

**Portfolios as Performance Assessment: Explorations into the Nature of  
Representation through Technology**

**By**

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**ABSTRACT**

This exploratory study draws on scholarship in ethnography of communication, performance theory, and case study methods to explore how four participants in a doctoral program in Curriculum and Instruction developed digital portfolios. The analysis of the portfolios suggested that each of the participants used technology to perform their identities as doctoral students within a *textual space* of digital portfolios. Participants used these performances to create interpretive spaces within and against a discourse articulated by program goals and curriculum expectations in unanticipated ways. Results from this exploratory study suggest that assessment of learning through portfolios that is informed by work in performance ethnography can shed new light on how identity and subjectivity shape learning in complex ways. Assessments that tap into these complexities can provide new insights into how learning is performed at the doctoral level.

### Introduction

In the last decade, qualitative researchers have sought to push the boundaries of analysis and data representation to more accurately portray relationships among the nature of constructing research texts, and the complex interactions between a researcher and his/her participants (Denzin, 1997; Richardson, 2000; Vickers, 2002; Warren & Fasset, 2002; Oikarinen-Jabi, 2003). These researchers and others have drawn on the traditions of storytelling, poetry, and inquiry into the nature of performance as they sought innovative ways to address what Denzin (1997) has called “a triple crisis of representation, legitimation, and praxis” (p.3) in the broader field of social science. This crisis has evolved as qualitative researchers have struggled with questions about how traditional attempts to *textualize* lived experience have diluted or marginalized the voices of participants (Richardson, 2000). Further, additional questions about how validity might be reconceptualized from constructivist (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), feminist (Lather, 1991), or a poststructuralist (Levinson, Foley, & Holland 1996) perspectives have been raised.

Together, this body of research has challenged qualitative researchers to examine how data analysis can be construed as an interpretive event or a *performance* of meaning (Denzin, 1997; 2003) and how those performances position both a researcher and participants in that event. For example Denzin (1997) argues that:

A performance is an interpretive event, a rehearsed or improvised set of creative activities, with a beginning, middle, and end, performed for the benefit of an audience and the performers. Performance is interpretation (p. 97).

This developing trend in qualitative studies informed our thinking about portfolio assessment as a type of performance assessment. Portfolios have been designated as a performance assessment in that learners assemble and construct artifacts that *perform* growth and achievement over time (Clark, Chow-Hoy, Herter, & Moss, 2001). Recent research into the nature of performance has problematized how we think about performance, particularly within qualitative work focusing on linguistic data, of which portfolios are a typical example (Loxley, 1983).

However, digital portfolios have become pervasive in educational settings as a way to open up possibilities for including images, websites, and video clips, as learners seek richer representations of their growth and achievement (Yancey, 2004B). However, questions remain about how technology shapes the ways learners narrate their stories within a portfolio. In other words, how does the medium of technology open space for portfolio developers to represent and reflect on their own learning? If portfolios are a performance assessment, what is it that is being performed?

This conceptual article draws on data from a larger exploratory study that examined the educational value of paper and digital portfolios as an alternative choice to traditional comprehensive examinations in a doctoral program in Curriculum and Instruction. This project drew on work in ethnography in communication and performance theory to explore the development of both types of portfolios with a small group of doctoral students in the summer of 2005. In this article, we describe the ways in which technology informed the experience of performance for four of the portfolio developers in the study by analyzing their digital portfolios as performances. In the next

section, we foreground our study in two areas of research: ethnography of communication, and performance theory in education

