Telling the learning story: Students' authentic experiences used to assess learning

Webchat sponsored by EPAC and AAEEBL

Presented by

- Kate McConnell
- Teggin Summers
- C. Edward Watson
- Marc Zaldivar

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Introductions/Overview

1. Background/History and Growth
   - C. Edward Watson, Director, Professional Development and Strategic Initiatives, Learning Technologies
2. On-going projects
   - Teggin Summers, Asst. Director, ePortfolio Initiatives, Learning Technologies
3. New Pilot Projects
   - Marc Zaldivar, Director, ePortfolio Initiatives
4. Quality Enhancement Plan and ePortfolios
   - Kate McConnell, University Academic Assessment Coordinator, Office of Academic Assessment
5. Discussion/Questions

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Overview of Virginia Tech

- Comprehensive, Research I Institution
- Land grant
- 60 bachelor's degree programs
- 140 master's and doctoral degree programs
- ~28,000 total FTE
- ~1,700 full-time teaching faculty

- Founded in 1872
- Six Campuses
- 107 Extension Offices

National Capital Region

Roanoke Richmond

Abingdon Blacksburg Hampton Roads

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Background of VT Project

- ePortfolio system selection in 2002 – **OSP**
- 1.x piloted by faculty from disciplines historically associated with portfolio assessment
- Late 2005, 2.x pilots began – within Sakai
- Within our group, recognized much potential
- How do we increase our capacity to support adoption and sustain the growth of the project?

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Sustainability

Strategic Plan Alignment
- A culture of continuous improvement
- Integrated learning technologies to enhance the teaching and learning process

Institutional Alignment
- Multiple assessment projects
- SACS review (site visit March 2010)
- QEP focusing on student learning

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Forming Key Partnerships

- Unit leadership kept aware of ePortfolio's progress and potential (Associate Vice President for Learning Technologies)
- Innovative faculty opinion leaders selected as early pilot participants
- Director of VT's Office of Academic Assessment
- Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

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Engage in the Conversation

- Invited to demonstrate and discuss ePortfolio at key meetings:
  - Provost's council
  - College deans' meeting
  - Department heads' meeting
  - Student affairs council
  - Academic assessment workshops
  - Faculty development workshops
- All of these conversations concurrent with pilot activities and meetings with individual faculty
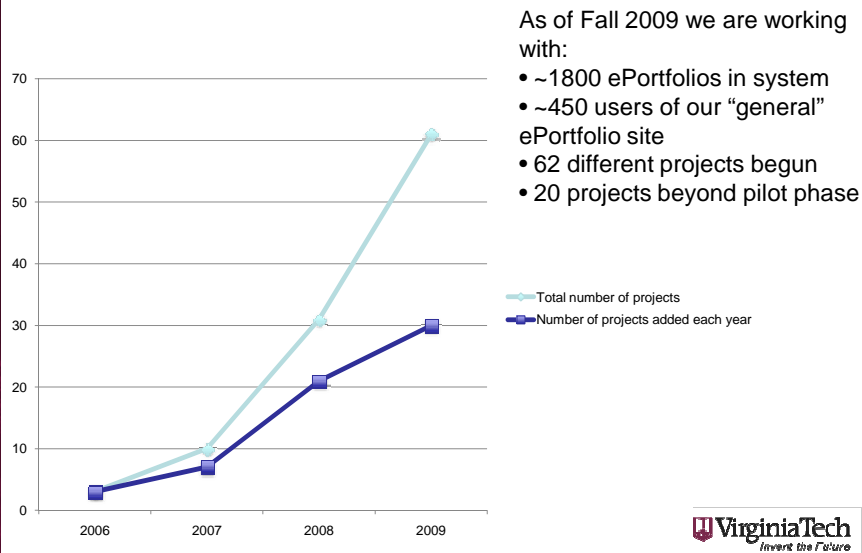
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Advocacy Fostered for OSP

- Broad advocacy for OSP resulted from the triangulation of faculty and administrator voices, strategic plan alignment, and pressures from SACS / QEP
- Spring 2007, we were asked to submit a budget
- Granted three new positions – one each summer – 2007, 2008, and *2009 (2010?)*
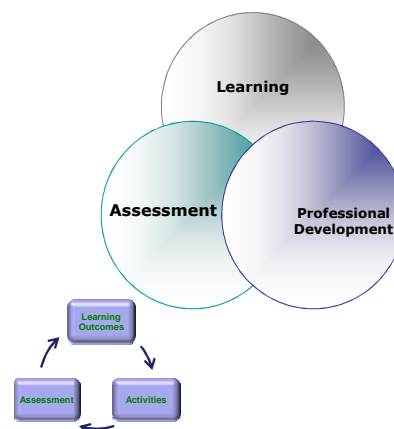
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Trajectory of Growth

As of Fall 2009 we are working with:
- ~1800 ePortfolios in system
- ~450 users of our "general" ePortfolio site
- 62 different projects begun
- 20 projects beyond pilot phase

Total number of projects
Number of projects added each year
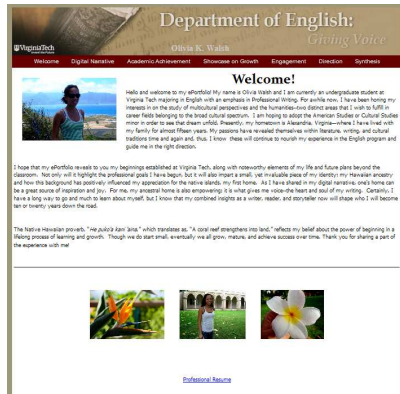
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ePortfolio Balancing Act(s)

- Focus faculty and student training and development on three different approaches to portfolio
- Stress connections between assessment, curriculum, and student experience
- Grounded our approach in "folio thinking" to balance outcomes, assessment, and activities.
- Balance between technology and pedagogy.

