

Memo:

ePortfolios in the School of Education v2.1

9 May 2011
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Chair, SOE Portfolio Committee

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Overview

Starting in Spring 2011, most students in the School of Education will create **ePortfolios** using the D2L ePortfolio tool. This is a significant change from the previous approach, in which students created **webpage portfolios** using Adobe Dreamweaver (or a similar web-editing program).

Students who take **EDUC 200 in Spring 2011 or later** will complete ePortfolios. Students who took EDUC 200 before Spring 2011 should complete the webpage portfolios they already started.

The ePortfolio tool is more user-friendly than Dreamweaver. Since we need to spend less time on teaching the technology, we can spend more time on our students' professional development. Thus, in addition to changes in the technology, the new portfolio process has **different expectations and outcomes**.

If completing a teaching degree is a Christmas tree, the portfolio is the trunk. It's the least glamorous part of the process, so this memo isn't glamorous. However, like the trunk, the portfolio is central to the experience. Please take time to read this memo. Instructors, please support the portfolio process in your courses, via the Journal, Glossary, and checking artifacts.

Please direct any questions, suggestions, concerns, etc. about the SOE portfolio to Kym Buchanan.

Briefing: Mon 14 Mar 5:30 pm

Kym Buchanan will host a public briefing on the ePortfolio on Mon 14 Mar 5:30 pm, in CCC 101. The briefing will include how to use a webpage portfolio or ePortfolio in a job application or interview. The briefing will include time for questions.

This event is sponsored by StWEA, and the meeting will include StWEA elections.

Old Process

Students who took EDUC 200 before Spring 2011 created webpage portfolios using Adobe Dreamweaver (or a similar web-editing program). A webpage portfolio was based on the specialized webpage templates available on the SOE website. These templates included Performance Tasks charts and a cover page for an artifact. Each artifact had a separate cover page. The cover page included a synopsis and a reflection. The template for the cover page included prompts for the synopsis and reflection.

A webpage portfolio included separate, specialized pages, including: Introduction, Teaching Philosophy, My Influence, Subject Knowledge, Instructional Strategies, Assessment, Adaptive Instruction, and Credentials. Different courses directed students to complete some of these pages.

A webpage portfolio was a series of webpages. This gave students considerable freedom in aesthetic and format choices. Instructors minimized the value of customizing aesthetics and format, but some students still invested considerable time (and often frustration) on these choices.

The quality of reflection on the cover pages was inconsistent. It was also atomistic. The process and the technology didn't make it easy to connect separate courses and artifacts into a continuous process of goal-driven reflection and self-assessment.

A webpage portfolio was public: anyone could view the portfolio and Google could find it. Instructors minimized the likelihood of a potential employer viewing a webpage portfolio. Rather, instructors outlined how students could use parts of their portfolios in a job application or interview, including their Teaching Philosophy and My Influence essays and selected artifacts (especially lesson plans).

A student's webpage portfolio existed in one place: as a series of webpages in the "soeportfolio" folder in the student's "inetpub" folder of their MyFiles space. Upon graduation, a student could take a complete copy of their portfolio with them by copying the "soeportfolio" folder (e.g., to a USB drive).

New Process

Students who take EDUC 200 in Spring 2011 or later will complete ePortfolios using the D2L tool. The ePortfolio tool is designed for the generic tasks of uploading, organizing, and sharing artifacts. The ePortfolio tool doesn't include separate, specialized pages like Introduction, Teaching Philosophy, etc. The ePortfolio tool is distinct from a D2L course. A student may have access to many D2L courses, but the student has only one ePortfolio.

The ePortfolio tool can be used to create presentations. These presentations are comparable to PowerPoint slideshows. Students will create **Performance Tasks presentations**. A presentation can be made available on the web to an external audience (i.e., someone not logged into D2L). However, this kind of presentation has a specific address and Google can't find it. Thus, an ePortfolio is not public.

When editing a presentation, a student has limited aesthetic and format choices. Instructors will continue to minimize the value of customizing aesthetics and format.

The D2L ePortfolio tool includes a reflection feature. We're not using it. Instead, the process of synopsis and reflection takes place in a single Word document, called the **Preservice Journal**. Each time a student completes an artifact, the

student should write an entry in their Journal. A student is taught how to save their Journals as a PDF and add the PDF to a page in their Performance Tasks presentation.

