

EPAC March 2009 Webcast

**ePortfolios in Math with Professor Suzanne Topp, Salt Lake Community College
Friday, March 13th at 9 a.m. PT/10 a.m. MT/11 a.m. CT/12 p.m. ET**

CHAT PARTICIPANTS

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16. Kathy - LaGuardia

CHAT TRANSCRIPT

Salt Lake Community College presentation.

Polling question: I/my institution is most interested in using ePortfolios for:

1. Academic Advising
2. Institutional Accreditation/Departmental Review
3. Program-level Curricular Development (i.e. General Education)
4. Career Planning & Development
5. Alumni Development – Lifelong Learning

Moderator (Suzanne): 3

Laurie: 1, 2, 3, 4

Jon - Kauai CC: 3

Kathy - LaGuardia 1: 2,3,4

Steve: 3, but where is student learning?

Kathleen: 2,3,4

Judy: In order 2,3,1,4

David SLCC: 3--Program level curricular development in General Education

Mary - Mount Holyoke: 1 3 45

Una: Career Development & Academic Advising

Judy: I would say student learning is embedded in 3

Steve: agreed

Trent: seeing one's own growth -- a key portfolio value

Moderator (Helen - Stanford): I wonder if there are gender differences in confidence in math -- seems like a really interesting finding with implications for recruitment and retention of women in math/engineering/STEM

Jon - Kauai CC: At some point could you share your student learning outcomes with us? (Later would be OK)

Trent: How many students?

David SLCC: Sessions like this, in which faculty show how eportfolios can be successfully integrated into their courses is a great way to build faculty buy-in.

Judy: We've found that as David said, sharing the student eports and their reflections is very convincing. Faculty get really excited when they see the level of work possible in student eports.

Trent: do faculty themselves use eportfolio for any purpose?

Jon - Kauai CC: I was just curious to see what they were, but you showed them on the tour. Thanks.

David SLCC: We have a pilot, Trent, where some faculty are using eportfolios for their tenure reviews.

Jon - Kauai CC: Yes.

Trent: Great, David -- great idea

Kathleen: This is the first example I've seen with 'math'. The pedagogy is sound and fits well with ePortfolios. Thank you for sharing.

Trent: I think that gets faculty much more engaged in the whole process

Jon - Kauai CC: What do you think about the use of e-portfolios in other math courses that are more focused on specific math content like factoring, etc...

Steve: I especially appreciate relating projects to everyday life situations

Judy: Trent, I agree. Some faculty here use eports for their P&T documentation and we are supporting groups of faculty creating them out of our Center for Academic Excellence.

Steve: Also, using multiple competencies, writing, critical thinking, etc. addressed in the portfolio.

Kelly: Do students see each others' portfolios?

Moderator (Suzanne): At this point students can see each others portfolios.

Trent: How large a rollout at SLCC?

Moderator (Suzanne): I did ask them to make their portfolios private until the due date.

Moderator (Helen - Stanford): Your last slide mentioned the public aspect of the ePortfolio as being motivating -- do they comment on each other's portfolios? is there much of a community in the class?

David SLCC: Suzanne, do you grade the student reflection as part of the assignment? If so, do you give them an idea of what they'll be graded on? A rubric?

Moderator (Suzanne): The rollout at SLCC is still in pilot phase. We have about six active courses right now.

Moderator (Suzanne): I have the students look at each others portfolios after the due date. This helps them see what is possible with the portfolio from more tech savvy students as well as the public community.

Trent: Digication is Web-based, so accessible from home for the students -- was that a factor in choosing Digication?

Moderator (Helen - Stanford): It also strikes me that the challenge of capturing math notations, etc. could be addressed by using a tablet PC or even some of these new notetaking pens such as the Anoto or Livescribe pens as input devices. Has anyone experimented with these?

Moderator (Suzanne): I do grade the reflections. I have not given a specific rubric on that part.

Judy: Suzanne, is it possible to see your syllabus and the assignments you give?

Moderator (Suzanne): I do have a tablet. I just downloaded a new tool to try the grading of the portfolio.

