Title of Session: e-Portfolios
Moderator: Lynne Wolters
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Room: e-Portfolio Group

LynneW: Welcome to our e-portfolio discussion group.

LynneW: Is there anyone here who is new to the group or to Tapped In?

AprilCT: I did the tips session yesterday

DanaSR: This is my first time at a discussion group on Tapped In.

LizH: I'm new to the group, but not Tapped In.

LynneW: Please accept this warm welcome to each of you.

LynneW: I am a professor of ed tech at a university in Portland OR

LynneW: Please introduce yourselves.

AprilCT: My name is April and I am a student teacher of 6th grade science

DanaSR: My name Dana and I teach a 4/5 combo class in Spring Valley and getting my masters at SDSU.

LudmilaS: I am an Associate Professor at Mount Saint Mary College, Newburgh, NY

LynneW: April - where are you geographically?

AprilCT: sorry I am in Houston TX

LynneW: No problem.

LynneW: A couple of reminders about this user interface.

BJB2: I teach communication and am located in Pennsylvania

LynneW: By clicking on the ACTIONS menu, you can both increase font size and detach the chat module from this window.

LynneW: Detaching the chat module gives more room for text so you see less scrolling.

DanaSR: That helps....thanks.

LynneW: How many of you are "joined" members of this discussion group?

LudmilaS: I teach Curricular Planning, Methods of teaching and Teaching with Technology courses; I am also chairing ATAC and piloting the course with the group. I am exploring the MOODLE

LizH: Sorry, the Internet at my school is freezing. I'm a Disability Specialist and Professor in NH.

LynneW: Thank you for chiming in Liz

LudmilaS: I am in your Web 2.0 group, Lynn and I think in this too!

LynneW smiles and nods to Ludmila

DanaSR: I'm a member of Tapped In, but do I need to "join" a particular group?

LynneW: Dana you don't have to join any group.

DanaSR: Ok

LynneW: I ask because of the announcement service that goes with membership to the group.

LynneW: When I post reminders for the upcoming session, group members who have not opted out, receive an email of that discussion board posting here in this room.

LynneW: If you would like to receive those posted reminders, please consider joining this group.

LynneW: Any questions?

LudmilaS: I get the reminders and also visit the calendar!

LynneW: Good

DanaSR: I just visit the calendar. Thanks.

LynneW: Last month, one of our participants suggested today's topic.

LynneW: Authentic Writing Skills for ePortfolios

LudmilaS: Lynn has her Web 2.0 workshop tonight

LynneW smiles and thanks Ludmila for the "plug"

MaureenB: hi I am a 4th grade teacher in Putnam County NY

LynneW: Welcome

LynneW: So, when you think of authentic writing skills within the context of eportfolio creation --- what does that mean?

LudmilaS: Reflection, one of them

LynneW: Yes, a very important element

DanaSR: Definitely reflection and the ability to go back and make changes and see growth.

LynneW: How does the word "authentic" impact our association with writing skills?

LynneW: Good Dana.

LynneW: What else?

DanaSR: Original thoughts.

MaureenB: work samples to reflect on

LynneW: Good

LynneW: Anything else?

LudmilaS: real life situations

MaureenB: real world writing is the authentic part

LynneW: Let's do a quick exercise

LynneW: Free association

DanaSR: Well, with writing skills--just the fact of writing complete sentences, sentence structure, paragraph form, etc.

LynneW: Just type whatever comes to mind

LynneW: Vocabulary expressing "authentic" learning, experiences, understandings, etc.

DanaSR: It is a beautiful day here in San Diego--75 and sunny.

AprilCT: authentic holds value or usefulness to the student

LudmilaS: essay writing, paragraph building, punctuation

MaureenB: I am glad it is Thursday and the last day of this school week. (Can you tell it's been a rough week)

LynneW: I'm looking for words you would see in writing that would describe the learning as authentic

LynneW: deeply understood

LynneW: felt

LynneW: sensed

LudmilaS: expressing,

LynneW: captured

DanaSR: passion in writing

LudmilaS: self-expressing in writing

LynneW: so could words like complex, or confused or conflicted be authentic expressions of learning?

LudmilaS: might

MaureenB: yes if students could express what they don't understand it would be a window into their mind

DanaSR: Sometimes

AprilCT: I think if it would be authentic then it would be clear and simple to the student

LynneW: So, if I were writing about an experience I had with a POW vet...