A student's portfolio now exists in two places. (1) A student is taught to keep all artifacts and other work for a specific course in clearly-named folder in the "SOE Portfolio" folder in their "private" folder of their MyFiles space. (2) A student is taught to create and maintain a Performance Tasks presentation for each major and minor. Students are taught that their portfolio exists both (1) "behind the curtain" and (2) "in front of the curtain". Upon graduation, a student can take a complete copy of their portfolio with them by copying the "SOE Portfolio" folder (e.g., to a USB drive).

When adding an artifact to an ePortfolio, a student has the choice to apply one or more descriptive **tags**. Tags are words the student associates with the artifact to make it easier to find again. Instructors and students who have used Facebook or other photo sharing websites will immediately recognize the function and value of tags. There are official rules for tagging artifacts. The rules also apply to naming course folders in the "soeportfolio" folder. For example, the folder for EDUC 381 Educational Psychology should be named "educ381". When adding an artifact from this course to their ePortfolio, a student should tag it with "educ381". The official rules are here:

<http://education.uwsp.edu/central/portfolio/tags.php>

The Preservice Journal is a new part of the portfolio process. The **Glossary** is also new. Each student is taught to start and maintain a Glossary. Students choose what words and phrases to add to their Glossary. Instructors can also assign entries in the Glossary.

In EDUC 200, students are taught that their portfolio is not a box.

Not a Box

Your ePortfolio isn't just a "box of assignments" or a single checklist to complete. The different artifacts in your **Performance Tasks Presentation** should demonstrate your different strengths and perspectives as a teacher. The chronological series of entries in your **Preservice Journal** should demonstrate your ability to set goals, identify strategies and resources, and self-assess.

In your Journal, you should describe what you learned while creating an artifact. You should try to use each artifact assignment as an opportunity to work on your goals. You may include of part an artifact when you write about it in Journal. For example, if the artifact assignment required you to assess your own performance, you could copy-paste that self-assessment into your Journal, and relate it to your goals.

Your ePortfolio and your Preservice Journal are private: you only have to share with your instructors. When you start student teaching, you will share your Journal with your cooperating teacher and student teaching supervisor. However, consider sharing with your peers, too. In your EDUC 200 Journal Group, you experience the potential value of collaborating with your peers on your goals and professional development.

Education is filled with special language: jargon, acronyms, abbreviations, and slang. If you don't know the language, you're going to be an inferior teacher. Your **Glossary** is your cheat-sheet. You could discover special language anywhere: in your reading, in a class, while talking with a peer, etc. Whenever you encounter a word or phrase you don't know, add it to your Glossary. Learn what it means now, before you look ignorant or sound unprepared in a job interview.

In EDUC 200, students are also taught the basic philosophy of the Journal:

The main **purpose** of your Preservice Journal is personal planning for your success. Your pre-professional preparation should be more than a series of courses. You should consider the **knowledge, skills, and dispositions** of a successful professional educator in your field. You should consider your strengths and weaknesses. You should set **goals** to develop your strengths and manage your weaknesses. You should identify **resources** to learn about your field and to meet your goals. Possible resources include courses, instructors, student organizations, jobs, volunteering, and more. Other people will read your Journal, including your student teaching supervisor. But the main audience is you. Continually ask yourself: **What do I need to do to succeed?**

Initial Journal Entries

In EDUC 200, a student adds three entries to their Preservice Journal, below. These entries are designed to set the tone for Journal. A student's subsequent entries should focus on successive reflections on their personal journey of professional development.

The Journal process is designed to mimic the Professional Development Plan (PDP) process. As inservice teachers, our graduates will need to complete PDPs to maintain their licenses. The PDP process centers on setting goals, identifying strategies and resources, and self-assessment.

EDUC 200 Journal Entry 0

Today's Date

A SMART goal has these five essential qualities:

- **Specific:** the goal is focused, clear, and precise.
- **Measurable:** progress and success can be clearly observed.
- **Achievable:** the goal is reasonable and do-able. A modest achievable goal is better than an ambitious, unrealistic goal. Achievable goals build momentum. Unrealistic goals sap motivation.
- **Relevant:** the goal is meaningful to you and any appropriate audience. On an assignment, I'm part of your audience, so I expect goals that relate to what we're studying.
- **Timely:** the goal fits with your current abilities, interests, needs, and opportunities.

