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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank N. Gerry House and Dale Kalkofen for their leadership in school reform. In my search for a deeper understanding of the integration of technology across all curricula and how to transfer this to children, I want to thank Deborah Gunn for her endless creativity and insightful guidance.

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Jim Luckey who encouraged and believed in me from the first day I appeared in his office. Many thanks and appreciation to Robin Willner, Patti Scanlon, Sarah Weber, Kevin Ho, Lisa Shepherd, Jean Ward, Diane Raley, Bill Byles, Mazie Marlin, Betty Buchignani, Celia Moore, John Avis, and Jena Pennington and her students at Oak Forest School.

Last, but not least, I thank my husband David and son Steve for their unconditional love, support, and technical advice.

I am forever indebted to all of the above.

LINDA E. ASH

Software Acknowledgments

FOREWORD

An electronic student portfolio integrates authentic learning, assessment, and technology to provide a more accurate portrait of the student as a learner. It showcases the student's progress in meeting standards, attaining understanding of key concepts, and mastering the technological skills essential for success in both school and life.

In *Electronic Student Portfolios,* Linda Ash utilizes both written and visual steps to introduce the development of instructional or working portfolios and assessment portfolios used for evaluation. She describes the hardware and software options and the technical skills necessary for teachers and students to produce meaningful products and performances. In addition, she addresses practical issues regarding room arrangement, safety issues, scheduling, grouping, job assignments, and organization of projects and units. She also provides examples of students' work, rubrics for assessing the quality of the work, and a sample of an integrated unit.

More importantly, however, Linda shows how students can assume responsibility for collecting, selecting, and reflecting on their own work and communicating electronically with a wider audience to share their progress in meeting academic goals. Electronic portfolios provide a showcase for written work, pictures, audio and video segments to document a student's growth over time. As teachers begin to move away from traditional notebook or pizza box portfolios and experiment with CD-Roms, they will become more efficient in capturing students' authentic work from grades K-12 without cumbersome storage or organizational problems.

Educators everywhere will welcome this resource and recognize its potential to link technology to standards, instruction, and performance assessment. Linda Ash has created a valuable tool for teachers to help students communicate electronically the progress they are making in their educational journey.

KAY BURKE
June, 2000

INTRODUCTION

Today's technology and the demands of a standards-based curriculum have put a burden on many teachers. Pioneering new technologies and using multiple assessment strategies are difficult without a plan or prototype to follow. Guidance and direction reduce resistance and open the doors for change. Educators will find that they possess much of the knowledge and many of the skills needed for this type of project. Even the equipment needed to start is often already within a teacher's grasp but is going un- or under-used. This book will help educators make use of the human and material resources they have at hand to institute an electronic portfolio system in which student progress can be communicated through tangible examples.

Each of *Electronic Student Portfolios'* seven chapters contains a "Plugging in the Portfolio" section showing examples of successful electronic portfolio projects. These examples demonstrate how teachers at all levels of technical expertise can facilitate and guide students in the creation of electronic portfolios. Various formats illustrate how a traditional paper portfolio can be transformed with technology. A unit plan based on electronic portfolios is offered in an appendix as are a number of valuable Web sites that will help teachers "plug in."

Chapter 1 sets the stage for why there is an urgent need to implement electronic portfolios into the K–12 teaching and learning process. It discusses the relative benefits and purposes of different types of portfolios. The chapter also discusses ways for teachers to self-assess their levels of technological expertise. The five progressive levels defined here are touched upon in succeeding chapters as well as in the sample portfolios.

Chapter 2 explains the hardware and software needed to begin. (A glossary of technical terms at the back of the book will help navigate the chapter's terminology, as will the explanations throughout the chapter.) Project expansion is discussed and correlated to professional development as teachers move up through the levels of expertise. The "Working with Existing Equipment" section provides both strategies for educators to start now and encouragement to those who feel they must wait because they do not have the latest and greatest equipment.

Chapters 3 and 4 provide options for educators who have the basics under their belt and who need concrete implementation strategies for all grade levels. Different ways to organize student products makes use of the collection, selection, reflection, and projection processes. Guidelines for each process and different age groups are discussed.

Vision categories are introduced in chapter 5 to link essential skills to content-area standards. As students gain knowledge in specific content areas, they do not always use process skills effectively to demonstrate understanding. Vision categories help transfer appropriate skills across all curriculum areas.

All classroom activities need to be organized and managed if learning is to take place. Chapter 6 discusses effective project organization, room arrangement, safety issues, scheduling, grouping, and job assignments at grade-appropriate levels. Chapter 7 aligns curriculum, instruction, and assessment to measure student learning. Discussions include how electronic portfolios benefit all populations of students by providing information to guide them as they become more responsible for their learning and play an active role in communicating what they know to various audiences.

Ultimately, the purpose of this book is to inspire teachers, regardless of their level of technical expertise, to help students creatively design electronic portfolios that communicate the progress they are making in their educational journey. No doubt it is easier to collect papers in a pizza box, but think of the skills students miss. Administrators may say that they do not have time to implement an electronic portfolio or that they cannot afford the computers. But, can we afford *not* to do so?