



Dear Faculty,

Week 8 will keep the Technology Section, providing a full ePortfolio and artifacts in Week 9. During Week 9, and beyond, the technical details will be provided. By Week 14, the complete cycle of ePortfolios, assessment using ePortfolios, rubrics to support their design and development, etc., will have been presented. Please review these materials and consider how they might be used not only to help our students validate work, but how these might be used in your instruction to reinforce that the work our students do is of considerable consequence beyond grades—that the work they do applies to life-long work and outcomes. To reiterate---while at Amridge, one of our primary goals within the QEP is to enable our students to improve their writing skills, and their digital/information literacy abilities—those go hand-in-hand. **Regards and Thanks: The EXPLORE Lab/QEP Team.** (Contribution from K. Scott)

➔ TECHNOLOGY...WEEK 7: CREATING THE ePORTFOLIO & ARTIFACTS ◀

Distance education faculty have the additional task of incorporating the use of technology to reach students and facilitate learning. See the following links for assistance in the use of instructional technologies and tools.

In Blackboard, as you select the option to create an ePortfolio or Portfolio, the sample image below appears to begin the process (see Figure 1). Please note a couple of items on this page: 1) The template; 2) 'Available'. When students are considering what appearance they desire for those who will see/review their ePortfolio (or 'Folio'), the template is the layout of the web page. If you reviewed the Clemson University web site samples from Week 6, you will notice that the layout/design of the pages vary according to personal preference, choice of links and locations on the page, and so forth. The second item is whether students are ready to publish their work for access by the web community. These are two VERY important considerations. Why? Because an ePortfolio that is a mush of items with errors in spelling or sentence syntax might not be a worthy outcome to validate that our students have given sufficient thought and peer-review considerations to what the search engines might locate. Thus, faculty review or peer-review factors come into play in this process. Please allow me a moment of personal input: it is becoming evident that ePortfolios are trending as a global tool to validate skills, abilities, work, community service, and is virtually unlimited in its scope and capacity to inform viewers of these Folios. Therefore, my colleagues, it behooves us to ensure that we support the outcomes of the QEP in terms of writing skills and digital/information literacy abilities so that what students produce for consideration as an artifact is indicative of their skills and abilities—as a minimum prior to posting to the ePortfolio. Figure 1 begins the process of creating the ePortfolio, where artifacts, information, and a major portion of the digital footprint will reside.

Once you have created a 'central repository'—the Folio—you are ready to begin posting artifacts, thus please review the sections on artifacts. Artifacts can take the form of simple to complex; from a memo to a video; from a neighborhood cleanup to a city-wide beautification project. However, please-please-please remember that what we are after in ePortfolios is the 'selling' of a person's skills, abilities, community service, and the 'holisticiveness' (that word gave Webster's a fit!) of who the individual is—by the characteristics that are in the artifacts and the ePortfolio page. For example, as employers—from Christian to secular—begin to use e-tools to search for individual traits, the better the ePortfolio design and clarity of artifacts, the better the fit for those search results. And...if you begin to research how these search tools are being used, you can find out about a person's digital footprint with relative ease if you understand how the process works. This includes the totality of the individuals online activities, ergo---the ePortfolio. Not just any ePortfolio, but one that is designed properly, vetted by faculty, and 'artifact'd' by conscientious design. Figure 2 indicates where those all-important artifacts accumulate.

Amridge University **Courses** LIVE! Weekly Devotional Faculty Student Resources My Career Amridge Development

Portfolios Homepage

Create Portfolio

* Indicates a required field. Cancel Submit

GENERAL INFORMATION

* Title

Template Portfolio Template I Remove Portfolio Template
Templates are pre-created content blocks that follow a certain order.

Description
For the toolbar, press ALT+F10 (PC) or ALT+FN+F10 (Mac).

Character count 28

Available

Comments are Private
If checked, all comments will be hidden from users who can view the Portfolio.

*Click **Submit** to proceed. Click **Cancel** to go back.* Cancel Submit

FIGURE 1.

Amridge University Courses LIVE! Weekly Devotional Faculty Student Resources My Career Amridge Development

Portfolios Homepage

Personal Artifacts Add Personal Artifact

Add Personal Artifact

Personal Artifacts are pieces of content (text, images, documents, and multimedia) that can be attached to your Portfolio. The benefit of creating a personal artifact is that you can create it once, and reuse it across multiple portfolios.

* Indicates a required field. Cancel Submit

ARTIFACT INFORMATION

Enter basic information about the Personal Artifact.

* Title

Description

Character count: 0

The description is not included when the artifact is added to a portfolio. It is an aid to help you find your artifacts in the future.