### **Conceptual Foreground**

Ethnography of communication has a long intellectual history in a tradition of ethnographic research (Goffman, 1964; Gumperz, 1968; Hymes, 1964; Phillips, 1983; Schegloff, 1971; Saville-Troike, (1989.) These early theorists situated their work in the linguistics and the sociology of language (Giglioli, 1972) and examined communicative competence, the nature of communicative events and other issues in anthropological studies of language acquisition. Saville-Troike's work (1989) in the area of ethnography of communication attempted to codify some of the practices of this approach to inquiry and focused on patterns of communication in variety of cultural settings. These and other researchers set the stage for a rich body of scholarship that drew on ethnography of communication and investigated patterns of discourse use and discursive practices of language in classrooms and schools (e.g. Cazden, 1986; Farah, 1997; Heath, 1983; McClaren, 1986; Watson-Grego, 1997). This body of research deepened understandings of not only how overarching institutional discourses of schooling shape the nature of interactions in classrooms, but also how individual learners uses discourse practices to push against or disrupt dominant discourses of educational institutions.

More recently, researchers such as Heller, (1999) and Duff, (2002) have broadened ethnography to include nonverbal and non-vocal forms of communication such as laughter, gaze, and graphic forms of representation (Duff, p. 291-292). In Duff's study, (2002) for example, she analyzed the structure and arrangement of the classroom as a way to look at "how identity and difference were constituted by the seating

arrangement of the classroom as well as other classroom practices” (p. 299), and then linked these to the types of discourses that students produce in the contexts of specific lessons. In this study of doctoral students’ digital portfolios, students created digital portfolios and copied them on to CDs, and then presented their portfolios to the class. During a process of constructing the portfolios, the participants in this study discussed their working portfolios on WEB CT and used these *threaded discussions* to support one another’s ideas and plans. This process raises questions of presentation of self and transmediation across media forms for the students developing the portfolios. For example, how does the technology used to produce a digital portfolio shape the stories that each student narrates or performs about their identity as a doctoral student? What aspects of learning does the technology help a student highlight about him or herself? As an approach to exploring how meaning is constructed, ethnography of communication is useful in this context as it provides an approach to unpack how technology serves as a medium for participants to present themselves via a digital portfolio.

The concept of presentation is complex and combining some of the tenants ethnography of communication with recent work in performance theory and specifically what Denzin called “performance ethnography” (2003) provides a lens to analyze digital portfolios in new ways. Denzin situates his arguments for this view of ethnographic practice an understanding of experience that is “performative, symbolic, and material” (p. 32). Informed by the sociological work of Goffman (1964), the literary and cultural theory of Butler (1990) and others, Denzin argues that “performance ethnography represents and performs rituals from everyday life, using performing as a method of representation and a method of understanding” (2003, p. 13). This view of ethnographic

research resonates with recent theoretical work of the role of performance in understanding teaching, learning, and other aspects of education (e.g., Alexander, Anderson, & Gallegos, 2005; Kohli, 1999; McClaren, 1986; Pineau, 1994).

In an analysis of teaching as performance, Pinneau (1994) explored the theoretical challenges inherent in the often used phrase of teachers as *actor*, teaching as *theatrical*, or *improvisational* (p. 3). She drew on work in critical pedagogy, narrative theory, and other fields to validate a “performance paradigm” (p. 24) that she saw emerging in the study of education. Pinneau believed that this particular approach to conceptualizing and studying teaching has particular value in current climate of educational reform (p. 25). McClaren’s ethnographic study of educational rituals performed within cultural systems of *schooling* and how those performances reify the traditional relationships of power provided insights into how symbolic capital was related to the development of curriculum and practices of classroom teaching. More recently, Foley (2005) and Levinson, Foley, and Holland (1996) have infused performance theory with critical ethnography to look the structures of schools and educational practice a bit differently than McClaren. Foley (2005) for example draws on sociological theory of Bourdieu to analyze from the performances of Chicano youth from a “practice theory perspective” (p. 225) to theorize cultural identity as contested terrain. This approach enables him to understand some of the rites of passage of these adolescents against a larger backdrop of the institution of schooling and demonstrate the complexities of constructions of cultural identity. Informed by this work in performance theory, this research on digital portfolios examined how the performances by each of the four participants were presented against a backdrop

of programmatic expectations of a doctoral program in curriculum and instruction and performed their identities both within and against those expectations.

