Core Strategies for Scaling Up: 1-5

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C2L campuses have developed a rich array of approaches to the Scaling Up process discussed in “Scaling Up: Growing Effective ePortfolio Initiatives” and analyzed in “Scaling Strategies and ePortfolio as a Catalyst for Change.” We have distilled these approaches into a set of 10 Core Strategies, which reflect effective approaches observed across the network.

This version of the “Ten Core Strategies” essay was originally conceived and written in June 2012 and reflects preliminary thinking about the Catalyst Framework. Many of the references in this version of the Strategies were from the 2011-2012 Activity Reports, which campus teams submitted as part of their reporting requirements and are not publicly available on their campus ePortfolios. An updated set of the Ten Core Strategies will be released in Spring 2014.

The Ten Core Strategies for Effective Scaling Up of ePortfolio Initiatives
Group One: Strategies 1 - 5

#1. Developing an Effective Campus ePortfolio Team: Successful ePortfolio initiatives build effective leadership teams that possess diverse composition representing different roles in the institution and have strong connections to key stakeholders in the institution.

#2. Connecting to Programs: Successful ePortfolio initiatives build relationships with degree programs, engaging a wider community of faculty and serving as catalyst for other departments at the institution.

#3. Connecting to High-Impact Practices: Successful ePortfolio initiatives build connections to the ten high-impact practices that have been revealed through broad research to demonstrably improve student success and learning in higher education.

#4. Engaging Students: Successful ePortfolio implementations make student work visible and engage students as stakeholders.

#5. Advancing through Professional Development: Successful ePortfolio initiatives are advanced through thoughtful professional development activities for faculty and staff to explore both ePortfolio-related pedagogy and practice, and to build crucial buy-in for broad change.

#6. Building Strategic Connections to Outcomes Assessment: Successful ePortfolio implementations build strategic connections to assessment of student learning at programmatic and institutional levels.

#7. Making Use of Evidence: Successful ePortfolio initiatives gather, analyze, and share meaningful evidence of impact on student learning.

#8. Leveraging Resources: Successful ePortfolio implementations require financial resources to support the leadership team, faculty professional development, and technology.

#9. Aligning with Institutional Planning: Successful ePortfolio initiatives align with institutional planning efforts through a variety of key strategies, including working with key allies in administration, and working to include ePortfolios in program-level and institutional strategic plans and planning processes.

#10. Building a Culture of Learning: Successful ePortfolio initiatives build an ePortfolio awareness and culture at the department and program level, among students, faculty, administrators, advisors, in formal and informal ways.
Core Strategy #1
Developing an Effective Campus ePortfolio Leadership Team

Through our interaction with the twenty-four campus leadership teams that comprise the Connect to Learning network, it is apparent that leadership is key to the success of an ePortfolio implementation. In the C2L Scaling Up stories, several campuses identified the development of an effective campus ePortfolio team as an important strategy that has helped scale and grow their ePortfolio initiatives. Based on those narratives and our observations, we compiled the following characteristics of effective ePortfolio leadership teams.

Successful ePortfolio leadership teams tend to possess…

- **Diverse compositions representing different roles in the institution, including faculty representation.** Since most, if not all, ePortfolio projects involve faculty practice, their active and visible participation as leaders is critical to success. Leadership team membership is not static; leaders often strategically recruit additional members of the team to include areas of the college that might benefit from ePortfolio pedagogy.

- **A strong understanding of ePortfolio as an integrative social pedagogy.** Effective leaders understand ePortfolio as a pedagogy, not simply a technological tool. They have knowledge of reflective pedagogy and are familiar with different ways to integrate ePortfolio into a course or program.

- **A formal process for meeting and communicating with each other.** Successful leadership teams meet regularly, discussing successes, challenges, and next steps.

- **The ability to collaborate, distribute responsibilities, and meet deadlines.** Leaders possess strong management skills and work well with others. They deal with complexity, juggle multiple tasks and projects, balance short-term and long-term thinking, deal with problems, and find creative solutions. They are also able to share credit for project successes.

- **Strong skills as communicators.** Successful leaders write well, speak and present clearly and with energy, listen carefully, learn from what they hear, and convey that what was said is meaningful and important.

- **Interest in engaging with the larger ePortfolio field.** Leaders not only stay current with the latest ePortfolio research and literature, they attend conferences and engage with their colleagues through a variety of networks.

- **A reflective attitude towards change and the capacity to learn and adjust.** ePortfolio projects do not travel a straight path; there are twists and turns along the way. Successful leaders listen and respond to student, faculty, and administrative feedback. They evaluate evidence and use that evidence to inform the next steps of their work. ePortfolio project leaders are comfortable navigating through change and understand that restlessness is a natural part of the change process.
Core Strategies for Scaling Up: 1 - 5

- **Regular access to one or more administrative stakeholders at the institution.** Some ePortfolio leadership teams include an administrator (University of Delaware, Salt Lake Community College), allowing for a direct connection to management. Those teams that do not include an administrator are more successful if one or more members of the team communicate with a member of administration on a regular basis, involving them in their work and keeping them informed of the project’s progress.

- **Connections to professional development at the institution.** Some teams have a representative from the Center for Teaching on their leadership team (Manhattanville College, LaGuardia Community College, Pace University), other teams develop a working relationship with their Center for Teaching, designing their own ePortfolio professional development seminars and workshops (Tunxis Community College, Northwest Community College).