Specify the content of this Personal Artifact.

Content

Path: p Words: 0

Attach File

Click *Submit* to proceed. Click *Cancel* to go back. Cancel Submit

FIGURE 2.

BEYOND BLACKBOARD: THE IMPORTANCE & LONGEVITY OF THE EPORTFOLIO

Before moving into the actual creation of the ePortfolio in Blackboard and posting the Folio for access, let's consider a few things in terms of ePortfolios some 1 year out from graduation, or 5 years out. Once students at Amridge University have graduated or they continue their degree pursuits, it is important that their artifacts are maintained in 'good working order.' As in the case of the Oracle example, the student was to validate his skills by accessing and publishing the artifact that only Oracle could produce. If an employer or a mission group needed to see samples of work or mission trip experiences, for instance, where are those artifacts and how readily are they available for review? And, how long are those artifacts maintained? This then, brings us to the discussion regarding longevity of one's Folio. Therefore, a brief discussion is in order, and will be further discussed in the next several weeks—alongside using Blackboard.

1. Domain Registration: Domains are those things we review in the URL's of our web pages. They are the **legal** nomenclature of organizations, colleges, and individuals. You must register them, and in most cases, you pay a small fee for individuals while organizations tend to pay more. These domains, then, are how the normal access method is accomplished. Take, for starters, the search method to find a web site by name: <http://amazon.com>. At some point, if students are going to keep an active ePortfolio after graduation, they will need to consider this activity to be able to do so. It's very easy to register a domain, but it is the first step in the process outside of Blackboard. Thus, this is an important consideration as we begin to build portfolios in Blackboard—looking down the road when our students will transition to a full-blown site;
2. Hosting Site Considerations: Most people don't normally purchase a server, or today own their own cloud servers/services (note the keyword own). Rather, they use the services of web orgs that have those cloud services already established. A good example would be Google Sites or BlueHost. You can use what might be free hosting services, but the disadvantage is that 'free does not come free.' Free means you might get space on their server at no cost, but the services are limited and they might advertise on your web site. Well, to learn the process of hosting site considerations, free is good; however, down the road, if Amridge students want to create a web site/digital footprint/folio, they may need to invest in a hosting site. Using Bluehost, you can purchase their services on a massive host of Linux servers to host your individual site or your corporate site. Cost rises correspondingly, of course, but for the individual, these cost considerations should be part of the overall process of the ePortfolio package;
3. Templates, HTML Variations, and Artifacts: Finally, it is important that students are aware that to host their artifacts and Folio content, they must do so within the confines of a structured web page. If you are 'un-fluent' in the use of coding in HTML, you might use a template; if you have little experience in how to upload files using tools between a local machine and the hosting site, you will need to learn this; and, if you want to customize your Web-Folio, it will take some learning as to how this is to be accomplished. In short, there are also considerations that need to be addressed external to graduation and respective Blackboard content.

To provide students with knowledge and information of why ePortfolios/artifacts are important, this process must begin with the Portfolio tools within Blackboard; however, we must also begin now to give them the heads-up on ePortfolio longevity. This means that they need to understand earlier than later, how items 1-3 above will become a consideration for them in the years after graduation should they want to continue using an ePortfolio. The bottom line is this: for the general use of ePortfolios, they need to be available to search engines in the global marketplace. To address this, and to improve 'hits on the first page' of the search, these tools noted on this page must be identified and discussed with students early—regardless of the field of study. The better our students are at getting their work e-recognized, the better the search outcomes will become.

WEEK 8

➔ INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES & WRITING TOOLS/ WRITING FOR PUBLICATION... ⬅ SECTIONS COMBINED FOR WEEK 8

As you consider strategies to prepare your courses in Blackboard or how you might improve those strategies, the following links and information will help you update your approaches to student engagement. How can you add an element(s) of interest to the course while maximizing learner performance? Visit the links below for great suggestions.

Scholarly writing is an important trait for all college students to master. Listed below are several links to assist students in their pursuit of correct use of grammar, punctuation, and scholarly publication.

Writing Across the Curriculum/Writing in the Disciplines Instructional Strategies
and
Writing for Publication:
ePortfolios & Artifacts

<http://wp.auburn.edu/writing/eportfolio-project/eportfolio-examples/>

Because considerable materials have been presented in Weeks 1 - 7 and allowing for ‘absorption time’, for the two sections noted here, only one resource is provided. This resource is the link above from Auburn University, in which there is a direct connection to WID, WTL, and WAC. An excellent resource for these efforts can be found at: <http://wac.colostate.edu/intro/index.cfm>. In terms of the many excellent Professional Development activities from Dr. Taylor, and the need for Amridge University students to learn the details of becoming better writers, but one of the SLOs that our students need is the guidance to use ePortfolios, not only in Blackboard, but for their careers or to validate their work. They have the option to use artifacts while at Amridge in the tools provided by Blackboard, and over time, they may transfer their work to an offsite web server for personal and professional use, should they decide to do so.