Learning

Assessment

Professional Development

Learning Outcomes

Assessment

Activities

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English 2614: Beginning the major

- Unique Features
  - Digital narrative
  - Academic Achievement
  - Student creativity and focus on growth as an English major

http://eportfolio.vt.edu/gallery.html

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History and Social Science Education

- Learning, Assessment, Prof. Dev.
- Very student-centered
- Lots of rich assessment data for accreditation

http://eportfolio.vt.edu/gallery.html

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NCSS/INTASC Accreditation Section

- Students write reflections and design layouts for each page
- Link to materials meeting assessment standards

http://eportfolio.vt.edu/gallery.html

Equine Science Capstone

- Pilot project beginning Spring 2010
- Senior students have year-long experience at veterinary farm
- Each semester students take two courses, plus work-study/internship credit and a personal research project.
- At the course level, assignments and reflections gathered for later long-term assessment by student and faculty.

Course: Equine Repro v2	Items and Reflections
Lecture Scenarios	
Skills Checklist	
Mare Report	
Keep/Cull Presentation	
Sire Project	
Mare Presentation	
Foaling Project	
Daily Breeding Work	
Field Trips	

Equine Science Capstone

- The curriculum combines in-class and in-practice activities, such as field trips, study abroad, and daily field work.
- At the macro-level, students are asked to reflect at the end of each term on the project's learning outcomes. These reflections make up the pages of a personal capstone portfolio – not a "whole" portfolio, but focused on the year's experience.

Equine Studies Matrix	Spring	Summer	Fall
Critical Thinking & Reasoning			
Communication			
Leadership & Collaboration			
Independent Learning			
Subject Matter Expertise			
Contemporary Issues			
Personal Growth			
Career Development			

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"folio" by Design in VT's QEP

- SACS-COC reaffirmation of accreditation
- QEP – **PROPOSED!! TEAM VISIT MARCH 2010!!!!**

Quality
Enhancement
Plan

- First Year Experiences (FYEs) – all Colleges, University Studies (undeclared students)

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PROPOSED!!

"folio" by Design in VT's QEP

- Designed to deliver multiple "high-impact educational practices" (Kuh, 2008)

- FYE (1 high-impact) defined by *Common Intellectual Experience* (2nd high-impact)
  - Shared learning outcomes across FYEs
  - Use of ePortfolio

High-Impact Educational Practices (Kuh, 2008)

First-Year Seminars & Experiences
Common Intellectual Experiences
Learning Communities
Writing-Intensive Courses
Collaborative Assignments & Projects
Undergraduate Research
Diversity/Global Learning
Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
Internships
Capstone Courses & Projects

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PROPOSED!!

"folio" by Design in VT's QEP

Learning Outcome	Measurable Indicator of Learning	Instrumentation	Nature of Evidence	Administration
Problem-Solving	Define a Problem. Identify problem-solving strategies. Propose solutions/ hypotheses.	Common Reflection Prompt in ePortfolio rated using customized VALUE rubric for problem-solving	Qualitative	Embedded in the individual course/program
Inquiry	Select a topic of inquiry. Access and evaluate existing knowledge, research, and/or views. Use information effectively, ethically, and legally to accomplish a specific purpose.	Common Reflection Prompt in ePortfolio rated using customized VALUE rubric for inquiry / Information Literacy Test (ILT), developed by the Center for Assessment and Research Studies, James Madison University	Qualitative / Quantitative	Embedded in the individual course/program / Conducted under auspices of Office of Academic Assessment
Integration	Connect relevant experience and academic knowledge. Make connections across disciplines. Reflect upon and assess themselves as learners.	Common Reflection Prompt in ePortfolio rated using customized VALUE rubric for integration / Measure of ePortfolio Skills and Integration, developed by Virginia Tech ePortfolio Initiative	Qualitative / Quantitative	Embedded in the individual course/program / Conducted under the auspices of the Office for Academic Assessment

Thank you!

- Questions?
- Some URLS:
  - http://eportfolio.vt.edu (ePortfolio Initiatives, VT)
  - http://www.aap.vt.edu (Office of Academic Assessment, VT)
  - http://www.fye.vt.edu (First Year Experiences, VT)
  - http://epac.pbworks.com (EPAC's Homepage)
  - http://www.aaeebl.org (AAEEBL's Homepage)

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The Association for Authentic, Experiential and Evidence-Based Learning (AAEEBL): www.aaeebl.org

- The professional association for the world ePortfolio community
- In partnership or affiliated with all ePortfolio projects, organizations and initiatives around the world.
- Will have 4 real life events this year: Clemson (March), Case Western (May), Stonehill (May) and OUR BIG annual conference, July 19-22 in Boston
- Co-hosted by Campus Technology, The Association of American Colleges and Universities, NERCOMP, Making Connections, RINET
- Goal: partner with EPAC to increase knowledge about ePortfolio practices, successes, research and technology.

EPAC Community of Practice

- Virtual interactions through monthly online chats & discussions, audio and video conferences;
- Networking with EPAC members at conferences and meetings;
- Exchange of resources
- Tracking of international and national conferences, requests for proposals and funding opportunities;
- Active exploration and evaluation of ePortfolio tools and practices
- To join and for more info: http://epac.pbworks.com