EDUC 200 Journal Entry 1

Please complete these activities before writing this Journal Entry:

- Complete the StrengthsFinder Self-Assessment
- Attend Journal Group Meeting 1

Then, respond to these prompts:

- **Why do you want to be an educator?** You could include how you feel about children, what content area(s) you're passionate about, how you like to spend your day, what kinds of tasks you enjoy, how much independence you prefer, the possible relationships between schools and communities, and/or other things.
- **Describe your teaching persona, as it relates to success in your field.** You could include your strengths and challenges as a professional, your enjoyment of certain roles or kinds of tasks, how you handle independence, how you interact with other people, how organized you are, how spontaneous or flexible you are, and/or other things. You must explicitly refer to at least 1 Strength from the StrengthsFinder self-assessment.

You should respond to each prompt in one paragraph (100-200 words). This whole Entry should be 200-400 words total.

EDUC 200 Journal Entry 2

Please complete these activities before writing this Journal Entry:

- Complete the WTS Self-Assessment
- Attend Journal Group Meeting 2

Then, respond to this prompt:

- **Describe 3 SMART goals for the next 365 days of your career, including tentative strategies for meeting each goal.** Consider the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required to succeed in your field. Consider your current weaknesses relative to those requirements. One weakness may be your partial ignorance of the requirements for success. When describing tentative strategies for a goal, consider the courses you'll take in the next 365 days. Also consider other resources that could help meet the goal, including non-academic strategies like reading independently, volunteering, etc.

Describe each goal and its strategies in one paragraph (100-200 words). This whole Entry should be 300-600 words total.

Initial Glossary Terms

In EDUC 200, a student adds 5 terms to their Glossary, below.

Artifact: a piece of evidence of my professional abilities as an educator. This could be almost anything, like a lesson plan, an essay, or a slideshow from a presentation. When I'm adding an artifact to my ePortfolio, I will first save or print it as a PDF. I will add the PDF to my ePortfolio, and I will keep the original file(s) in the correct folder in the "SOE Portfolio" folder in the "private" folder of MyFiles. Artifacts are sometimes called "work samples" or "performance tasks."

Performance Task: a specific artifact for a specific course. To get my teaching license, I must complete every Performance Task for my major. To get an endorsement on my license, I must complete every Performance Task for the minor. I should add each artifact to the correct page of the correct Performance Tasks Presentation in my ePortfolio, as soon as possible.

Portfolio: a collection of artifacts. Different portfolios can have different purposes, including earning a license, applying for a job, performance evaluation in a job, professional development, and personal growth. The purposes of my SOE Portfolio include earning a license, professional development, and personal growth. A potential employer probably won't ask for or look at my portfolio. But I can use part of my portfolio before and during an interview.

Preservice: the period of coursework, field experience, and other preparation before I'm a licensed, professional educator. Sometimes called "pre-service" or "pre-professional." The next period is called "inservice."

Talent: "Talents, as Gallup formally defines the word, are naturally recurring patterns of thought, feeling, or behavior that can be productively applied. Your talents are the ways in which you think, feel, and behave instinctively, unintentionally, and without even noticing it." (Liesveld & Miller, 2005, *Teach With Your Strengths*, p. 49)

Supporting the Portfolio in Any Course

Instructors should support the portfolio process in their courses, via the Preservice Journal, Glossary, and checking artifacts.

Instructors can assign writing entries in the Journal. Instructors can assess specific entries from the Journal, or require the whole Journal (in its present form) be submitted as an assignment. The Journal is a Word document in a student's MyFiles space, and it can be added/updated on the Journal page of an ePortfolio presentation. Students can print their Journal, send a link to their Performance Tasks presentation, submit the Word document in a D2L dropbox, email the Word document as an attachment, etc. Instructors should use the method they prefer.

Instructors can assign and assess entries in the Glossary in similar ways.

In EDUC 200, students are taught that they should add artifacts to their portfolios when they complete them. **The School of Education passionately asks all instructors to support this practice.** For example, I teach EDUC 381. The performance tasks for EDUC 381 are Teaching Philosophy and My Influence as a Teacher. As the instructor, I teach and

score these assignments. I also check that my students have added these artifacts to their portfolios, as a separate assignment. Without support and reinforcement from instructors, some students will procrastinate on adding artifacts. This creates significant anxiety and frustration for students near the end of student teaching (e.g., they can't find their old assignments).

An instructor should explicitly describe the Performance Task(s) for a course in the Syllabus. Here is what I include in my EDUC 381 Syllabus:

Performance Tasks

The performance tasks for this course are the My Influence and Teaching Philosophy essays. Part of your scores on these assignments will be correctly adding them to your portfolio.

