppose the proposed budget cuts, and highlight how important higher education is to the economy of our state.

Students connected to faculty, peers, staff, friends and family through a guest invitation. The recipient of the link in an emailed invitation did not need to have an ePortfolio account but could see the work designated for viewing.

ePortfolios were not automatically public to all. This was important when working with new students in healthcare who did not understand the consequences of breaking HIPPA (confidentiality) laws. Multiple ePortfolios were created with various audiences in mind. **Students understood how the technology worked with an analogy: you have multiple files in a file cabinet which you access and review in different ways and at different times, presenting knowledge and ideas in different ways to different people. Your ePortfolio is a powerful tool. What I learned to say is using ePortfolio is a powerful process.**



Faculty used the assessment module to create assignments with rubrics. Students submitted work to these modules for grading and program outcome assessment. Norming for assessment teams was also done through these modules. Faculty developed reliable scoring through rating a research nutrition paper before the assessment was done. A wonderful part of www.ePortfolio.org was the collaborative and collegial nature in which work was shared with institutional users; faculty posted assignments and opened them to other colleges and universities for use. Appropriate credit was given to creators. **Ideas were generated in a cross curricula network.**

Students in the nursing program used the platform each semester, but some students needed to refresh through the embedded video / document tutorials. A wizard tool also acted as a guide; multiple resources were available to users. *Facebook* was also emerging for personal use and students compared the two in ease of use. *CTDLC* was simultaneously developing other projects such as *eTutoring* and local hosting of *Blackboard*. The company focus was shifting and an opening for other platforms was beginning. It is important to state how receptive to suggestions and collegial in nature the staff of *CTDLC* were and are; they were easy to access and responsive to all questions. **The people connection is an important consideration when choosing a platform.**

Student and faculty course and pilot feedback continued with an increasingly evident need for a new platform with **unlimited file storage size**. ePortfolio as a purposeful learning pedagogy, outcome assessment and career assessment tool was clear. ePortfolio.org was going to no longer renew accounts. *Digication* was a vetted choice as other Connecticut Community Colleges were using the platform successfully. Many who are new to ePortfolio believe ePortfolio is one “thing”, one “tool” but quickly learn there are many choices in platforms.

As faculty, staff and administrators consider which platform to use;

- **consider purpose**
- **ease in artifact submission, multimedia artifact capability, and file size capacity**
- **reflective capabilities**
- **ability to use social pedagogy**
- **24/7 access to online tutorials and professional development**
- **design look of an ePortfolio, what will engage a student**
- **outcome assessment capabilities with anonymity and rubrics**
- **report generation, what will engage faculty in teaching, learning and assessment**

- **efficient productivity, outcomes met, impact on culture and cost, what will engage administrators**

One other important factor when choosing a platform is long term availability to learners. Platforms that are only available to the student for a semester do not promote artifact interaction over time. This is important to the systematic and disciplined pedagogy of inquiry, reflection, social connections, and integration as a guided journey to personal growth. ePortfolio as pedagogy makes a difference in us through technology.