Electronic Career Portfolio

The college fine arts department wants a video clip of a student’s performance in a musical. The English department wants an Electronic Portfolio of four writing samples, drafts included, as part of their admissions process. A summer employer asks to see a team project completed in the last year. With the creation of Electronic Career Portfolios, U-High students will be prepared to honor these requests. The portfolios will be stored on a server located at University High School and backed up nightly by ISU. Students may store written material, digital video and audio, web pages, PowerPoint presentations, and lab reports. If the material to be stored is not in digital format, scanned images of objects like artwork, musical scores, carpentry work, posters, bulletin boards, etc. can be included in the portfolio.

At present, contents of paper portfolios end up in scrapbooks and in wastebaskets. The digital portfolio will help students preserve selected work over the years. In addition, students will no longer need to rely on floppy diskettes for file storage. Students can work at home on files as easily as they work at school. The files may be much larger than the current limitations of a floppy diskette.

The Electronic Career Portfolio was a key foundation of a 9-week pilot career course offered during the 200-2001 school year to each member of the sophomore (2004) class. The pilot program was funded by a one time Education to Careers grant from Heartland Regional Partnership. Once learned by students and teacher mentors, it became a welcomed activity. The objective in the course was to have every student aware of how to store essential documents that would be maintained in the portfolio throughout their high school career. Students were required to complete a series of
template forms to get them started. Teacher mentors helped to guide the process on a weekly basis.

At the end of the quarter, students had learned their password to access their personal data store, as well as the basics of how to transfer, copy, and then store artwork, written pieces, and video clips. Their work was reviewed and checked by the teacher mentors and the Education to Careers/Electronic Career Portfolio Coordinator.

As an ongoing initiative of this program, this year (2001-2002 school year) Denise Ross Haynes has volunteered to follow-up with some of these students (current Juniors) to assist them in the continued development of their Electronic Career Portfolio.

All indications are at this point that the pilot program was successful; however, since this was a one-time grant we do not have the funds to adopt the pilot program. The Counseling Center does see value in the concept in the Electronic Career Portfolio and are working to encourage this present sophomores and freshmen class to begin taking advantage of the Electronic Career Portfolio and all it has to offer.

At this time counselors are meeting with small groups of freshmen. We are going over two important results of the Explore test which was given to them in early May. The first area is the results of the academic performance (English, Math, Reading and Science Reasoning). The second area is the beginning of career awareness that ties in with the National and State initiative of Education to Career process. The Explore, Plan and ACT (which are all required at U-High) each have a Career Exploration component to them. As we go over the results of the test results (both the Academic and Career Awareness), we encourage the student to explore the Career information more in detail. At the same time we encourage them to put both pieces of information into their
Electronic Career Portfolio. Mr. Allen and Ms. Anderson, Freshmen English Teachers, are arranging for each freshman to get training on how to use the Electronic Career Portfolio. At least one of their writing assignments will connect to the Career information from the Explore Test. These students will be encouraged to include this work in their Electronic Career Portfolio.

At this point we have not worked through the ins and outs of how we will work with our sophomores. We are thinking we may need to call upon volunteers to help us work with individuals or small groups.

We have received a grant to train teachers in how to identify activities they are already doing in their classes that would be of importance in the future. Students are then encouraged to place those in their Electronic Career Portfolio. This training also teaches them about other Career Activities they can incorporate into their existing curriculum. We had our first training in August and will be scheduling another training sometime in the spring.

For more information about Electronic Career Portfolios contact JD Hawkins at 309-438-5691 or dhawki@ilstu.edu.