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

LynneW joined the room.

LynneW: Hello!

BJB2 waves hi to Lynne

KimberlyR: hi Lynne

LynneW: We are well beyond the time for this session to begin.

LynneW: BJ, is there another person coming this way?

BJB2 nods. I'll announce. The other person had to leave

LynneW: Bummer

LynneW: Kimberly, did you get the reminder to detach your chat module?

LynneW: And/or to increase the font size for easier reading?

KimberlyR: yep - I'm good to go

LynneW: Welcome to the E-Portfolio Discussion special interest group September session.

BJB2: This is also Kim's first calendar event, Lynne

LynneW: Yippee!

BJB2: want to do intros?

LynneW: Kim, where are you from and do you teach?

KimberlyR: sure - I'm a doctoral student at UW-Madison studying teacher ed.

LynneW: Welcome.

LynneW: How did you find this session?

KimberlyR: I've got about 20 years in the classroom, as a mentor, and adjunct faculty

LynneW: What grade level/content area are you seeking licensure for?

KimberlyR: Part of my work as a TA is working with the e-portfolio here, so was interested in the discussions that take place

LynneW: Wonderful.

KimberlyR: I'm working on a Ph.D. in teacher ed. - I'm currently licensed for elementary

LynneW: We can go in any direction for this discussion.

LynneW: What are you most interested in at this moment in time?

KimberlyR: one of the things we often struggle with is how to help students really view the e-portfolio as documentation of their growth - as a formative tool, rather than a showcase or a hoop to jump through

LynneW: Yes! I approach this topic as "Who Owns It?"

BJB2 . o O (some teachers are the same way, Kimberly!)

LynneW: Before we begin, let me introduce myself.

KimberlyR: we also need to work more with the supervisors that oversee the portfolio work so they also don't take a more summative approach.

LynneW: I have been a professor of educational technology.

LynneW: I am the "owner/facilitator" for this special interest group.

LynneW: I come to you from Vancouver, WA

LynneW: BJ, have you introduced yourself to Kimberly?

KimberlyR: beautiful area! My sister lives in Portland

LynneW: I'm glad to hear we share more than one connection.

BJB2: I'm in Pennsylvania and am a retired communications/arts teacher

KimberlyR: hi BJ

LynneW: BJ is being modest. She is the rock for Tapped In.

LynneW smiles

BJB2 blushes. Thanks, Lynne

LynneW: So, let's move into our discussion.

LynneW: I like to approach this topic from the standpoint of ownership and desired outcomes.

LynneW: Does that make sense to you Kimberly?

KimberlyR: sounds good

LynneW: Students must feel ownership for their portfolio for it to function as you wish.

LynneW: The way it is assigned, referred to, assessed, and the language that is used set important tones that linger.

KimberlyR: I think that is sometimes a struggle for students to "own" it.

LynneW: How much is reflection a part of their portfolio process?

KimberlyR: The state requires a portfolio documenting growth towards standards, so perhaps many feel the state "owns" it.

KimberlyR: We work very hard to make reflection the driving force behind the portfolio.

KimberlyR: Sometimes it clicks with students, but many still see it as a hoop.

LynneW: So, how could this requirement be framed so that students would better identify with the portfolio as "personal"?

KimberlyR: I think part of the struggle is being in a large university. That means that many different people work with students on portfolios and not everyone takes the same approach.

LynneW: This scenario isn't surprising.

LynneW: Let's break it down a bit further.

KimberlyR: Supervisors who work with students are required to "check off" that students have met specific standards in specific semesters, which leads the supervisors to often not work in a formative, student-driven way

LynneW: What does this process communicate to students?

LynneW: That this is a check-off hoop to jump?

LynneW: Students are reflecting back exactly what is presented to them.

KimberlyR: That's the perception of many

LynneW: Who determines what artifacts are worthy of inclusion in the portfolios?

KimberlyR: it requires good professional development for the supervisors to help them understand the role of the portfolio in a formative, reflective approach I think

LynneW: Yes, I agree.

KimberlyR: The students - but many of the supervisors demand very particular elements in the reflection prior to "approving" the standards and this takes ownership away from the student I think

LynneW: Artifacts included in the portfolios and student choice are also hard drivers in how students relate to the portfolio.

LynneW: Breakthrough learning for one student doesn't necessarily mean it happened in any given assignment.

LynneW: Are the artifacts to be included prescribed?

KimberlyR: sometimes.

LynneW: Can you see where I'm going with my questions and comments?

KimberlyR: the process is more prescribed in the beginning, then the student takes on more and more ownership as the semesters progress

KimberlyR: Yea. But I think the struggle is getting all of the many people who work with the students on the portfolio to get it, too I think.