Together, ethnography of communication and Performance theory help develop a conceptual framework that informed a case study of the portfolio developers at the doctoral level in the following ways. First, combining aspects of ethnography of communication and performance theory opened up our thinking about the transmediation of artifacts into a digital format and how the technology itself became a tool whereby portfolio developers could perform a sense of themselves differently. And second, we were able to gain insights into how these four participants seemed to be using digital portfolios to perform those identities within and against the discourse of the program itself. In the next section we situate portfolios within a larger domain of teaching and learning; then, we position our project within other efforts to develop portfolios at the graduate level.

### **Situating Portfolios**

A portfolio is a learner's self-selected, systematic collection of artifacts that includes a critical, reflective essay; this portfolio should be presented or made public for evaluation as evidence for the individual's growth and achievement (Condon, & Hamp-Lyons, 1994). Situated within the scholarship of teaching and learning, portfolios continue to be a viable and valid option to assess learning and provide a lens for systematic inquiry into an instructor's pedagogy (Boyer, 1990; Shulman 1996; Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff, 1997; Yancey & Weiser, 1997). Proponents argue that portfolios can be tools for authentic assessment, provide insights into growth and achievement over time, and help learners to gain a better understanding of their own learning processes,



thus promoting learner autonomy (Condon, 1997). However, portfolios have also been criticized for lacking in reliability associated with more traditional forms of assessments such as standardized tests (Shavelson, Baxter, & Pine, 1992). Complicating this issue further is a recent trend to shift from paper to digital portfolios. This shift purports to solve the logistical problems of storage, allow learners to include video, audio and other artifacts, and develop links that enhance the contents through intertextual linkages both within the portfolio and to websites or other sources (Hawisher & Self, 1997; Cambridge, 2001). As portfolios continue to be used in a variety of assessment contexts, we need to know more about their validity and reliability. Regardless of whether paper or digital portfolios are used to assess student work, they must be theoretically grounded, aligned with clearly articulated standards or learning goals, invite thorough student analysis and reflection, include a systematic plan for evaluation and be linked to teaching and learning to be reliable (Belanoff & Dickson 1991; Hutchings 1998 Yancey, 2004).

At a recent talk about the shifting landscape of portfolio assessment toward a web-based or digital format, Kathleen Blake Yancey argued that well-designed portfolios have potential to “atomize learning” so that readers and evaluators of portfolios understand detailed processes of learning embedded in the selection of texts and artifacts by the *portfolio developer* (October, 2004). Yancey’s use of the phrase *portfolio developer* signaled her attempt to capture the different types of choices an individual makes to construct a web-based compared to a paper portfolio. Further, it may be that constructing paper and developing digital portfolios require different types of decision-making processes, thus presenting different aspects or features of a learner’s growth and achievement (Yancey, 2004). In other words, assessing a student’s digital portfolio and

assessing a paper version could theoretically lead to a different understanding of a student as a learner. This presents an interesting question at a graduate program level in regards to how to most effectively craft assessments such as portfolios that capture student learning? This question is particularly salient in a doctoral program where one function of assessment of students is to determine whether a student has reached a level of ability and autonomy as a developing researcher to begin a dissertation work under direction of her chair and committee.

There are doctoral programs that have adopted a portfolio as a component of their requirements (e.g. University of Texas at Austin, 2005; University of Washington, 2005). Yet, limited research studies have inquired into the reliability of this assessment, and there is scant evidence about viability of paper vs. digital portfolios at the doctoral level (Brennan, 1996; Maxwell, 2003). This project addressed that gap within a context of teaching and learning by developing case studies of doctoral student portfolios.

### **Methods of Inquiry**

This project used a case study design to investigate the usefulness of paper and digital portfolios for doctoral students in Curriculum & Instruction at a Midwestern University (Yin, 1994). This exploratory study it began in summer of 2005 with eight doctoral students who are enrolled in a course on teacher assessment. Three research questions guided this study:

1. What are doctoral students' views on portfolio assessment?
2. How do portfolios assess students' progress in terms of program goals?
3. How does technology associated with digital portfolios influence or shape the ways in which students present themselves via digital portfolios?

