The E-Portfolio Development,
Assessment and Reflection of Standards-based Instructional
Methods in Urban Field Sites Using Multimedia

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Abstract

The goal of this project, Development, Assessment, and Reflection of Standards-based Instructional Methods in Urban Field Sites Using Multimedia, was to enhance the capabilities of future teachers to document their teaching abilities in the classroom for meeting program requirements at the undergraduate and graduate level. In meeting this challenge the project designed prototypes of electronic portfolios by developing these in methods classes and during student teaching which were then assessed by the teacher and faculty member for their ability in meeting standards-based instruction.

Two major goals were created by the faculty involved in this Consortium project, which included Loyola University New Orleans, Dillard, Holy Cross and Tulane University. The first goal was to develop needed technology skills to create electronic portfolios for lead faculty and students within the consortium partnership. The second goal required the university faculty to develop, reflect and assess multimedia portfolios for meeting criteria of standards-based instruction in urban schools. In the first year all lead faculty were trained at the New Orleans Consortium for Technology Integration and Implementation in Teacher Education (NOCTIITE) in May of 2002. Particular emphasis on their training involved the needed skills which were felt to be important for the production of electronic portfolios and consisted of: web page design, hyperlinks, presentation technology skills as well as the effective uses of technology in their teaching in their own classes. Components of an electronic portfolio were addressed as well as the steps one would follow in creating a folio, such as the storage of electronic portfolios on CD’s and the web. Training in short stream video, video editing and photo editing as well as the effective use of Blackboard was given. These participants were paired with student technology mentors who also attended a two week workshop and assisted them in implementation of the learned technology within their own classes. This assisted us in scaffolding the technology expertise of the consortium members and began a close collaboration of ideas and efforts with this project.

All university lead faculty members as well as graduate assistants collaborated monthly on needed goals and objectives of the grant. Particular content standards were highlighted for each monthly meeting and formative rubrics were introduced and refined throughout the year. By May a working rubric for year two was developed and agreed on by the consortium which we felt addressed the needs of assessment as Candidates pass through the main portals of their program. By the end of the first year we had established several prototype portfolios
along with many partial portfolios for review. Through year one we developed what we felt needed to be included in an electronic documentation of instruction and in working day to day with our college students worked through many of the unknown problems when working with media in classroom situations (such as how to adequately hear the instructor on the video tape which resulted in us using wireless mikes on the main speaker). These trial and errors, when working with this medium, assisted both the instructors as well as the college students in learning this type of production more fully and effectively for the future.

We feel that year one was successful for many reasons. We established a trusting and working relationship with other smaller universities who are also attempting to develop the best ways to assist their students in documenting their teaching. Everyone developed more refined technology skills which they are using with their college students as well as the college students sharing within their teaching in the K-12 settings. The grant provided the entire consortium with needed equipment to practice utilizing wireless technology in limited technology schools and also afforded Candidates the needed materials to document their teachings through state of the art equipment. Having Graduate students helping through the matching grant allowed added additional assistance for scaffolding individual college student’s technology skills and for regular technology mini sessions throughout the year.

The focus of the second year of the project was that each university involved was responsible for creating electronic folios and assessing their folios in relation to how successful they were in documenting the Candidates’ abilities in teaching standards-based curriculum in urban settings. By this time it was noted that individual universities began developing unique personalities with their electronic folios which represented the character of their universities. While still meeting the overall goals of the project, universities selected individualized ways of documenting their Candidates’ teaching which showed the efficacy of the Candidate in multimedia proficiency as well as teaching standards-based lessons which demonstrated successful student learning.

In attempting to establish reliability in the e-portfolio assessments the consortium partners along with several PK-12 teachers utilized a working rubric to utilize as candidates progressed through the different portals in their program. This rubric was used and refined throughout year two. Portfolios were turned in at the end of semesters by all participating partner institutions. At semester end meetings, we as a group evaluated the selected folios to ascertain the consistency of our evaluations of these multimedia documentations of Candidate’s teaching in urban areas. The final year e-folios were assessed by the K-12 educator in assisting us in evaluating our folios for authenticity and reliability of assessment. When reviewing these processes the evaluator reported the following, “The rubrics used for evaluation of the portfolio and the teaching segment of the portfolio demonstrates clearly the standards base that underlies the portfolio development and the project itself. The categories of evaluation combine standards for teaching/learning, media/technology knowledge and use, lesson planning, diversity, classroom management, and instruction. Together, the two rubrics communicate high expectations for candidates in all aspects of their work: planning and creating lessons, delivery of instruction, reflecting on teaching and learning, and using multimedia to create the portfolio.”

In assessing the overall successes and difficulties of this project for continuation and use at other institutions there were several key points which would need to be considered. First, all universities in the consortium took more time than anticipated in creating and developing the electronic portfolios. Secondly, the creation and editing of multimedia is time consuming and initially somewhat intimidating for college students. With some practice this skill emerges and like other technology skills becomes refined with practice. Third, assistance for lead faculty members who have full commitments is highly desirable. We were afforded the opportunity of this assistance for one year through a special UPS Grant. However with no additional funding beyond that one year, faculty felt the added strain of implementing this type of technology-rich, but time intensive, project with their college students.
The positive effects of this project were quite evident and hopefully lasting at the varied institutions. As the evaluator of the project reported, “One of the most striking aspects of review of the candidate portfolios was the incremental sophistication of the portfolios as the project progressed, thus indicating the cumulative effect of the project on program participants; candidate participants in the second year, on the whole, gained from the experience of first year students and faculty participants. Of equal importance is the frequency with which candidates included student work in their portfolios. This is one of the single best means for documenting the effect of teaching performance on student learning, and the portfolio analyses indicated that candidates were analyzing and reflecting carefully on student learning.”

Conclusion

The universities involved in this consortium were enhanced in their ability to utilize effective multimedia for Candidate documentation of technology proficiency as well as their documentation of teaching. Before this project none of these universities utilized multimedia for this cutting-edge way of teacher assessment. As we have learned repeatedly students learn not only what is taught to them but also how they are taught. By providing the needed technology and proficiency training, we continue to establish an environment for “risk free learning of technology” for future teachers which enables them to approach the new ways of teaching and learning in a positive and motivated fashion. Through this method we encourage continued use of newer technologies which enhances all of our consortium partners’ chances to become leaders in the education of Candidates with proficient technology abilities as well as the ability to use technology in their teaching. We have proven that by analyzing the lessons taught, how effective the teacher was in teaching the lessons (video), and the documented artifacts which demonstrate the success of the lessons learned we are better able to assess proficiency in our Candidates’ teaching over time.

Additional research involving Candidate dispositions affected while working with electronic portfolios will be investigated further with conclusions made from the aggregation of edited video.

References