However, the crux of what occurs in the QEP is writing intensive and digital literacy. As part of this overarching process, if you review both the Auburn University site and the WAC, Colorado State site (one among many), you will see that these two learning outcome processes mesh into artifacts of various types across various degree plans, i.e., Writing Across the Curriculum, Writing in the Disciplines, and Writing to Learn, as well as the application of digital literacy skills. In other words, the outcomes that our students acquire are what become artifacts during their tenure in their respective Plans of Study.

For example, “To begin using ePortfolios for either a course or program, it is important to map the products that students create—i.e., ePortfolio artifacts—to specific objectives or standards. Course or program objectives describe what knowledge, skills, or attitudes that you want students to show they have mastered. By assigning projects that align directly with these objectives, students know what is expected and instructors know what to evaluate. When mapping artifacts to the objectives it is also important to think about the level of competency required. For example, asking a nursing student to write down the process for finding a vein and inserting a needle is a lower level of competence than asking that same student to demonstrate that he or she has actually done it (e.g., video clip, observation log written by supervising doctor or nurse in the field). Reflective statements allow students to describe how they feel when performing the skill. Standards created by outside agencies, such as teacher credential agencies and discipline-specific accreditation bodies, often predetermine what skills and knowledge students need to show. Instructors can still be creative with how students use an ePortfolio to demonstrate their competencies. Instructors can also

add components that the standards often do not require, such as reflective statements, leadership skills, and community-based activities.”¹ ... “Some programs invite panels of employers from their field to evaluate ePortfolios after students have graduated to solicit feedback about the methods and types of evidence used to demonstrate competencies. The evaluation of individual student assignments happens at the course level. However if assignments are archived in an ePortfolio, instructors can review artifacts themselves, the student's reflections about the value or meaning of each artifact, and different instructors' feedback about the student's work. In this way, the instructors and advisors can collectively track a student's growth and development, and provide formative guidance about next steps or areas to improve. Departments may also have both formative and summative reviews of a cohort or cluster of student portfolios. The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC, 2008) provides guidelines and a rubric for departments interested in using ePortfolios to assess program learning outcomes.”

Therefore, when you consider instructional strategies, writing skills, and digital literacy, consider not only the SLOs that our students are to achieve, but the curriculum mapping of those outcomes to what our students might prepare as artifacts for their ePortfolios. Stated differently, what might our students do to demonstrate that they have ‘mastered’ competencies? Artifacts, of all types, are those items that they can use to demonstrate or validate the writing skills, technical skills, and soft skills that they have learned in preparation to become viable employees, whether in technical areas or in ministry.

Please take a few minutes over the next few weeks to consider how ePortfolios might be used to help our students prepare for the many endeavors that they seek to accomplish over the life of their education and in their lives once they graduate or pursue advanced degrees.

See Figure 1 and Figure 2 to accompany this information.

¹ Mapping ePortfolio artifacts to objectives at different levels

(<http://teachingcommons.cdl.edu/eportfolio/resources/dop/documents/Mapping%20ePortfolio%20Artifacts.pdf>)

Figure 1.

wac.colostate.edu/intro/index.cfm

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supporting scholarly exchange about communication across the disciplines

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Home > Resources > An Introduction to Writing Across the Curriculum

An Introduction to Writing Across the Curriculum

This guide offers information about WAC - writing across the curriculum. If you're reading this for the first time, please view our [tips on using the guide](#). To learn more about WAC, choose any of the items below:

- [Why include writing in my courses?](#)
- [What kinds of writing can I include?](#)
- [What is writing to learn?](#)
- [What is writing in the disciplines?](#)
- [Do I have to be an expert in grammar?](#)
- [Do writing and peer review take up too much class time?](#)
- [How can I avoid getting lousy student writing?](#)
- [What makes a good writing assignment?](#)
- [How can I get the most out of peer-review?](#)
- [How can I handle student writing?](#)
- [Why consider collaborative writing assignments?](#)
- [What writing resources are available for my students?](#)
- [What teaching resources are available?](#)
- [Other Online Resources on the WAC Clearinghouse](#)





Introduction

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Figure 2.