As an instructor, here is one way to check that students have added an artifact. Direct your students to:

1. Write an entry in your Journal about the assignment, based on the prompt
2. Copy the entry
3. Create an email to your instructor
4. Paste the entry into the email
5. Create a PDF of the assignment
6. Add the PDF to your ePortfolio as an artifact (use correct tagging)
7. Add that artifact to your Performance Tasks presentation
8. While editing the presentation, choose Permissions > External Users
9. Check External Access. (If it's already checked, leave it checked.)
10. Click Save
11. Just below the External Access choice, find "URL:". Copy this URL. (**Don't** copy the URL in the address bar of your web browser. It won't work for anyone else but you.)
12. Log out of D2L
13. Paste the URL into your web browser, to be sure it works for an external user (i.e., for anyone, not just you when you're logged in)
14. Paste the URL into the email
15. Send the email

As an instructor, when you open the email:

1. Read the Journal entry
2. Click on the URL
3. Click on your course
4. Visually confirm that the artifact has been added
5. (optional) Click on the artifact to open it
6. Record the "add to portfolio" assignment in your gradebook

As an instructor, you could specify the Subject: for the email. (Microsoft Outlook allows you to create rules for incoming email, which could be very useful for this assignment.) You could require the whole Preservice Journal, not just the new entry. You could write your own prompt, or use this generic prompt:

Prompt: Reflecting on this Assignment

Skim your Preservice Journal so far. Pay special attention to any SMART goals that you're still working on. Reflect on how this assignment helped you work on those goals. **Describe what you experienced and learned in this assignment, as it relates to your goals.** Perhaps this assignment allowed you to make progress on one or more goals. Perhaps it allowed you to achieve one or more goals. Perhaps it has inspired you to set one or more new goals. Perhaps you've learned more about your strengths, and how you can better apply your strengths as a teacher. If this was a group assignment, remember that your instructor is most interested in your personal growth. This new Journal entry should be at least two paragraphs (200-400 words).

Additional Information

The EDUC 200 website is public. Please feel free to copy or adapt any of the content and assignments:

<http://education.uwsp.edu/200>

Step-by-step directions for basic ePortfolio actions are here:

<http://education.uwsp.edu/200/checklist.php#eportfolio>

Appendices

EDUC 200 Intended Learning Outcomes

If you bring sufficient ability and apply reasonable effort to this course, you will learn how to:

1. Demonstrate an initial understanding of the Wisconsin Teacher Standards, including how to select appropriate evidence of how you meet a standard.
2. Reflect on your strengths and weaknesses as an educator, using self-assessment tools, reading, meetings with colleagues, and writing.
3. Set SMART goals for your professional development and identify promising resources to meet these goals. (SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timely)
4. Use the basic features of the D2L ePortfolio tool, including uploading and tagging artifacts, and sharing your portfolio with others.

EDUC 200 Readings

Liesveld, R., & Miller, J.A., with Robison, J. (2005). *Teach With Your Strengths: How Great Teachers Inspire Their Students*. New York: Gallup Press.

Students must purchase a new copy (or Kindle version) of Liesveld and Miller, in order to access the StrengthsFinder self-assessment.

Bullock, A.A., & Hawk, P.P. (2001). Chapter 3: Reflection. *Developing a Teaching Portfolio: A Guide for Preservice and Practicing Teachers*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Students in EDUC 300 also read Bullock and Hawk, on e-reserve. If you'd like a copy of this chapter, please email Kym.

ePortfolio Tags

The official list of ePortfolio tags is here:

<http://education.uwsp.edu/central/portfolio/tags.php>

Legacy Issues with Webpage Portfolios

Students who took EDUC 200 before Spring 2011 should complete the webpage portfolios they already started. Until these students graduate, the School of Education will continue to support webpage portfolios.

In Fall 2011, students may get the option to convert their webpage portfolios to D2L ePortfolios. If so, students won't be required to convert their portfolios. The School of Education will discourage converting, especially late in the process.

Portfolio Studio will continue through at least Spring 2011, to support students with webpage portfolios.