LynneW: I could say I thought this was true

MaureenB: that would be powerful

LynneW: Found through this interaction it wasn't true

LynneW: It left me confused and I'm trying to reconcile my former belief

LynneW: with the new information

LynneW: Isn't writing about that process an authentic writing sample of the greater learning experience?

DanaSR: definitely.

MaureenB: definitely

LynneW: As teachers, we assign writing

LynneW: We set up the environment

LynneW: We communicate expectations

LynneW: We also have different abilities among our students

DanaSR: Very different abilities! And once that speak little English!

LynneW: How would you assign authentic writing for your students' eportfolios?

LynneW: How would you support the "authentic" in their writing?

LynneW: Good point Dana

LudmilaS: Allowing them to express themselves in their own ways

AprilCT: wouldn't it have to be writing where the student could use their own prior knowledge to connect with the assignment

MaureenB: If they are writing for an audience, whether it be there classmates or parents or just for themselves

LynneW: April I believe that is part of it.

DanaSR: Giving the students a topic and having them go with it wherever they would like to take it at their own level.

LynneW: Excellent - who owns the portfolio? Who is the audience?

LynneW: For what purpose is the portfolio being created?

LudmilaS: To tell a story

LynneW: A personal story

AprilCT: personal growth

LudmilaS: was a bout to say that

MaureenB: can't leave out assessment

DanaSR: The student owns the portfolio. It could be for themselves to see growth.

DanaSR: It could also be used for goal setting on a specific writing skill.

MaureenB: and showing how they have grown as writers

LynneW: What about if we were thinking in terms of your own eportfolio for professional growth?

MaureenB: same reasons

LynneW: What would authentic writing skills look like then?

LudmilaS: applying for a job too

LynneW: So let's shift to emphasis

DanaSR: Adding lesson plans to the portfolio

AprilCT: it would be focused to individual interests and goals.

LynneW: Is it authentic or pragmatic to focus our writing less on authentic, personal, deep learning to professional accomplishments

MaureenB: and for those of us who have been around it would show the pendulum of ideas coming and going

LynneW: Love that idea Maureen

LynneW: If we look at the portfolio in its entirety as 100%, what balance should there be between writing, images, products of creativity, etc.

DanaSR: Well, I think in today's world of technology, students need to know how to incorporate images, etc, but I think in a writing portfolio, that should be the base.

LynneW: What about writing with the intent to speak that information as audio?

AprilCT: depend on the influence of the teacher's subject

LudmilaS: 25%X 25X50 (writing)

MaureenB: but authentic writing might be a podcast or video that was storyboarded and scripted

LudmilaS: still it requires writing

LynneW: I have listened to audio explanations of student artwork, poetry within their eportfolios.

AprilCT: eportfolio should be about all types of communication

LynneW: It makes the hair on the back of my neck stand out.

LynneW: Very powerful to hear students speak about the meaning of their art work or creativity in their own words and voice.

LynneW: So we have an opportunity to support written communication to stand as text, to be used for audio expression, and perhaps to be acted out in a video.

DanaSR: Students are way more creative than I am...they impress me!

MaureenB: Students have to write in all subject areas today. They must be able to communicate and explain they're reasoning and solutions.

LynneW: And hearing students address how they have overcome obstacles is also a powerful experience for an audience.

LynneW: So, for your grade levels -- what type of materials would you typically assign to be included in a student eportfolio?

MaureenB: Students need to write in all subject areas in today's classroom. They need to explain their ideas and solutions to problems

LudmilaS: In my methods class -- I create a template based on the major projects of the course

LudmilaS: each page of the portfolio has 3 parts: Introduction;

LudmilaS: description and reflection

LynneW: How many of you have actually worked with students to develop eportfolios?

DanaSR: My students are taking digital pictures of vocabulary words and have to write a paragraph about it that they keep saved on the computer and assess their growth each week. They also have to reflect them.

LynneW: Dana are these 4/5 graders?

DanaSR: Other than what I said above, I have not.

DanaSR: Yes.

LynneW: How do your students respond to this activity?

LudmilaS: students are expected to provide work samples and write for each part and of course creative design I have been using

AprilCT: thinking maps as graphic organizers of content

LudmilaS: e-folios for 6-7 years

DanaSR: It took some serious modeling and practicing at first, but they are getting it now.

LynneW: So, from your experiences what do you value about the eportfolio process? Does it give an authentic venue for writing authentically?

MaureenB: I have not done a formal eportfolios but my students' work is posted on my web page and they have to include a reflection piece on their work

LudmilaS: Did we agree on the term? What do YOU mean by the term, Lynn?