- **Connections to technical expertise.** ePortfolio has a technology component; having access to IT personnel and other technical experts at the institution helps in a range of areas within an ePortfolio project, from selecting a platform, to acquiring labs, to technical training and troubleshooting.

- **Connections to Institutional Research.** Gathering, analyzing, and utilizing evidence is a core strategy for scaling up. Successful leaders build and cultivate a good relationship with institutional research departments to elicit their help and expertise in that process.

- **A voice in the programmatic and institutional outcomes assessment work of the college.** There is a natural fit between ePortfolio and outcomes assessment. Leaders who leverage that connection better position their project for scaling up across academic programs.

- **Experience in fundraising.** ePortfolio projects need financial resources to grow. Successful leaders are skilled in navigating budgets, working with internal stakeholders to acquire funds, and in seeking external funding opportunities to support their work.

- **Connections to Student Affairs.** More and more ePortfolio projects are connecting with advising and service learning. These connections develop more easily when the leadership team cultivates a positive working relationship with student affairs at their institution.

C2L ePortfolio leaders discuss some of these characteristics in their Scaling Up stories.

IUPUI leaders discuss the importance of a diverse team and connecting with the larger ePortfolio field:

From the outset, ePortfolio team members have represented diverse segments of the institution, including academic administration, the faculty, the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), and Planning and Institutional Improvement (PAII), the division that coordinates assessment… in addition, over the past decade, ePortfolio team members have become seasoned ePortfolio leaders who have experience with both success and failure of ePortfolio efforts. They are deeply familiar with the ePortfolio literature, have worked with academic programs in many disciplines, have participated in multiple national and international ePortfolio projects, have advised other campuses undertaking ePortfolio initiatives, and have used ePortfolios in their own teaching and learning practices. Moreover, by supporting participation in AAEEBL, the Assessment Institute, and national initiatives like C2L, through campus and IU-wide
communities, and through local faculty development efforts, we are nurturing the development of an additional layer of expertise embedded within the various ePortfolio projects across the campus and active in their particular disciplinary areas. [1]

In their Scaling Up story, leaders from Tunxis Community College discussed the ways a diverse leadership team helping broaden use of ePortfolio across programs:

The leadership team membership has always had diverse representation from departments and programs. The team leader also made sure to change or expand team membership every year. Through these decisions, the ePortfolio initiative was able to expand throughout the campus.[2]

Tunxis leaders strengthened their leadership team and their ePortfolio initiative building a connection to technical expertise:

An important addition to the team was adding Jason Iorio, a computer science adjunct to supervise the ePortfolio lab. He has been able to train and mentor the student workers, as well as oversee the development of ePortfolio resources for the campus. Having this dedicated person has allowed our ePortfolio lab to expand its role on campus.[3]

Regular access to one or more administrative stakeholders at the institution and strong communication skills are characteristics of Pace’s ePortfolio leadership team that have served them well in scaling their ePortfolio work. As they tell us:

In addition to the advisory board, great efforts were made early in the process to reach out to key stakeholders to get their input and support. In a way, there has been a continuous PR process for all stakeholders including administrators, faculty, staff and students. Now as we are in our 4th year, we’re looking to continue our communication efforts. So much effort was initially put into communicating what is an ePortfolio and now we want to deepen that understanding among our Pace community. [4]

As these characteristics and examples reveal, ePortfolio leadership teams need to engage with a variety of stakeholders on their campus, showing how ePortfolio plays a connecting role to their work and the larger work of the institution. Successful leadership teams take each of these institutional connections and move them forward, often simultaneously, employing some or all of the other nine core strategies for scaling up an ePortfolio project.

Core Strategy #1 Notes
Core Strategy #2
Connecting to Departments and Programs

An ePortfolio implementation is more likely to be successful when...

There are strong connections to degree programs, supporting student learning, programmatic assessment, and accreditation.

Jennifer Sparrow (SPS): I think it’s ideal if campuses can get entire programs to adopt ePortfolio so that all courses in the program contribute, all instructors in the program participate, and students receive a consistent message from their instructors. This is often not so easy to accomplish.

Craig Kasprzak (LAGCC): Seconded. There’s no question that, at LaGuardia, our most successful ePortfolio practice has emerged in programs that have adopted ePortfolio across the curriculum. A consistent message is critical. When students work on their ePortfolios in every course, they are more likely to recognize its value and to use it productively. Moreover, individual faculty then do not feel an onus to “do” the entire portfolio with their students, which makes ePortfolio feel manageable and steadies faculty buy-in. ePortfolio works best in the curriculum when everyone does a small part toward the whole. But you’re right: easier said than done. [1]

This conversation, from one of the C2L discussion forums, highlights both the strengths and challenges of scaling up an ePortfolio project by connecting with degree programs. ePortfolios, because of their integrative nature, are a natural fit for incorporating their use throughout a degree program or major. When connected to a program:

• ePortfolios enable students to more easily make connections among the courses in a degree program and between general education courses and program courses.

• The use of ePortfolio supports outcomes assessment work and external program accreditation.

• Individual faculty members working with ePortfolio within a degree program serve as catalysts for other faculty in their program and department.

• Initial pilot programs which integrate the use of ePortfolio across a curriculum serve as models and catalysts for other departments at the institution.

Seeing the strengths of ePortfolio as a connector to degree programs and building relationships with program faculty and staff is a key step for ePortfolio leaders. There are several strategies C2L campus teams use to pursue these connections.

