



# E-Portfolio Case Study



From zero to assessment portfolio in a matter of weeks, with a little help from Serensoft

**M**essiah College was looking for a way to ensure that students were seeing the big picture, that their course work was just a part of a larger educational puzzle—and that those students could conveniently demonstrate proficiency in core competencies.

### The Problem:

*Ensure that students in the nursing program are making connections in their learning, and allow students to demonstrate understanding and proficiency in the core competencies of their profession.*

Messiah asked: “What does student progress mean to us as an institution? How do we communicate that to students throughout their undergraduate career and keep it at the forefront—driving them to make connections in their learning?”

### The Challenge:

*Find a technology platform that is flexible enough to accommodate the yet-to-be-defined institutional priorities—and a partner that can help apply that technology to their needs. Oh, and the solution should be implemented and launched in the next few weeks.*

By identifying a technology platform that affords flexibility, Messiah could focus on the broader goals of the institutional priorities.

### The Solution:

Messiah chose Open Source Portfolio (OSP), a community source e-portfolio system built into

Sakai. To get started on OSP quickly and effectively Messiah needed an experienced partner, Serensoft, to work with them collaboratively to design a pilot program—in a few short weeks.

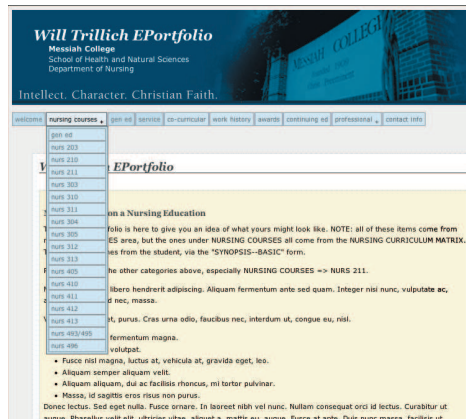
The project was highly iterative, underscoring the need for flexibility—in the technology, in the consulting partner and in the institution. The main ingredients were:

1. Define the “core competencies” for Nursing,
2. Apply these competencies to the entire program,
3. Identify the tools within OSP that fit the needs of the Nursing program at Messiah.

With these three pieces, Messiah’s nursing program was able to create a structure that allowed students to collect and present their work in way that met both the institutional needs and the student’s needs.



**MESSIAH COLLEGE**



*A portion of one of the interactive portfolios from Messiah College’s OSPPortfolio*

### The Results:

Aside from increased institutional interest in a broader deployment of OSP in other academic departments, both the institution and students benefitted:

### Institutional Benefits

With OSP, data is organized and collected in a format that allows faculty and advisors to quickly and easily see which students were meeting

specific objectives.

Faculty & Advisors can easily track students’ ability to make the necessary connections—and progressing in their learning over time.

Faculty are able to collaborate with students in



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We can help.

## E-Portfolio Case Study *Cont'd*



a real-time way—offering feedback that can be referenced throughout the program.

### Student Benefits

Students are more easily able to make connections in their learning over time, and see how

concepts build on one another.

Through the Portfolio Templates, students are able to easily and quickly create and share relevant portfolios to prospective employers.

No hard-copy portfolios!

### Where can I get more information?

Serensoft produces “Wonderings” with the hope they will help higher education professionals as they explore subjects of interest. An electronic copy of our “Wonderings” can be found at the Serensoft web site (<http://www.serensoft.com/>). In addition Serensoft posts Webinars on related topics to the website—and, below are additional resources for electronic portfolios.

- Dr. Helen Barrett’s Electronic Portfolio website (<http://electronicPortfolios.org/>) provides what may be the most exhaustive treatment of the subject on the web. The website includes Dr. Barrett’s ongoing blog, writing and presentations—and links to numerous other resources.
- As e-portfolios are becoming more prevalent, many publications are devoting more and more space to the subject. Online articles for e-portfolios can be found at publications such as Educause (in particular Educause Quarterly at <http://connect.educause.edu/Library/EDUCAUSE+Quarterly/>) and Campus Technology (<http://www.campusTechnology.com/>).
- *Handbook of Research on ePortfolios* by Ali Jafari and Catherine Kaufman. A comprehensive treatment of the subject. It includes contributions from over 100 authors and addresses major aspects of rationale, technology, and implementation. Dozens of case studies detail current usage.
- *Electronic Portfolios: Emerging Practices in Student, Faculty, and Institutional Learning*. Barbara L. Cambridge, Susan Kahn, Daniel P. Tompkins, and Kathleen Blake Yancey, editors. Thorough treatment of major portfolio categories—student, faculty and institutional—using many case studies to examine and illustrate e-portfolio considerations, issues, and solutions.
- *Assessment Essentials: Planning, Implementing, and Improving Assessment in Higher Education* by Catherine A. Palomba and Trudy W. Banta. Focused on the larger question of assessment, this book does devote a few pages to how portfolios can be a useful assessment tool.
- Assessment Institute (<http://planning.iupui.edu/574.html>). Held annually in Indianapolis, the Assessment Institute is the United States’ oldest and largest conference focusing on outcomes assessment in higher education.
- Making Connections (<http://www.eportfolio.lagcc.cuny.edu/conference/>). Organized by LaGuardia Community College’s Center for Teaching and Learning, this conference provides an opportunity for thought leaders, practitioners, and newbies to gather and exchange information on their e-portfolio research and experiences.

### How can Serensoft Help?

Serensoft is a higher education services firm; our goal is to use technology-based services to assist colleges and universities in meeting their teaching, learning, and administrative objectives. We have helped several institutions work through issues associated with electronic portfolios. From developing a more complete understanding of electronic portfolios in general to

focusing on how they might fit with a particular institution, we can help with education regarding e-portfolios.

From designing a best-fit solution for your electronic portfolio needs to developing a pilot implementation, we can help. From training faculty on the use of electronic portfolios to helping your IT staff support them, we can help.