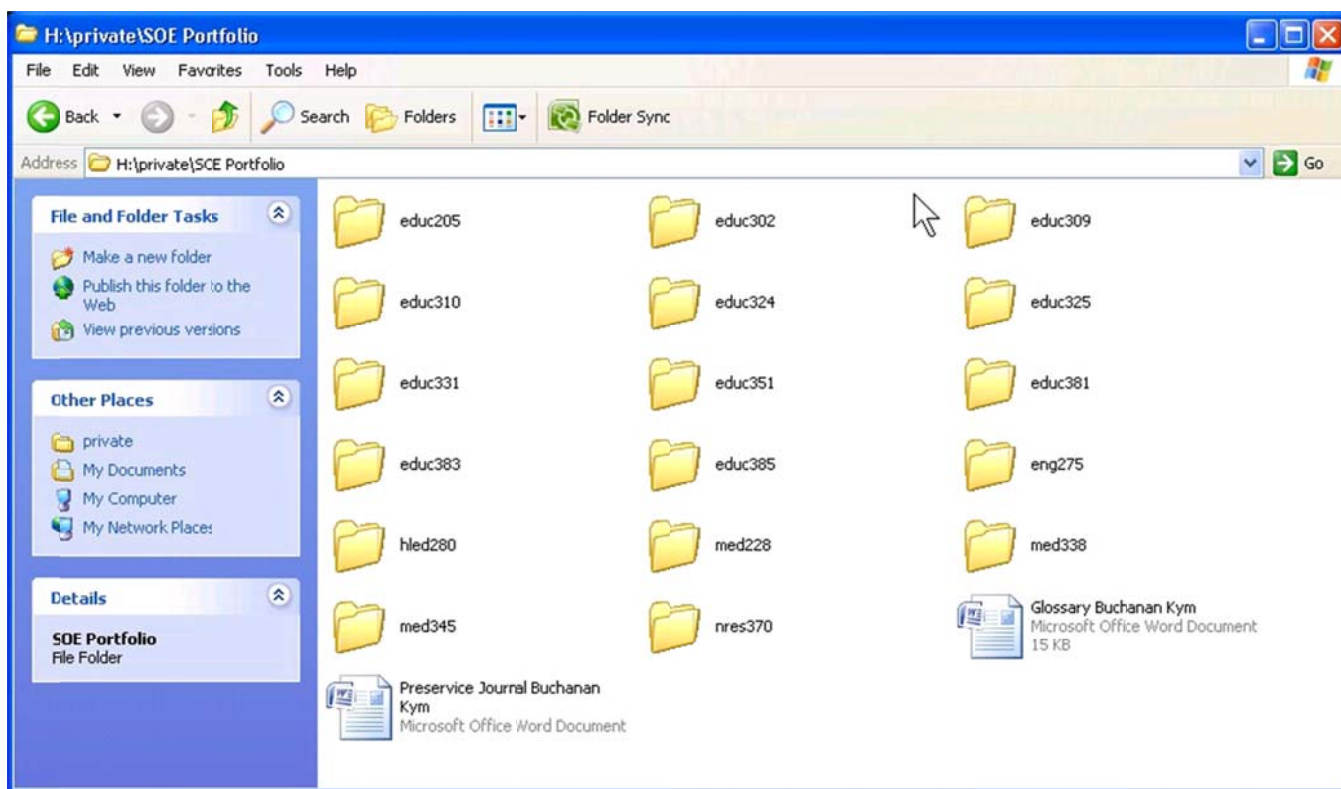
EDUC 300 will include students with webpage portfolios and D2L ePortfolios. The curriculum and assignments will align with the new process (e.g., Preservice Journal). The instructor will make accommodations for students with webpage portfolios (e.g., webpage cover pages).

EDUC 400 and EDUC 398/498 will include students with webpage portfolios and D2L ePortfolios. The instructor and supervisors will make accommodations for students with webpage portfolios. Student teachers and intern teachers will be held to different expectations based on their portfolio. For example, a webpage portfolio should have a cover pages for each artifact, but a D2L ePortfolio should have a Preservice Journal.

The School of Education website includes resources for webpage portfolios. These resources will eventually be removed, but no sooner than Spring 2013.

MyFiles Example

Here is an example of how your MyFiles space should look. This example is for Elementary Education. A different major would have some different folders.



Presentation Example

Here is an example of a Perf Tasks Presentation with all the courses for a major:

https://uwsp.courses.wisconsin.edu/d2l/eP/presentations/presentation_preview_popup.d2l?presId=20241

Here is an image of that Presentation:

Kym Buchanan : Perf
Tasks for Elementary
Education

Preservice Journal

Preservice Journal Buchanan Kym 8 Feb 11

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Preservice Journal

[Glossary](#)

[educ205](#)

[educ302](#)

[educ309](#)

[educ310](#)

[educ324](#)

[educ325](#)

[educ331](#)

[educ351](#)

[educ381](#)

[educ383](#)

[educ385](#)

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