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Core Strategies for Scaling Up: 1 - 5

Working with Pilot Faculty and Programs

The use of ePortfolio in a program often begins with one or two full-time faculty members. In those instances, what we observe across the C2L network is that those faculty members then encourage interest and participation from other full-time faculty, which, in turn, leads to adjunct participation. The University of Delaware’s (UDel) music program is one example of this scaling up model. In this instance, one or two faculty members began working with ePortfolio, and then showcased their students’ ePortfolios as a way to gain interest from their department colleagues. In a 2012 interview, here is what UDel ePortfolio leaders had to say about these faculty members’ efforts:

[T]here was a public forum that helped spread awareness that students are really benefiting from it. So other faculty started to look at their work, and then wanted to participate. …[I]n that one department, it’s become a vocal part of faculty conversation…they have a culture in which ePortfolio is now organic and almost inseparable…they plan very purposeful and strategic venues to bring it to the forefront in a non-threatening way, and in a way that everyone [can] embrace.[2]

ePortfolio provides a structured and concrete context for program and department leaders to think about alignment of program goals, course goals, course assignments, and student work. Working with key faculty in degree programs, such as program coordinators and department chairpersons, is, therefore, the way many C2L campus leaders begin their pilot implementations. Those initial pilot programs then serve as models for other programs at their institution. Tunxis Community College began with pilots in Computer Information Systems and Dental Hygiene. ePortfolio campus leaders then used those programs as examples to encourage other program coordinators, such as those in Business Administration and Early Childhood Education, to explore ePortfolio for their programs. A similar situation is taking place at Hunter College, where they are shifting their focus from using ePortfolio as a storage and capstone portfolio to a portfolio model that focuses more on student learning and pedagogy. As the Hunter team reported in 2012,

[T]he Literacy Program ePortfolio is the first of its kind at Hunter; other program portfolios are exit portfolios that are used primarily as repositories. Since we launched the revamped ePortfolio, several program coordinators have expressed great interest in learning more and/or creating similar ePortfolios. Ours will no doubt be a model for the School of Education and other professional schools at Hunter. [3]

Currently, the School of Education at Hunter is working to integrate ePortfolio use across its program.

Time

Once project leaders engage departments and degree programs in working with ePortfolios, they continue to grow and strengthen their relationship with those stakeholders. One thing C2L leaders tell us about this process is that it does take time to build and sustain the use of ePortfolio in a program. This is evident from the Three Rivers C2L project reflection:
Successful implementation of pedagogy connected to technology is a process mixed with vision, listening skills, enthusiasm, detailed actions and timely evaluation of goal attainment. Checklists with timelines support transparency. Mentorship is critical to continued development; this project acted as a catalyst for our growth! [4]

As part of this connection-building process, C2L project leaders work with department chairpersons or program/degree coordinators to help plan the integration of ePortfolio into the curriculum and guide the implementation process. Making connections to other initiatives, such as outcomes assessment, also helps in this process. At LaGuardia Community College, for example, working directly with program coordinators to connect ePortfolio with program assessment and review strengthened both the ePortfolio and assessment initiatives at the college.

Incentives and Support
One incentive idea being used by several campus teams including LaGuardia Community College, the University of Delaware, and Manhattanville College, is the “mini-grant.” Faculty, program coordinators, and department chairpersons apply for a small, internal grant, often in the form of a stipend, to attend professional development seminars or to receive release time for planning the integration of ePortfolio into courses or programs. At Manhattanville, for example, the C2L campus leaders “solicited submissions for a small departmental grant. Three departments applied and were accepted. The departmental workshops began in Spring 2012...We began our departmental grant “jams” holding three that focused on reflective practice, designing learning activities and implementation.”[5]

C2L ePortfolio leaders also offer professional development opportunities for program coordinators and faculty. LaGuardia Community College’s “Rethinking the Capstone” seminar is geared towards those faculty members teaching a capstone course in a degree program. Tunxis Community College holds departmental meetings each semester to provide ePortfolio-related professional development for their full-time and adjunct faculty members.

Establishing strong connections with departments and degree programs helps campus ePortfolio leaders advance their work and the scaling up of ePortfolio use across programs, departments, and the institution. Strategically determining which faculty, departments, and programs to work with and then cultivating and maintaining a strong relationship with those departments will help anchor ePortfolio into the academic division of an institution. Building strong, successful program and departmental relationships early on in an ePortfolio initiative catalyzes and encourages other departments and programs to consider the use of ePortfolio in their work.

Core Strategy #2 Notes
[2] Interview with University of Delaware C2L Campus Leaders, May 2012

http://www.c2l.mcnrc.org
Core Strategy #3
Connecting to High Impact Practices

An ePortfolio implementation is more likely to be successful when….

Project leaders work with faculty, staff, and administrative leaders to build connections between ePortfolios and High Impact Practices such as First Year and Capstone Experiences, Service Learning, and Study Abroad.