Each participant developed both a paper portfolio and a digital portfolio as an assignment for the course. This paper focuses on results from the third research question. Participants used Web CT's threaded discussion function to comment on the development of both the paper and digital portfolios. Both portfolios were organized around the four goals of the doctoral program. These goals included that students be able to:

1. Design curriculum, instruction, and assessment in appropriate educational contexts;
2. Study complex problems within those educational contexts through research and reflective practice;
3. Analyze contemporary educational issues from multiple perspectives, and
4. Provide responsible leadership in professional education.

The plan for the portfolios drew on a model developed by Indiana University's Department of Curriculum & Instruction (<http://www.indiana.edu/~edci/DocBooklet.pdf>) as it has been in existence for over 3 years. Portfolios required the following products: (1) reports of published research; (2) reviews or critiques of selected journal articles in the field of Curriculum & Instruction; (3) preliminary draft of a proposal for dissertation research; (4) two additional artifacts that student selects to demonstrate that program goals have been met; and (5) a reflective essay that systematically analyzes the contents of the portfolio in terms of the program goals.

Together, these goals that were articulated in the portfolio assignment along with the five required artifacts construct a discourse that situates the program in specific ways (Gee, 1999). The goals imply a *practitioner* oriented doctorate which historically has

been the focus of an Ed.D programs in education (Shulman, Golde, Bueschel, & Garabedian, 2006). However, the five artifacts listed above could be interpreted as work that would come out of a program that was closer to a PhD, with an emphasis on research. These two texts are features of a discourse typifying a program that may be unsure of its academic focus or possibly in transition from a professional/practitioner orientation to a more research one. This second scenario was the case at the time of this study, and the students in the course were aware of this impending transition. This awareness is significant. We argue later in this text that it is this discourse within and against which the participants develop their digital portfolios.

Portfolios were evaluated based using a rubric and included oral defense of the portfolio by the student. In this exploratory study, the researcher/instructor evaluated each portfolio, and students in the course provided feedback to one another (both in class and on the web). Data collected included post portfolio reflective writing about assessment, paper and digital portfolios and post-portfolio interviews to triangulate the data (Patton, 1990).

The overarching goal of analyzing the data is to construct explanatory case studies of the portfolios that are iterative in nature (Yin, 1994). In other words, data was be examined and analyzed, conceptual/theoretical propositions about portfolio assessment were to be interrogated and then evidence re-examined from a new perspective generated from this process (Yin, 1994, p.111). Two goals framed this analysis. First, we aimed to carefully evaluate each portfolio and the process of developing it in terms of program goals and autonomy as key to doctoral studies. Second, we hoped to distill and clarify our own ideas about the worth of portfolio assessment in a doctoral program. To meet these

goals we drew on the work of Straus and Corbin in grounded theory for the coding and interpretation of the data (1990).

Developing explanatory cases necessitated that data analysis be ongoing and that new data be reexamined in the light of data collected earlier in the study. Using open coding whereby conceptual labels are developed to identify patterns in the reflective writing, interviews, and portfolios was allow for identification of preliminary categories to begin to answer the research questions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 61). However, to achieve a more finely-grained analysis of these data, axial coding was also used. This process involved recombining data that has undergone a preliminary analysis via open coding in order to better understand the “dimensions and properties” of categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 96-97). Axial coding provided a method to delve more deeply into the relationships among the portfolios, learner autonomy, and assessment at the program level. This approach to analysis led to the development of preliminary categories for types of portfolios displayed in Table1.

