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Using a VoiceThread Tutorial for the Preparation of the Electronic Portfolio

September 24, 2010

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Graduate students in the Educational Technology Masters program at the University of Hawaii Manoa are required to produce an electronic portfolio in order for the university to meet the requirements of the accrediting body, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Those requirements are based on standards set by the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT).

Students begin the e-portfolio in their first semester, a task that provides experience with setting up a web page and creating sections for their work. For some, this is their first experience with such a task. By the end of the first year, students must post a first-year portfolio composed of work and reflections from that year. In the graduation year, students submit a final portfolio reflecting their learning in the program.

In the past, guidance for this assignment has included a brief online, text-based description of the assignment, with a few sample portfolios. This has left the learners with many questions about how best to develop the electronic portfolio, questions which have remained somewhat open as the portfolio is outside of the realm of the coursework for any given course. The purpose of this instructional design project is to develop and evaluate a VoiceThread tutorial to assist graduate students in producing a required electronic portfolio in partial fulfillment of their Masters of Education in Educational Technology in the Department of Educational Technology at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Several ideas have emerged from the literature regarding the development of electronic portfolios. Since portfolios are tied to the AECT standards, learners should be informed of those standards from the start, and asked to consider them as they select content for their portfolios. The literature also suggests that an effective electronic portfolio should “connect the values of the institution with the personal development of the student” (Cambridge, 2008). This suggests

that learners should clearly tie their portfolio content to the mission and values of the College of Education.

The same article suggests that electronic portfolios are an effective way to keep track of the learner's path to graduation. If this is so, perhaps the electronic portfolio should be worked on each year a student is in the program rather than only the first and last years. This way, students will contribute to their portfolios every year and can use it as a way to document their learning over time and to make connections amongst their coursework and program experiences. Another idea is that feedback from instructors and peers adds value to the electronic portfolios (Chitpin & Simon, 2009). The use of a VoiceThread can contribute to this if learners and faculty use it as a collaborative learning space (Brock, 2009).

The audience will be comprised of approximately fifteen adult learners in the current first-year Online Master's in Educational Technology (OTEC) 2010 cohort who will need to complete their electronic portfolios at the end of the Spring 2011 semester. These learners will have completed their first iteration of the e-portfolio in the Fall 2010 semester and will have had intensive experiences with instructional design and technology tools by spring.

Instruction will take place through a module that explains how VoiceThread can be used to enhance to overall e-portfolio experience. Not only will the VoiceThread aim to provide rationale and directions; it will also provide examples of how collaborative learning can help learners gain understanding of the assignment through their interactions.

While the tutorial will be designed to comprise an hour of instruction, learners will have the opportunity to take more time if needed, enter comments and receive feedback on the VoiceThread, and will continue to have access to the module after the implementation stage.

Analysis of the pre and post survey data as well as comments posted on the VoiceThreads

will be used to inform as to the effectiveness of the content, design, and method of providing instruction. The analysis will identify additional revisions to improve the instructional design and effectiveness for future use of the tutorial by other first-year students. It is hoped that providing an interactive VoiceThread tutorial on the electronic portfolio will enrich both the learners' understanding of the assignment and the value of the process.

## References

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