The High Impact Practices identified by George Kuh, from learning communities to capstone courses, have gained broad recognition. AAC&U President Carol Geary Schneider has argued that Kuh’s work “takes the examination of effective educational practices to another level.” A 2009 AAC&U publication highlights persistent correlation, across multiple studies, between participation in High Impact Practices and improved student success outcomes such as increased rates of retention, and suggests a link to the development of higher level thinking and learning skills. “The results of participating in these high-impact practices,” Schneider points out, “are especially striking for students who start further behind in terms of their entering academic test scores. The benefits are similarly positive for students from communities that historically have been underserved in higher education.” [1]

On many C2L campuses, ePortfolio initiatives link to one or more High Impact Practices. For example, campus First Year Experience programs may use ePortfolio to help incoming students reflect on their prior educational experience, their college goals, and what it means to be a college student, facilitating an easier and more effective transition to college life. Perhaps because of their emphasis on innovation and experiential learning, High Impact Practices seem to provide a natural “home” for ePortfolio learning. And, ePortfolios can enhance the value of a specific High Impact Practices with the integrative power of ePortfolio-based reflection, and the opportunity to use the longitudinal ePortfolio to connect multiple High Impact learning experiences. Thinking about this connective quality, IUPUI’s Susan Kahn and Susan Scott have suggested that ePortfolio could itself be considered a Meta-High Impact Practice. [2]

C2L’s practices have focused most intensively on classroom pedagogy involving students and faculty. But the linkage between High Impact Practices and ePortfolio goes beyond the classroom. As C2L Senior Scholar Randy Bass points out in “Disrupting Ourselves: The Problem of Learning in Higher Education,” High Impact Practices occupy an ambiguous place in most academic structures – connected to but not confined to the traditional disciplinary curricula.

Where are the high-impact practices located? Many of these practices are not part of the formal curriculum but are in the co-curriculum, or what we used to call the extra-curriculum (e.g., undergraduate research). The rest are special or exceptional curricular experiences
Core Strategies for Scaling Up: 1 - 5

(e.g., First Year seminars and capstones). From the perspective of the impact on learning, this intersection of the most learning-intensive experiences in the co-curriculum and in the few exceptional, often experientially focused courses in the formal curriculum forms the new center—the re-centered core—of undergraduate learning.[2]

Our analysis of C2L practices suggests that successful ePortfolio campus leaders strategically work to build connections between ePortfolio and the high impact practice initiatives on their campus. C2L campus leaders most often build relationships not only with individual faculty, but also with centers and offices charged with developing and sustaining the HIP initiatives – an office coordinating First Year learning community programs, for example, or an internship or community-based learning program. Building a network of connections with these offices and programs, which often stand outside traditional departments, ePortfolio teams create and strengthen purposeful integrative interdisciplinary cooperation, all too rare in higher education.

Building a Network of Connections

C2L campus teams’ Scaling Up stories articulate the importance of the connection between ePortfolio and High Impact Practices. This connection can help both broaden and deepen the use of ePortfolio across an institution. Examples from across the C2L network reveal that, while each campus employs a unique approach in establishing and building these connections, successful initiatives strategically build and use these connections in their scaling efforts:

Some teams strategically target high impact practices as launching points for ePortfolio initiatives:

- At Tunxis Community College, ePortfolio is integrated into the First Year Experience Course. Project leaders also worked strategically with Program Coordinators at the college to connect ePortfolio to Capstone Experiences. Programs ranging from Business Administration to Early Childhood Education and Dental Hygiene all require students to create a capstone ePortfolio. Working with Capstone courses also helped faculty see the need for and benefit of integrating ePortfolio use across an entire program. Leaders “next want to extend to General Studies and Liberal Arts and Sciences” as those two programs develop Capstone Experiences for their students. They are hopeful that this connection will then help with further faculty buy-in at their institution.

- The Virginia Tech leadership team connected with their college’s first year experience program in 2010. They now use that connection as they continue efforts to scale up ePortfolio use across their campus. They report that “the work alongside projects like the First Year experiences offer faculty a model for ePortfolio use.”

- Manhattanville College is building a connection to their first year experience course as they transition from a long-standing paper portfolio to ePortfolio. “We see the First Year Program (FYP) as an important gateway for the use of ePortfolio by both our faculty and students…One member of our ePortfolio Team is the Director of our First Year Program. Other members have taught in the FYP.”

- Connecting ePortfolio into the sophomore Capstone Experience in the College of General Studies proved to be a successful scaling strategy for leaders at Boston University. This connection not only helped with faculty buy-in for using ePortfolio throughout the program, student capstone ePortfolios
“have been very illuminating for us: they reveal what students feel they have benefitted most from and where they feel less well-prepared--information we can use as we contemplate curriculum reform.”

On some campuses, administrative stakeholders encourage the use of high impact practices. Campus leaders at these institutions are using the administrative support for HIP to connect those practices with ePortfolio:

- ePortfolio has long been connected with the Freshman Academies initiative at Queensborough Community College (CUNY). As a result of that connection, the “Freshman Academies Protocol has observed that students retain and graduate at higher rates when engaging in multiple high impact experiences.” ePortfolio leaders are now working with the college’s “high impact team to create integrated experiences for students” which include participation in multiple HIPs. “EPortfolio figures prominently in these discussions.”

- While still in the planning and early implementation phases, Pace University ePortfolio leaders are strategically using administrative support for high impact practices to help broaden ePortfolios presence across the student experience. They report that, “our Provost and Deans are promoting high impact practices across the university, and, in scaling up, we see ePortfolios playing a bigger role in UNV101 (first year experience), Capstone courses, Learning Communities, and Undergraduate Research opportunities. Also, we see highlighting the kinds of research that faculty are pursuing around these practices as supporting our cause.”

On campuses where ePortfolio is in broad use, across an institution, the connection to High Impact Practice has a deepening effect, helping improve student learning and reflection:

- At Guttman Community College (CUNY), where they opened the college with a number of high impact practices integrated in their curriculum, their college is deeply committed to learning communities in the first year experience, common intellectual experiences, collaborative projects, and service and community-based learning. “Each of these practices relies on ePortfolio as a source of connectivity, reflection, and collaborative analysis.” With ePortfolio already being implemented “at scale,” C2L leaders at Guttman work with faculty, staff, and administrators to identify ways ePortfolio can help deepen student experiences with these high impact practices.