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**Insert Table 1. Here**

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We used these categories to go back into the digital portfolios themselves and look at the how each of the four participants selected for this paper, Cathy, Bill, Joan, & Charles (all pseudonyms), performed their identity as doctoral students within the context of portfolio assessment. Originally we were concerned that these three suggested a type of hierarchy in which the “scholar-researcher” was viewed as the strongest or most

desirable type of portfolio with the other two following in order. It was at this phase of the analysis that the frame of ethnography of communication and performance theory helped us push our analysis in new ways. Based on viewing the digital portfolios, we began to theorize that the performances were multi-layered and suggested both what was valued by each portfolio developer, (e.g. traditional seminar papers, conference presentations, musical compositions, visual slide shows) but the technology of digitizing and sequencing artifacts allowed for positioning of each portfolio differently.

Rather than accepting a linear sequence, we followed Denzin's lead (1997) and questioned how each digital portfolio might be experimenting with nature of *textuality*—how complex meaning/identity is represented in a digital sign system. From this perspective we asked questions about interpreting each portfolio within the “cannon it is embedded in (modernist or postmodernist) and the cannon it opposes’ (p. 27). In other words, we analyzed the goals of the doctoral program and by implication the course in which the portfolios were created as the both cannon in which the portfolio was embedded and the cannon it opposes. This approach pushed us to conceptualize digital portfolios as a *performance space* in which in each portfolio developer used a multi-modal technology to perform portraits of themselves as doctoral students in unanticipated ways. In this next section, we describe these spaces by looking more closely at the portfolios themselves and how they represent the individuals who constructed them. In each case, we suggest that the portfolio developer created a space that allowed them to locate themselves within a larger discourse of the doctoral program in curriculum and instruction. We present analysis of the reflective essay form each of the portfolios and the digital portfolio itself.

## **Performance of Portfolios**

### *Joan—Portfolio as Scholar/ Researcher*

In her reflective piece, Joan describes briefly a narrative upon her admission into the program, presentations at conferences, mini-grants she has received, co-teaching a course, conducting a study, and a hands-on drama activity completed for a class. She writes that she specifically chose documents that would show her growth as a doctoral student over time. She describes briefly a narrative upon her admission into the program, presentations at conferences, mini-grants she has received, co-teaching a course, conducting a study, and a hands-on drama activity completed for a class. In the WebCT discussion, she gives this advice to a classmate: “Be mindful that when you live in the world of academia, there is a fine line between personal and professional boundaries. As long as you see a clear connection on how 'the personal' document your growth as a 'doctoral student' and not your personal being/growth, then I think it is appropriate to disclose, but make sure that a clear connection to your academic growth is attained through sharing.” She likes that the portfolios present the individual’s uniqueness and creativity, giving a more complete picture of a doctoral student than a standardized task or exam does.

Joan’s digital portfolio included papers she had written from seminars and presented at conferences. Within her these texts she inserted web site addresses that, if

opened, would take a reader to sites of professional organizations or conferences where she had presented some of her work. She did not submit a CD with her portfolio, but placed it on her website instead. During the interview about her portfolio, Joan commented on the diverse level of technological skills that existed within the group of doctoral students in the study.

*Cathy—Portfolio as Teacher/Student*

Cathy's introduction contains a reflective essay that explains her teaching and learning goals, and then introduces her artifacts. She hopes that her portfolio "demonstrates this broad research focus because this theory and practice connection has become the lens that I use as a doctoral student." She explains that because she has taught at a middle school for twelve years, her research and educational practices focus on students of that age. This reflective essay comments on each of the next five artifacts. She includes a creative writing course that she designed and implemented, and comments that she feels creative writing encourages creative and critical thinking in her students. Then she examines a writing portfolio system that she designed in one of her early doctoral courses. Next she discusses an after-school program she created for students at her middle school, and mentions that after its implementation two years ago, it continues to evolve successfully. Her last two artifacts are reviews of literature about the middle school concept, and she briefly describes them. At the end of this, she includes some pictures and samples of her students' work. She feels the portfolio made her think about her dissertation in a more concrete way, and that this demonstrates her autonomy.

