week 2 reflections

by [Betsy Damon](http://www.plymouth.edu/webapp/courses2/user/view.php?id=20904&course=16493) - Wednesday, September 18, 2013, 2:20 PM

What is my x-factor in regards to my e-portfolio? For my own eportfolio, I am especially concerned with transportability and having it available to me whenever I need to access it wherever I need to access it. It should be secure unless I invite someone into my eportfolio world and even then I should be able to determine who can do what to my eportfolio and how that will function. Can they only view it, or view and add private comments (or should the comments be public?), or can they actually edit my items? Definitely speaks to my x-factor of security needs. Another x-factor of mine is my disdain for creating in a vacuum. I need my eportfolio to come to life - to connect with others - to help others learn or see different ideas whether they embrace them or just let them go. The idea that something I've created could inspire someone else is a great motivating factor for me - a purpose if you will.

 When reading about the epets, I was struck by the similarity of motivation that our elementary school students had when the school introduced Sumdog to the students. This website provided games to encourage math proficiency. Kids who hated math loved playing these games as they competed against friends and others in the online environment. They competed for points/coins to change their avatar and strove to reach the next level and become a better animal. The school made a large display that highlighted those students who reached the highest levels for the week and kids got very excited to see if they made the top ten each new week.

 I was also struck by the motivation adults find in playing social games on Facebook. These games can become a driving factor to people to get them to log in (thereby being exposed to the advertising that keeps the whole system running!) There are some concerns with any external motivators, especially with people who have addictions or are predisposed to such problems as the drive to win can take over and eclipse the process. I have witnessed many people getting very frustrated with Candy Crush Saga because they are stuck for weeks on one level, but they keep playing and being frustrated. Eventually they make it through that level and declare their victory only to find that ten or so levels later they are again stuck. Some people will buy their way out and I think that there will be some kids that would try to "buy" their way to having a healthy epet by doing more - not necessarily better - work or having friends help them. Could the desire to have a healthier or more advanced epet lead to cheating or put excessive pressure, either externally from peers or internally from self, on students much as some students are traumatized when they get a grade below the grade they expected of themselves?

I like how Knisley talks about the relationships that are created with the use of eportfolios and not just the interpersonal, human relationships, but the relationship between the learner and the material. The more intimately they understand and embrace their learning, the greater ownership and pride they will have in the output that becomes their eportfolio.

While reading Nelson's article, my thought regarding standards and the importance of students understanding is that I think the common core standards may be easier for students to understand and relate their work to. I found GLEs to be very difficult to fully understand and watched many teachers at the middle school level make extraordinary measures to help students interpret how what they were working on satisfied the standards. I think that while we are teaching them to understand what quality work that satisfies a standard looks like, we also need to spend a fair amount of time teaching and modeling what reflection looks like. Many kids think "I worked hard" qualifies as a reflection even in fifth grade and unless teachers take the time to really demonstrate what a quality reflection should look like in several forms so that students can take their reflection beyond the basic. In relation to the quality of the reflections is the audiences that will view the eportfolio. Pride in work and reflection should increase as the value of the viewer's opinion to the student increases. That fact provides guidance to the teacher on ways to motivate students through providing multiple audiences for their eportfolios. If there is only one single audience for the work that is not a motivational audience for the student then the incentive to excel would be dampened and may result in sub-par work and/or lackluster reflections.

I think that the most important thing about eportfolios is the personal connection the user has and if used with students it is imperative that the teacher find an x-factor that will motivate each student to  relate a connection that they then desire to share. Much like differentiation in instruction is time-consuming and requires extra effort to achieve individual successes, differentiation in application of eportfolios will allow for success that should guide a process that may help students for years to come as they continue to keep and use their eportfolio as a valuable part of their experiences in schooling and later in employment.

Re: week 2 reflections

by [Tod Guilford](http://www.plymouth.edu/webapp/courses2/user/view.php?id=21140&course=16493) - Wednesday, September 18, 2013, 6:37 PM

Motivation is key

I think the biggest x-factor is motivating students and teachers.  In a former life, I was a high school social studies teacher.  I was involved with the math department wanted to change the math program to be more self-paced and portfolio based program.  I became involved as a union representative after the department was having problems with student/ parents buying into the new system.  The students that had the problem with the system weren’t the kids that had difficulties with math.  The problematic students were the honors students.  They had figured out the system and didn’t like that it changed.

Under the old system, they could work the percentages and figure out when they need to do homework or how high they had to score on the next test or quiz.  With a portfolio system, they couldn’t just go through the motions.  They had to work through each step or show they could skip some steps by mastery.  The system also required the students to be self-driven and honor students didn’t like this freedom they wanted someone to tell them what to do and when to do it.  The kids with difficulties liked the self pacing because they could work at their own pace and not have to work at someone else’s pace.

The key to making e-portfolios work is getting not only teachers and students to buy into it but also the parents.  If the parents buy into it, and show them how it will help their kids and personalize their children’s learning experience. Plus show them how it will benefit their kids in school but after they leave primary to secondary and beyond.  Kids will buy into it quicker if their parents are on board.  I think it will affect the teacher’s buy in the system too.

**Re: week 2 reflections**

**by**[**Ethel Gaides**](http://www.plymouth.edu/webapp/courses2/user/view.php?id=11461&course=16493)**- Sunday, September 22, 2013, 8:09 PM**

**Hi Betsy,**

**The "personal connection" is key to "motivate each student" so they "desire to share".  Student-led conferences were mentioned by Doris. In one of our schools, we have had successful student-led conferences in grades K-8 each spring for several years. The students are in charge of "leading" their parents through their ePortfolio. The students' showcase their best work and reflections (through their ePortfolio). The student-led conferences are the motivation and the students love to share their work with their parents. At this conference, the teacher is the guide on the side.**

 Re: week 2 reflections

by [Heather Weiner](http://www.plymouth.edu/webapp/courses2/user/view.php?id=18794&course=16493) - Monday, September 23, 2013, 3:49 AM

Hi Betsy,

We have student-led conferences at my middle schooll also. The teams often set the kids up in the library with little cubicle areas on a table and actual artifacts and reflections in them. I think the goal for the district is e-portfolios but we are not there yet! But yes students do love showing off their work to parents!

Heather