- Similar to Guttman, Salt Lake Community College uses ePortfolio in all of their general education courses. They too are working to deepen the use of ePortfolio at their institution. Connecting ePortfolio to two study abroad program is one piece of that process. Team members David Hubert and Adam Dastrup integrated ePortfolio into their London and Japan study abroad programs. “Professor Hubert had led three other London study trips prior to the implementation of ePortfolio, and was very impressed
with the depth of student learning on this trip.” They report that “even though this practice is quite small in scale, it has helped us with our scaling up efforts because we have been able to show it to other faculty doing experiential learning activities.”

- ePortfolio leaders at Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) has built a strong network of connections between ePortfolio and high impact practices on their campus. As their leaders report, “Connecting to High-Impact Practices has also been critical to the growth of our ePortfolio initiative. IUPUI has a long tradition of focusing on best practices across its mission elements of teaching and learning…and we are known for innovation in the first year experience, learning communities, service learning, and other forms of experiential learning. The ePortfolio Initiative’s connections to high-impact practices are both broad and deep.”

As we see from these campus examples, connecting to High Impact Practice can help ePortfolio leaders grow and deepen their ePortfolio initiatives. ePortfolio leaders at IUPUI take the connection between ePortfolio and High Impact practices one step further. They “believe that ePortfolios can be approached as a ‘meta’-high impact practice, deepening and intensifying the impact of experiences like first-year seminars, capstones, service learning, study abroad and internships.”

Core Strategy #3 Notes

[1] High-Impact Educational Practice: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter (AAC&U, 2009)
An ePortfolio implementation is more likely to be successful when…

**Project leaders engage students as stakeholders; making students a visible and active part of their ePortfolio project.**

Students are key stakeholders, too! And, they can possess quite powerful voices for getting other stakeholders (faculty, administration, etc.) on board. I’m quite confident that a new ePortfolio program that convinces students of its value and involves them in a substantive way will have an easier job than one in which the students sit passively on the receiving end. [1]

When ePortfolio project leaders think about working with students, the first ideas that come to mind often relate to student learning and pedagogy. What we observe in the C2L network, and what is evident from the above quote, is that successful ePortfolio project leaders also consider the role students play as stakeholders in an ePortfolio project. Students who serve as active participants in an ePortfolio project:

- Assist project leaders in scaling up.
- Engage other students.
- Encourage faculty and staff participation.
- Help to gain the support of college administrators.

ePortfolio campus leaders in the C2L network use two common approaches for engaging students in the scaling up process: students serving as ePortfolio mentors for both students and faculty; and, the showcasing of student work to a variety of stakeholders.

**Students as ePortfolio Mentors**

Providing opportunities for students to serve as technology mentors is one way to advance the scaling up process for an ePortfolio project. Student mentors encourage student participation with ePortfolio by engaging, supporting, and working with their peers. At LaGuardia and Tunxis Community Colleges, ePortfolio consultants and student technology mentors (STMs) work in ePortfolio labs and provide personal assistance to students. As Arcario, Eynon, and Lucca explained, at LaGuardia, they

had previous experience with students as technology teachers—in our Student Technology Mentor program, specially trained students worked with interested faculty, helping them learn the tools needed to integrate Web-based resources into their courses. We took this concept (and some of our successful STMs) and created a cohort of ePortfolio consultants,
who would run a dedicated computer lab, the “ePortfolio Studio.” The ePortfolio consultants and the ePortfolio studio not only provide students with drop-in assistance, but also come to classes and provide workshops, based on faculty requests. [2]

Similarly, former Tunxis Community College project leader Laura Gambino reported: “We developed the role of the student technology mentor (STM) after seeing the success of STMs and ePortfolio consultants at LaGuardia. Our student mentors have been invaluable in helping their peers, not just with the technology itself, but in understanding the role ePortfolio plays in their learning at Tunxis.”[3]

Student mentors also work with faculty members, assisting them both in and outside the classroom. Pace University, Manhattanville College, and LaGuardia Community College assign peer mentors to assist faculty in their first year courses, where students are introduced to the ePortfolio. As the Manhattanville leadership team explained in their 2012 Campus Activity Report:

[B]eginning in the Fall 2012, each FYP seminar will have a Manhattanville Mentor (an upperclassperson) who has been trained in ePortfolio attached to the course. This student will provide support for both the students and faculty member. We are hopeful that this arrangement will provide the needed support…we are looking into scheduling eTerns during the blocks of time when the FYP classes are scheduled as well as having “roving” eTerns who will be able to visit faculty in their offices when called upon. [4]

At LaGuardia Community College, Arcario, et. al., reported that their ePortfolio consultants, “play an even larger role in some classes, which have an attached weekly hour in the studio—the “Studio Hour”—where consultants are responsible for guiding an in-depth ePortfolio construction process.”[5]

In addition to these formal peer mentors, informal student mentoring takes place as well. C2L ePortfolio leader Lili Rafeldt reported that in the nursing program at Three Rivers Community College: “[T]he students actually have been able to mentor themselves… There’s not a formalized peer mentor program, but there is an informal peer mentor program in that sense, that they do help each other.”[6]

Whether their role is formal or informal, student mentors help increase buy-in and participation from other students. In addition, when students work with and support faculty, they support advancement of the project by encouraging faculty interest and engagement in using ePortfolio at the course and/or program level.