LynneW: Authentic?

LudmilaS: yes authentic writing?

LudmilaS: within e-folios

LynneW: I believe that reflection and the vocabulary to express deep understanding

LynneW: is extremely important in this process.

LynneW: That means we need to be able to have very real, personal conversations with our students.

DanaSR: I agree. I think the reflection part is huge.

LynneW: Asking them to think about consequences, others feelings, identifying their own feelings

LynneW: Building the vocabulary and associating what that vocabulary means with

experiences, context

LynneW: extremely important

MaureenB: and it is about them trying out new ideas presented in lessons and seeing how the ideas improved their writing

LynneW: It means weaving a rich tapestry that goes beyond simply describing the physical attributes, etc.

LynneW: Yes Maureen

LudmilaS: I agree, I think in my courses by the end of the semester the students really reach the meta-cognitive level and express their deep understanding of the pedagogical process illustrating it with the products

LynneW: Excellent

LudmilaS: of their work created during the semester

LynneW: In your experience, how do your students typically think of themselves as writers?

DanaSR: And when they go back to see some of the first products they created and compare them to more recent work, they're impressed.

LynneW nods and agrees with Dana

MaureenB: We do that the last week of school.

LudmilaS: Re: Lynn's question. It depends in my case

MaureenB: looking back at their writers notebook and published pieces

AprilCT: how do you use authentic writing to teach the students about writing with objectivity and criticism

DanaSR: Some of my students think they are great writers, when they are okay...just okay.

LynneW: April's question is a great one

DanaSR: But, when I point out what they are doing well and then we point out what they can work on, they improve on it!

LynneW: and Dana's observation is also important

LynneW: Critical thinking skills are important and a language unto itself

LudmilaS: I would say the graduate students think and express themselves more skillfully than the undergraduates

DanaSR: And probably much better than my fourth and fifth graders.

LynneW smiles

LudmilaS: He-he

LynneW: So, what advice would you give to teachers about authentic writing skills in eportfolios?

LynneW: We've heard use a template

LynneW: Support good writing

LynneW: Critical review

DanaSR: Provide rubrics maybe?

LynneW: Yes

LudmilaS: Essay Writing exercises online

LynneW: does collaborative writing experiences have a place here?

LudmilaS: journal writing, learning logs

MaureenB: I would think so

DanaSR: yes.

LudmilaS: wiki and the feedback

MaureenB: my class collaborated on the podcast they produced

LynneW: How did that go Maureen?

LynneW: What was their podcast topic?

MaureenB: best writing that some of them did

MaureenB: video games good or bad

MaureenB: their choice

LudmilaS: Interesting!

MaureenB: taught persuasive essay

LynneW: So, they had to agree on criteria for making their recommendations/decisions

MaureenB: used those lessons in their podcast

DanaSR: That sounds cool.

LudmilaS: Smart!

MaureenB: that got dicey at times but I have my referee license

LynneW: And identifying criteria supports the critical thinking process and gives shape to their writing

LynneW: I would love to have seen that Maureen

LynneW: How does the eportfolio add value to any of these activities?

MaureenB: go on ITunes you can download it search Beyrer

LynneW: We could still do all of these things without the context of an eportfolio?

LynneW: REFLECTION

LudmilaS: Students take pride for their accomplishments

LynneW: So, we end where we began.

LudmilaS: and the feeling of ownership

DanaSR: and to see the growth.

LynneW: Are there any closing questions, recommendations, comments for our discussion today?

BJB2: topic for April?

BJB2: Thanks, Lynne!

DanaSR: It was interesting...time went by fast!

LudmilaS: Thanks --

LynneW: That is what I was hoping for -- a suggestion for next month's topic.

AprilCT: thanks

LynneW: WAIT

LudmilaS: inspired thinking!

LynneW: Inspired thinking sounds good.

LynneW: Anything else?

LynneW: How about "Inspired Thinking and The Creative Voice" in eportfolios?

DanaSR: Sounds good.

LynneW: Is that something you would come back for?

AprilCT: yes

DanaSR: Yes

MaureenB: yes

LudmilaS: If we design recommendations for e-folio authentic writing and dicuss them in April

LynneW: Wonderful. Have a great spring break.

MaureenB: night all

DanaSR: Thanks..you too!

LudmilaS: Good night

LynneW: Thank you all.

BJB2: Lynne, you might want to send out several reminders about the April session...

BJB2: since it's going to be early [Ed. Note: April 10]

LynneW: OK, will do.