Science – Lessons Learned

Biology 321 – Mosses, Hornworts and Liverworts – Folio Pilot Summary

Successes

- ❖ Opened discussion with other faculty about using e-portfolios and folios in the Faculty of Science.
- ❖ Students displayed more engagement with course material, asked more conceptual questions and did better on course projects and examinations.
- ❖ Generated a community in the classroom through group activities.
- ❖ With the technical support from Bjorn Thomson and Alison Wong, appropriate software development and integration was implemented. Students currently have much less difficulty working with the folio technical elements than they did in the beginning.
- ❖ Presentations on using this approach at several conferences: UBC Learning Conference (2006); International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (Vancouver, 2005).
- ❖ On-going research on the effectiveness of this approach.

Challenges

- ❖ Software difficult to support at the beginning for the instructor, students and technical support team.
- ❖ Amount of instructor time required to set up this new approach was considerable.
- ❖ New users still have some difficulty with the technical requirements.
- ❖ Designing appropriate reflective questions for students.

User Feedback

- ❖ Student quotes about the Bryophyte e-portfolio:

  - o "[I liked] being able to communicate with classmates easily; a opportunity for creativity – as much work as you want to put into it"
  - o "gives an online presence; allows publication of work"
  - o "easy access to other people's ideas….doesn't take up physical space. Better coordination of class material"
  - o "an online storage area and an "e-space" for our bryo-enlightened "e-musings". Also somewhere to make our projects available to other years. A system of reflection meant to solidify course in our brains after lecture."

Recommendations

- ❖ Continue discussions with UBC central administration, Office of Learning Technologies and Faculty of Science about implementation and support for folio courses.
- ❖ Create opportunities for more faculty to hear about the advantages for student learning and faculty teaching in using the folio approach.
- ❖ Continue the research on why and how folio thinking promotes learning.
- ❖ Review different software interfaces to make sure students are using the easiest interfaces.