**Why Student Mentors? Here’s what LaGuardia students say:**

Arcario, Eynon, and Lucca discussed the importance of their student technology mentors and ePortfolio consultants in “The Power of Peers: New Ways for Students to Support Students.” In the following excerpt from that article we hear from the students themselves:

ePortfolio students report that the peer consultants work to encourage and motivate them: “They understand what you’re going through. All the things you’ll go through in college. . . And they help you try to achieve it.” As consultants put it, “I try to give them a lot of
encouragement in general” and “I always show my ePortfolio and encourage them to create a good ePortfolio.”

Consultants also recognized that they encourage students by being role models, conveying the idea that if a consultant can do it, then all the students can as well:

One more thing is that I’m like a role model for students. I tell them, “I’m an international student, I started to work as an STM and then I graduated and started to I work this job.” And they’re like, “Wow, I can do that, too...” Because sometimes half of my class is come from all different countries. So they think, “I can do it, too.” So I just want to show them they can do all this stuff. So that’s really it, for me. That’s really it.

**Showcasing Student Work**

Having students share and present their ePortfolios in a public venue is an excellent way to showcase exemplary students and recognize them for their outstanding work. Many of the C2L campus leaders host these “showcase” events on a regular basis. These ePortfolio leaders realize that this practice also serves as a means for Scaling Up and increasing buy-in for ePortfolio use at their institution. They target a variety of stakeholders in these efforts: students, faculty, administrators, and external stakeholders. The following is a sampling of different strategies used by some of the C2L ePortfolio leaders:

**Increase Student Interest and Engagement**

Norwalk Community College ePortfolio leaders used their student showcase to build student interest as they reported in 2012 when they:

introduced a different student showcase venue to garner a larger audience through our annual, college-wide Academic Festival this spring. This showcase was facilitated by the ePortfolio leadership team and created a public forum for student eP accomplishments. Many faculty brought their students to this showcase, so many students were introduced to innovative and personalized ePortfolios through the power of the student voices themselves. [7]

**Increase Faculty Interest and Engagement**

In addition to gaining student support, C2L ePortfolio leaders use the student showcase as an opportunity to reach out to and engage faculty members who have been resistant to ePortfolio. At Tunxis Community College, for example, a student showcase on their campus last spring inspired additional faculty to participate in their ePortfolio project. As David England, Dean of Institutional Effectiveness explains, these faculty members thought: “I want to do it, too. I’ve got students that can do this stuff. I want to get my students up there.” [8]

While there are these moments of success from these efforts, project leaders also report that getting
Catalyst for Learning: Scaling Up

Core Strategies for Scaling Up: 1 - 5

reluctant faculty to attend an ePortfolio showcase is, at times, challenging. As one campus leader shared,

We had our showcase, and I was thinking about who to invite to that. I targeted ten faculty
who I knew were very hesitant. Only one of them said yes, I'll come, and came. So that didn’t
work. I was hoping to get them there and see some real exemplary students that are doing
great things with their ePortfolios, and have a road to Damascus moment, and it didn’t work.

Increase Administrative Support

LaGuardia Community College ePortfolio project leaders have been hosting student showcases for many
years now. They have had and continue to have success in using those venues to gain administrative support
for their ePortfolio work. As the LaGuardia team reported in their 2012 Activity Report:

On October 26, 2011, the College held its first ePortfolio Expo. At this event, six students from different
disciplines (i.e., accounting and business, education, fine arts, nursing, and liberal arts) collaborated and
showcased how they used ePortfolio and new media technologies to collect, process, connect, reflect, and
communicate knowledge in the 21st century. In attendance at this event were the College’s President and Vice
President, and faculty and students from various disciplines and other colleges. [9]

Engage External Stakeholders

In the C2L network, some campuses use ePortfolio student showcases as a way to engage external
stakeholders in the work of a program or institution. Tunxis Community College holds annual showcases for
their advisory board members in a variety of programs including Computer Information Systems, Business
Administration, and Dental Hygiene. Additionally, at a Criminal Justice Advisory Board meeting, the Tunxis
team reported that after viewing student portfolios: “[T]he Criminal Justice advisory board recommended that
ePortfolio be used more extensively in the program; it will be a valuable tool for students to share with police
departments during the hiring process.”[10]

What we observe from these examples and others across the C2L network is that ePortfolio student showcases,
when utilized strategically by project leaders, advance the scaling up and buy-in of their campus ePortfolio
project with a range of institutional stakeholders.

Successful ePortfolio leaders view students as active stakeholders in the scaling up of an ePortfolio project.
In addition to having students working as peer mentors and showcasing student ePortfolio work, some C2L
campuses are exploring and engaging students through other venues such as student clubs and student
government. ePortfolio leaders are working with their colleagues in Student Services to encourage these,
and other similar, connections. When these connections take place, ePortfolio then serves as a catalyst for
students to connect their curricular and co-curricular learning, allowing them to take a more active role in
shaping their education, helping cultivate both an ePortfolio culture and an institutional culture of learning.
Core Strategies for Scaling Up: 1 - 5

Core Strategy #4 Notes
[3] Interview with Tunxis Community College ePortfolio leadership team. April 2012.
Core Strategies for Scaling Up: 1 - 5

Core Strategy #5
Advancing through Professional Development

An ePortfolio initiative is more likely to be successful when…

There is a strong connection to Centers for Teaching and Learning and professional development activities.