*Bill—Portfolio as Professional/Student*



Bill does not address the portfolio itself in the reflective essay. Rather, it seems to be a window into his thoughts about education as a whole, education in his school district, and what education means to him. One interesting aspect he writes about is his goal of teaching his students how to think and evaluate information. He also uses the phrase “logical reasoning,” a phrase that resonates throughout his interview. As Bill was originally a math teacher who is now teaching social studies, his emphasis on logic is authentic. His proposed study would compare over time the student achievement of two groups of students, one taught by traditional curriculum and the other by reform mathematics. After that he has placed the A Community Unit School District #15 Gifted Plan, the one that he created and presented to the school board. It begins with a general philosophy about the district’s responsibility toward meeting the needs of its gifted students, maps out how to identify such students and what assessment tools will be used, details a schedule for such events to occur, has a brief description of A Model of Gifted Services as its framework, and mentions staff development, program evaluation, and the educational personnel required to coordinate the program. He feels that the portfolio process made him “more aware of reflective thinking,” although not necessarily a more reflective thinker. He refers briefly to using the rubric at the beginning, but describes it as fitting it in with the pattern that he wanted to see as his completed project. He was adapting the rubric to his ideal portfolio, and not the other way around.

*Charles---Portfolio as Professional/Student*

Charles writes about the process of combining different elements of his scholarly life into a “coherent, complete whole.” He also briefly discusses his background in music and technology, and he explains his rationale for pursuing a Doctorate in Education,

which is to understand pedagogy so that he can teach well at the college level. Next, he summarizes his teaching beliefs essay and reflects upon it. The essay itself was created several years ago, but he reflects that it is still the basis for many of his beliefs. However, he says he has expanded it somewhat. In the essay itself, he addresses particulars of college students, creativity (definitions, suggestions, ramifications), and a performance base. The next section, audio/midi, begins with a brief reflective piece that summarizes the following digital audio lesson, and then Charles includes the lesson plan. He uses the same format of reflective summary to lead into an article about digital audio information, about a MIDI informative article, and again about a MIDI/digital audio project. Web design follows the same format, and Charles includes a lesson plan and a review of how the lesson went. He finishes with an overview of his goal, to become an instructor, and what he still needs to accomplish in order to do that well. He writes, “the process of putting this portfolio together has helped me crystallize that feeling [a great motivation to continuously better my abilities in any and all areas of instruction.]” He sees the autonomy inherent in the project because “it is based on what you are doing and what you have done.”

Each of these brief excerpts are not theater scripts; however these texts perform aspects of the student’s process of constructing the portfolio and suggests a dramatizing of practices of portfolio development that present aspects of the identities of each portfolio developer. For example, when Joan comments:

Be mindful that when you live in the world of academia, there is a fine line between personal and professional boundaries. As long as you see a clear connection on how 'the personal' document your growth as a 'doctoral student' and

not your personal being/growth, then I think it is appropriate to disclose, but make sure that a clear connection to your academic growth is attained through sharing. In this text Joan performs her growing sense of herself as a person seeking to position her identity within the “boundaries” of the academy and discern the boundaries of the personal and the academic. In this example the portfolio becomes a space where she stages those negotiations. The phrase “be mindful” seems to be a slight admonishment to her peers that certain social practices (e.g. scholarship, analytic thought, etc) are key for seeing that “fine Line” between the personal and the professional.

In Cathy’s’ digital texts she notes that her portfolio: “demonstrates this broad research focus because this theory and practice connection has become the lens that I use as a doctoral student.” In this example, Cindy begins to explain how her sense of linking theory and practice serves as a lens through which she views her doctoral work. Metaphorically, this linguistic practice positions her in what Denzin called a “standpoint epistemology” that are organized around social practices (1997, p. 54). In this case, Cindy’s practices are grounded in her experiences/practices as a middle school teacher. Cindy’s portfolio functions a performance space where she is connecting the worlds of middle school teaching and doctoral work, and positioning herself as still primarily a practicing teacher—despite the emphasis suggested by the portfolio on research.