LynneW: Do you use multi-media or audio files of students relating the meaning they associate with a particular artifact?

KimberlyR: we do.

LynneW: Great

KimberlyR: we have a number of samples of this that I'm hoping to pull together as models for both supervisors and students

LynneW: Then, it sounds like the focus is really on professional development and getting everyone on the same page.

LynneW: Would it be practical to assign an eportfolio advisor for each student?

KimberlyR: I think that if they can see the power of the portfolio then the students will really get excited about "owning" their own work

LynneW: That way you have consistency and investment in a co-creative relationship around the portfolio and the student's development.

KimberlyR: It would be a challenge with the numbers we have in our programs, but I do think having an "advisor" who can support that reflective approach would be helpful.

LynneW: You can also have portfolio showcases. Students can be inspired by each other, appreciative of what these portfolios can be, and perhaps a little competition would help as well.

KimberlyR: So many of the students see the supervisors as evaluators (and perhaps vice versa) when it comes to the portfolio, so the tendency is to want to shine and be perfect, choosing what will impress the supervisor

LynneW: Ah yes.

LynneW: I know that well.

LynneW: We are back to communicating professional expectations for supervisors.

KimberlyR: I'm sure that we're having many of the same challenges that others do

LynneW: Have your supervisors created their own portfolios?

KimberlyR: we have some model portfolios created by some outstanding supervisors

LynneW: There are many advantages to having every supervisor create their own portfolios.

KimberlyR: those portfolios focus on how these supervisors guided students through the reflective process and are pretty incredible.

LynneW: For one, they will respect the amount of work invested to get it done.

KimberlyR: It does seem that if you are going to assist others, you should have experienced the process yourself! :)

LynneW: There may be less of a tendency to dismiss student work with a check off.

LynneW: They will also have a shared experience to relate to each other.

LynneW: Maybe it is working with images.

LynneW: Maybe it is finding the correct "voice" for portfolio writing.

LynneW: Supervisors could be asked to create a professional portfolio.

LynneW: As a requirement indicating an increasing responsibility as an education professional.

KimberlyR: I like this idea - in teaching them how to create their own portfolio, prof. dev. about using a formative, reflective approach can be embedded

LynneW: This works powerfully if the institution backs it up with teaching assignments, review processes, etc.

LynneW: This creates an authentic reason for creating the portfolio.

LynneW: Authenticity builds ownership.

KimberlyR: and that's what it's all about - making the portfolio authentic

LynneW: YES!

LynneW: Then, you can talk to supervisors as a whole about assessment, language, and honoring the individual in their process.

KimberlyR: which will be more meaningful to them if they can relate it to their own experiences in building a portfolio

LynneW: Bingo

KimberlyR: ooh - exciting!

KimberlyR: Now to manage the politics of the university to make this happen

LynneW: Without context it is simply verbal "noise".

KimberlyR: But I'm always up for a challenge!

LynneW: Yep!

LynneW: What mechanisms are in place already for supervisor professional

development?

KimberlyR: I'm not sure yet - but clearly something I need to understand more about

LynneW: How and when are supervisors reviewed?

KimberlyR: Are you aware of a program that is doing the kind of thing we are talking about?

LynneW: An update to their portfolio should be a part of the review process.

LynneW: In an ideal world anyway.

KimberlyR: love it!

LynneW: This review could be peer review -- not necessarily at the Dean level.

LynneW: Peer review becomes self reinforcing.

LynneW: You could also send out brief email messages with a link to a new resource.

KimberlyR: It would be interesting to have supervisors share their portfolios with each other (just as students do) to support really effective work.

LynneW: Or encourage them to participate in the international eportfolio list serv group.

KimberlyR: how do we access that?

LynneW: Yes. This builds community and normative practice across the spectrum of supervisors.

LynneW: Above this chat module, under featured items is a link.

KimberlyR: ok - thanks I'll check into it.

LynneW: Directly beneath the bold "Discussions"

LynneW: Anything else you want to address? More on this topic or others associated with eportfolios?

KimberlyR: no - this has been really helpful in *sparking* my thinking.

KimberlyR: I do think I need to go make dinner now or there will be a revolt here

LynneW: Please come back next month.

KimberlyR: I appreciate the conversation

LynneW: It was nice to meet you.

BJB2: the next eportfolios discussion will be Oct 16

KimberlyR: ok I look forward to it!

LynneW: BJ - let's go back to the 4:00pm PT time frame.

BJB2: ok

LynneW: Kimberly was fun to chat with.

BJB2: nice to see an enthusiastic participant!

LynneW: I was feeling the same way.