Successful ePortfolio initiatives advance and grow when connected with thoughtful professional development activities which enable faculty and staff to explore both ePortfolio-related pedagogy and practice, and to build crucial support for broad change. From workshops to institutes to year-long seminars, ePortfolio-based professional development activities invite participants to anchor ePortfolio assignments and reflection practices in their course goals and to understand the student learning space differently. Many C2L campuses identified the connection to professional development as a key strategy for the scaling up of their ePortfolio initiative. These C2L ePortfolio team leaders strategically use professional development to increase faculty understanding of and support for the use of ePortfolio as an integrative social pedagogy, and this, in turn, leads to the scaling up of ePortfolio use across institutions.

In the Professional Development Sector of the Catalyst site, we discuss the importance of ePortfolio-related professional development and the Catalyst Essay, “C2L Strategies for Professional Development” shares seven strategies employed by campus teams when offering ePortfolio-related professional development. In this Core Strategy essay we examine those same seven strategies from a Scaling Up perspective, analyzing the ways these strategies help ePortfolio leaders grow and broaden the use of ePortfolio at their institution and sharing examples from C2L campuses.

Grow Faculty and Staff Peer Leadership (Integration)

ePortfolio leaders involve faculty and staff who have both experience with and an understanding of ePortfolio pedagogy to work with their peers at the college by placing them in professional development leadership positions. By leading ePortfolio seminars and workshops, these faculty and staff serve as role models and/or mentors for their peers, and encourage their colleagues to participate in professional development activities. They also become spokespersons, helping to advocate for the use of ePortfolio in their programs or departments.

Pace University reports that:

Initially Beth Gordon and Linda Anstendig led the sessions, but have since passed the leadership onto two teaching circle “alumni” who have embraced ePortfolios in their own pedagogy. Professors Michelle Behling and Hillary Knepper have generally followed our traditional layout, but have each made the seminar their own by selecting their own readings/
handouts to distribute and highlighting different practices from their own teaching. We do consider these two faculty members to be an important part of the ePortfolio team at Pace. Both have helped us judge ePortfolio contest entries, present at our college faculty seminars and have encouraged their peers to use ePortfolios. We continue to look for ways to cultivate future ePortfolio leaders at Pace.[1]

At LaGuardia Community College, professional development seminars are co-led by faculty and Center for Teaching and Learning staff. In addition,

The ePortfolio Leadership Team, an on-going group of faculty, staff, and ePortfolio consultants is an important piece of the professional development work at the college. Made up of ePortfolio leaders from across the college, the ePLT meets regularly to discuss ePortfolio at the college, to consider and suggest new directions, to troubleshoot any significant issues, and to provide sustained leadership across departments and programs.[2]

Meet the Needs of Programs and Departments
We know that one strategy ePortfolio leaders use to Scale Up an ePortfolio initiative is to connect with program and departments. One piece of that connection is to develop professional development activities that meet the specific needs of that area. “Customizing” professional development in this way can also be a scaling up strategy. When departments and programs see that ePortfolio leaders are willing to work with them in this manner, they may be more willing to test the waters and participate in ePortfolio-related professional development.

At Queensborough Community College, faculty development has helped scale up their Student Wiki Interdisciplinary Group, or SWIG, program. The seminar, “Moving Ahead with ePortfolio, “has served to connect many faculty with the foundations of the Student Wiki Interdisciplinary Group, providing tools which could lead to SWIG collaborations.”

At the University of Delaware, ePortfolio leaders implemented a “program-based ePortfolio consultation process” as their primary professional development practice with faculty. Their professional development support includes the following pieces:

1. Creating a conceptual ePortfolio framework to guide each program’s initial ePortfolio development.

2. Transferring the information obtained via the conceptual framework into a curriculum map. Using the curricular mapping process to guide programs in core program goal identification, selection of core courses/learning experiences that address these learning goals, selection of appropriate student artifacts aligned with program goals, and determination of appropriate assessment tools. The curriculum mapping process involved all faculty in a program and was conducted over a series of meetings.

3. Consulting with programs on development/refinement of individual ePortfolio elements, such as articulating goals, selecting artifacts, and developing assessment tools, predominantly rubrics. [3]
Strengthen Connections

From our work with C2L campus teams, we know that successful ePortfolio-related professional development offerings engage interdisciplinary groups of faculty and staff, intentionally connecting integrative ePortfolio pedagogy with assessment, advisement, and/or technology. We also know that building this intentional interdisciplinary, cross-campus professional development work can grow an ePortfolio initiative, serving as a space for conversations about student learning across a student’s academic experience and connecting their curricular and co-curricular learning experiences. Professional development can help these different constituencies see the potential of ePortfolio to connect disparate learning experiences into a cohesive, integrative whole, increasing the likelihood that they will integrate ePortfolio into their work with students.

In their Professional Development story, Manhattanville College ePortfolio leaders describe the way this strategy has helped them in broadening the use of ePortfolio across their campus:

The open and integrated nature of our professional development approach has been instrumental in the Scaling Up process on our campus. In all of our professional development programs, we actively recruit faculty and staff from across the disciplinary and programmatic spectrum. We work hard to disrupt “one size fits all” conceptions of ePortfolio by asking these diverse groups to collaboratively investigate the ways in which ePortfolios can meet their individual and collective goals for teaching, learning, programming and professionalism. In this way, ePortfolio professional development has become a catalyst for bringing faculty and staff who perform vastly different functions across our campus together to build an understanding of ePortfolio as a tool and way of thinking that can serve a complex web of interconnected goals and objectives.[4]

Showcase Faculty Work

Many C2L campus teams build on ePortfolio-related professional development to provide opportunities for faculty to showcase their pedagogical innovations to broader audiences on their campuses. In addition, we see C2L leaders organize campus-wide or cross-campus conferences to encourage faculty to present and share their ePortfolio work. These showcases and conferences help generate broader interest in ePortfolio, supporting the Scaling Up process.