Bill uses his portfolio to position himself within the discourse of the program. He focuses on himself as the reflective practitioner and describes his attempts to develop curriculum within a particular program, includes a power point presentation focusing on this responses to the educational philosophy of Dewey, and several papers that argue for diverse ways to teach secondary math, and a web page that takes the readers to different

websites in mathematics. Bill's portfolio creates a performance space where he links his sense of himself as a professional educator to the discourse of professional practice that is suggested by the goals that were part of the portfolio assignment. His portfolio is content focused and performs his preservation of an identity as a math educator.

Charles's portfolio performs both his creativity as well as his sense of himself as a person who knows technology. Charles's digital portfolio included the broadest array of texts. He included examples of musical and visual compositions in his portfolio that were part of what he valued as a doctoral student. He used image as artifacts to display and narrate his creativity, push textuality in ways that were unexpected and position himself as doctoral student who was both able to construct traditional texts and texts that were not linguistically based to perform his sense of himself as an innovator.

### **Digital Portfolios as Performance: Future Inquiry**

What do the scenarios of the four digital portfolios reveal about representation and performativity of performance assessment at the doctoral level in terms of future inquiry? Based on our analysis we argue that four areas are potentially interesting for future research. We see value in the frame we developed by drawing on critical ethnography and performance theory and posit that it could help researchers/educators more thoughtfully evaluate/design assessments that capture the diverse talents and competencies doctoral students develop within the structure of a program. Next, questions about the productive tensions between training students to master the more *canonical* texts within a doctoral degree and the innovative textual possibilities available through technology could be explored. We believe that carefully considering those

tensions may provide a window into how learners make decisions about meaning construction processes.

Further, a performance assessment in the form of a digital portfolio shows promise as a site of learning where doctoral students' portfolios may perform their identities, thus creating performance-based assessments that encourage individuality and autonomy, and where meaning could be contested, reframed and re-evaluated. Portfolio assessment could provide students performative space to showcase the development of their work, and view of themselves as a doctoral student as well as reflect on that development at various points in their doctoral studies. Finally, researchers could investigate how assessing graduate learning through portfolios that is informed by work on performativity could make more visible the roles of identity and subjectivity in shaping learning processes. Such studies may help deepen our understanding about the relationships among identity, teaching, and learning.

Obviously a small exploratory study like this one can only suggest research conversations, discussions, and *what ifs* that would need much more longitudinal investigation. However, the frame developed to study these four portfolios does open up another way to think about the role and nature of assessment in doctoral education and the intricacies involved in effectively capturing learning, and achievement. The digital portfolios themselves suggest questions about what new digital prototypes and hybrids might be useful for gaining an additional understanding about how learning is performed. Clearly, further inquiry with and into technology's role in performance assessment looks fertile.

**Table 1. Preliminary Categories for Analysis**

	<b>Scholar/Researcher</b>	<b>Professional/Student</b>	<b>Teacher/Student</b>
Definition	Research-oriented, emphasis on the theoretical and conceptual	Experientially oriented, reflective analysis focuses on practice	Oriented toward improving practice with theory
Artifacts	Sought to push artifacts further (beyond assignments) through seeking a wider audience	Sought to use class assignments to connect back to students	Sought to use artifacts to show how initiative comes from students
Organization	Primarily a compilation with reflective analysis in the front of the collection	Structured so that reflective analysis is introduced in the front and then included in between artifacts	Structured so that reflective analysis is introduced in the front and then included in between artifacts
Autobiography	Approach used to contextualize individual as a doctoral student	Approach used to contextualize individual as a doctoral student	Approach used to contextualize individual as a doctoral student
Autonomy	Emerging researcher. Demonstrated through conference presentations and manuscript development	Refining/deepening educator. Demonstrated through curricular projects and course materials	Emerging teacher leader/researcher demonstrated through manuscripts and curricular projects

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