Kelly: Do you think there is value in students learning from each others' reflection? In other words, learning how to solve problems from seeing each others' learning methods, not just the subject matter?

Moderator (Suzanne): At this point, many students scan thier work into a pdf file for final upload.

Jon - Kauai CC: I think having students comment on each others' work is a good idea. Students don't often see themselves as being able to judge work in mathematics, and that gives them a sense of greater "mathematical power".

Trent: good point, Jon

Moderator (Suzanne): Yes... Kelly. I do think there is a lot of value to that. In class I always show my students my thinking process... it is part of the learning.

Judy: It might be good to pair students up to share their learning reflections. Some students talk better in terms of reflective process than write. Then, they could write it as well.

Moderator (Helen - Stanford): I agree with you, Jon. It's an intriguing idea of how one might build a community around this and the possible relationship of the visibility/evidence of learning with confidence

Moderator (Suzanne): Jon, I like that... Also, your previous question. I want to get more signature assignments for higher level math classes... the math would be more in depth but always tied back to a real-world example.

David SLCC: I like Judy's idea of pairing students for reflective talk before they write. In addition, it would make sense to pair students who are comfortable with technology with those who are less so.

Judy: Do you see your work in math connecting with your civic engagement goal?

Trent: good question!

Moderator (Helen - Stanford): I agree, David & Judy. Reflection facilitated through conversation and dialogue is also valuable and these days, it's possible to capture that as well.

Jon - Kauai CC: I tried using portfolios (not "e-") for a basic algebra class once, and the results were pretty interesting. I just haven't been able to fine-tune the system enough to put it into use again, but I think an e-portfolio would make it work better the next time.

Steve: Easy to make math relevant to supporting legislation!

Moderator (Suzanne): I am working on that one. My first assignment asks about renewable energies. The civic engagement would have to add another component. But I would like to have that as a natural progression for these assignments.

Moderator (Helen - Stanford): Can you tell us a bit more about your experience, Jon?

Judy: Helen, it would be great to have audio on the portfolio and re-reflection connected to it as time went on.

Moderator (Helen - Stanford): Absolutely! I do think there are more tools now that can help make that happen. For example, this Livescribe pen has a recorder built into it.

Moderator (Helen - Stanford): Is anyone experimenting with audio in ePortfolios?

Jon - Kauai CC: Sure. I didn't go so far as to remove exams from the class, so they were actually part of the student portfolios, as well as exam corrections, and then responses to problems I posed. These were smaller in scope than the problems that Suzanne is using, but there were more of them.

Kelly: Funny you said it. Digication just enabled inline playback of any mp3 files.

Judy: Suzanne, I think that could be really rich. We do a lot of work around sustainability and doing footprints in the first years and water use studies in dorms and places on campus. Later student work on habit rehabilitation in the community. All this has QL potential.

David SLCC: Helen, I'm building a demo student eportfolio at SLCC to try to show what's possible, and I have audio in there.

Moderator (Suzanne): Yes, absolutely. That sounds great.

Jon - Kauai CC: I found that the top students in the class were more challenged and probably learned a lot more than they would have in a more "traditional" design, but I felt that some of the weaker students found some loopholes in my system and didn't end up doing all of the interesting work I was hoping to get out of them.

Trent: Hope you had a lot of top students, Jon

Judy: Is that always true, though. I've found that I'm more aware of the students who find the loopholes, too!

Moderator (Suzanne): I found students finding loopholes as well... Some are always looking for a way out.

Moderator (Helen - Stanford): I'm thinking maybe a future chat on ePortfolios and the use of audio reflection or something along those lines could be interesting...may need to get you back to demo, Davd!

Judy: It would be great if you could be looking at the work while you listened to the student reflect on it!

Kelly: I've seen some interesting use of both video / audio for reflections. Starting even in elementary school. Here is an example: <http://ppsd.digication.com/Artisphere/reflections>

Moderator (Suzanne): I think audio would be wonderful.

Una: Suzanne -- can you briefly address the question of getting faculty buy-in so that you can expand the use of e-Portfolios?

Kelly: I think the teachers simply used a cheap digital camera that has movie mode to capture the conversation

Moderator (Suzanne): Another media of communicating could be evaluated as well.