At Northeastern University, ePortfolio-related professional development is integrated into their semester-long faculty inquiry groups. At the conclusion of one group which included faculty from their Writing Program, the Inquiry Group created a blog-based web site that documents their teaching and lessons learned...The primary audience for this site was the approximately 80 other instructors in the Writing Program, and the site was organized to communicate how ePortfolios were influencing the participants’ thinking about common themes in writing pedagogy.[5]
Core Strategies for Scaling Up: 1 - 5

Build Faculty Portfolios

Campuses in the C2L network guide faculty in creating their own teaching and learning or professional ePortfolios either through workshops specifically for this task or as part of broader seminars and professional development activities. As a Scaling Up strategy, helping faculty create and develop ePortfolios makes ePortfolios more visible across a campus. Faculty who maintain ePortfolios often talk about and share their portfolios with their colleagues. We see campus ePortfolio leaders such as those at Pace University and Guttman Community College, working strategically to connect ePortfolio use to the reappointment, promotion, and tenure process, again helping to raise visibility for ePortfolio itself. Also, when faculty create and maintain an ePortfolio for themselves they are able to see the value that it has as a reflective and integrative social pedagogy and ways to integrate it into their own teaching and learning practices.

ePortfolio leaders at Salt Lake Community College, who are just beginning to connect ePortfolio-related professional development which encourages faculty ePortfolio use, report that they:

have been fairly successful at helping faculty and staff in several departments develop professional ePortfolios. We have been encouraging them to share parts of those ePortfolios their students. Again, this helps faculty walk the talk with their students. For example, we conducted professional ePortfolio training for the math department earlier this fall. The faculty who attended seemed excited by the prospect of showing “what they are made of” in an ePortfolio space. Several of the faculty said that they would like to share their work with students so that they can see how an ePortfolio extends far beyond the classroom. [6]

Encourage the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Recognizing that research and scholarship are important to faculty, successful ePortfolio leaders use ePortfolio and professional development to encourage faculty engagement with the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). Connecting ePortfolio with SoTL research can introduce faculty to the ways ePortfolio can help faculty inquire into their own practices, gather, analyze, and assess evidence, reflect on the implications of their research, and publish their work for broader review. Using ePortfolio for their own research and inquiry process serves as a Scaling Up strategy; it allows faculty to discover ways to integrate ePortfolio pedagogy into their courses. In addition, through professional development activities, faculty and staff are encouraged and guided to engage in ePortfolio-related SoTL research into their practices and student experiences with ePortfolio in their courses or programs. Professional development seminars dedicated to such activities encourage faculty to expand their thinking about ePortfolio pedagogy and experiment with innovative ideas for increasing student learning and success with ePortfolio.

LaGuardia’s Center for Teaching and Learning seminar leaders not only encourages SoTL research through their Carnegie Seminar, they disseminate, share, and discuss faculty ePortfolio-related publications in many other professional development seminars. This practice not only sparks interdisciplinary conversations about ePortfolio pedagogy it encourages broader use of ePortfolio across the institution. [7]
Build a Culture of Evidence-Based Learning (Inquiry, Reflection, and Integration)

Experienced ePortfolio and professional development leaders know that gathering evidence on the effectiveness of ePortfolio-related professional development offerings helps stakeholders recognize the importance of, and need for these efforts, and models what it means to develop a culture of learning. Once the purpose of professional development is recognized, evidence of the impact of these activities on a campus can also be used to help obtain additional funding and resources to grow and strengthen a program. In addition, when faculty and staff see that administrative stakeholders recognize and value professional development, they may be more inclined to participate in activities, extending the breadth of ePortfolio use.

At LaGuardia Community College,

over the past 8 years, data collected via Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) demonstrates that students taking courses from faculty enrolled in these programs are more likely than students in comparison courses to be engaged in integrative learning experiences and to develop integrative and higher order ways of thinking. Meanwhile, institutional outcomes data (e.g. course pass rates, retention rates, high stakes exams) gathered by LaGuardia’s IR office show a persistent correlation between faculty seminar participation and higher levels of student achievement.

For example, in one recent year, when we compared next-semester retention in all ePortfolio classes with similar courses college-wide, the ePortfolio courses showed a 5.8 percentage point higher rate. This is exciting and helps to justify broad implementation of ePortfolio. [7]

As we examine the scaling up stories our C2L partners shared, we see that those ePortfolio leadership teams who intentionally and carefully connect ePortfolio with professional development opportunities are better positioned to grow and scale their ePortfolio projects. ePortfolio-related professional development leads to increased faculty and staff understanding and use of ePortfolio as an integrative social pedagogy which helps increase student learning and success. To learn more about the connection between ePortfolio and professional development, please read the two Catalyst Essays “Professional Development: Effective Strategies in the C2L Network” and “Inquiry, Reflection and Integration in Professional Development”.

Core Strategy #5 Notes

Catalyst for Learning: Scaling Up

Core Strategies for Scaling Up: 1 - 5

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