Moderator (Helen - Stanford): With my research hat on, I'm wondering if you could set up an "experiment" comparing classes with traditional exams vs. eportfolios. It does sound like a pretty bold move that you tried Suzanne.

Trent: Thanks for the link Kelly

Judy: Helen, that study would be great. I've heard of some work on that but it wasn't published because it showed a very popular faculty member in a poor light. Too bad...

Moderator (Suzanne): Yes. I was scared. Interestingly enough, the e-portfolio was more intensive then the exam the students asked for the exams instead. That is when I knew they were really working to show me what they learned.

Moderator (Helen - Stanford) to yves: Welcome Yves - would you mind sharing your name, affiliation, and email so that we can follow up with you once the archive of this webcast is posted?

Moderator (Helen - Stanford): That is a really compelling finding, Suzanne!

Moderator (Suzanne): Also, this semester I went back to a shorter quiz and the e-portfolio assignment and the students are putting more effort into the quiz than the assignment. It is a natural assessment in a math class and the e-portfolio activity takes them out of what they are used to.

Trent: student-centered learning puts more onus on the student so they don't always like it

Kathleen: Thank you, Helen. Very well done. Signing off - K

Judy: You can say that, again, Trent.

Moderator (Suzanne): It was a great quantitative literacy learning moment when I showed the students the e-portfolios were worth more of their grade than the quizzes \"/

Trent: great

Trent: ePortfolios work when they are valued by teachers

Jon - Kauai CC: To get back to the audio for a second, I think that an overlooked component in math education is the ability to communicate what you know. Portfolios really help that in regards to writing, but speaking is perhaps even more important. I remember that in grad school, it took a while for me and my fellow students to really become comfortable conversing deeply about mathematics. And we had spent years studying it at that point. We were all great in writing, but had a long way to go in speaking.

Moderator (Suzanne): Student centered... intentional learning... that is why the signature assignments are so great... practical math.

Moderator (Suzanne): Absolutely. The x-two instead of x - squared problem... math is a language.

Moderator (Helen - Stanford): So, it's not enough to know and understand the content -- being able to articulate that knowledge such that you can explain it to someone else?

Trent: I wouldn't want to save audio clips of myself in college for very long . . .

Moderator (Suzanne): Yes... it brings the comprehension to a whole new level... we know that as teachers right?

Jon - Kauai CC: True

Judy: Being able to articulate learning means internalized learning...learning you can use.

Moderator (Suzanne): I think that is why the reflection is so important

Moderator (Helen - Stanford): Jon, I think this point you are making is critical. I imagine that many students do not get asked the question and do not have the kind of structured opportunity to articulate, explain, etc. How can ePortfolios help facilitate this kind of conversation?

Judy: I agree. Reflection is asking students to make connections and meaning. It's so important and as you said, so hard to prompt effectively.

Steve: Questions in class elicit one response. Questions in an eportfolio elicit a response from each student.

Jon - Kauai CC: Good point.

Judy: Have a meeting. Thank you for a rich and thought provoking chat!! Bye!

Moderator (Helen - Stanford): especially in math, science, engineering fields

Moderator (Suzanne): I think the community where the portfolio is shared with others can facilitate a new way of articulation

David SLCC: Similar to online discussions versus live discussions, eportfolio audio reflection would give students time to think a bit more before speaking.

Moderator (Helen - Stanford): Well everyone we're at the top of the hour. I want to thank Suzanne for her most excellent presentation today and everyone for the great discussion!

Steve: YES!

Kelly: Thank you Suzanne!

Trent: thanks, Suzanne!

Jon - Kauai CC: Thank you Suzanne!

Una: Nice to hear from you again Suzanne -- wonderful work!

David SLCC: Well done, Suzanne!

Moderator (Suzanne): Thank you...

Moderator (Helen - Stanford): We will be posting a transcript, archived recording, and additional resources on the EPAC wiki.

Steve: great session!

Moderator (Helen - Stanford): And don't hesitate to email me if you have any comments, suggestions, ideas for future chats/webcasts!!
