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# **FOLIO THINKING FOR FIRST-YEAR COLLEGE SUCCESS & CAREER MATURATION: PARTNERING THE KSU ONLINE CAREER PORTFOLIOS WITH THE KSU 1101: FIRST YEAR SEMINAR**

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## **Overview**

Research and reports are plentiful on the importance of “career maturation” to the retention of college students. The partnering of the Kennesaw State University First-Year Experience Program with the Kennesaw State University Career Services Center is addressing the importance of career maturation on our campus through the student use of the KSU Online Career Portfolio. The KSU Online Career Portfolio features the ability to record academic experience, international experience, technology experience, employment experience, community service while utilizing a grid which features the transferable skills needed by college graduates – leadership, communication, technology, problem solving, creativity, team building, which we triangulate with the learning outcomes of the First-Year Seminar. We call the process of creating the KSU Online Career Portfolio – *Folio Thinking*.

The folio thinking process prepares students for life-long continued career development, which demands an entrepreneurial approach of managing ones, own progress as a knowledge worker in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In our presentation we will share the academic approaches to creating e-portfolios as passports to student success, career maturation, and global citizenship.

The folio thinking process has five continual phases of development which help one design, deliver, and continually assess the learning history and learning plans: *Reflect, Assess, Collect, Connect, and Express – RACCE Portfolio Process*. By going through these continual phases of development of folio thinking the students will have (1) a distinct archived history of their learning and plans for their future learning, which results in a *Reflective Portfolio/Private Portfolio* and (2) have the baseline to design and develop a *Best of Show Portfolio/Public Portfolio* to present their learning story and learning plans to society for career search, graduate school, community work, entrepreneurial endeavors, and community service.

We will feature the ways we have partnered the Kennesaw State University First-Year Success Program and Kennesaw State University Career Services for supporting student success, through career maturation with the strengthening of retention of college students.

As of fall 2006, all KSU 1101: First-Year Seminars have used the Kennesaw State University Career Services Online Career Portfolio in their coursework. In fall 2006, 75 sections of KSU 1101 were offered and in spring 2007, 24 sections of KSU 1101 were offered. Every KSU 1101 class works closely with Career Services to ensure every first-year student meets a professional from the Center, either by classroom visits by a CSC professional or tours of the actual Center. Every KSU 1101 faculty member has been trained on the usage of the Online Career Portfolio. The Director of the KSU Career Services Center developed a Career Exploration section of the FYE, which she taught for the first time this past fall and hopes to teach every fall. The eventual plan is to allow every Career Services Center professional to teach a section to increase further the career maturation of our first-year college students.

As of fall 2005, Dr. Joan E. Leichter Dominick, Department of University Studies, was named Director of Portfolios for Student Success Programs, she is the departmental archivist for the KSU Online Career Portfolios used in KSU 1101: First-Year Seminar and all the subsequent Student Success Programs in the department.

**The *Folio Thinking* Process for First-Year Student Success: Reflect + Assess + Collect + Connect + Express**

The folio thinking process is the life-long process of archiving learning for honoring, understanding, and connecting one’s learning from self to global society. The archiving process results in the design and constant development of an ePortfolio, in the case of college students at Kennesaw State University (KSU), a KSU Online Career Portfolio. As previously stated, the *folio thinking* process prepares students for life-long continued career development which demands an entrepreneurial approach of managing ones own progress as a knowledge worker in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In our presentation we will share the academic approaches to creating e-portfolios as passports to student success, career maturation, and global citizenship. The folio thinking process results in the creation of a college student portfolio. The *KSU Online Career Portfolio* is a document that best displays what the student looks like starting their undergraduate experience. The portfolio is a process and a baseline that captures their past accomplishments, allows for analysis of your work, provides a path for your future, and bests of all, honors their accomplishments during the undergraduate journey.

The design and implementation of a portfolio is a learning process that results in the production of concrete evidence of accomplishments. The portfolio process helps students make the best decisions about honoring who they are, where they are going, and how to share their learning story! Creating a portfolio provides concrete evidence of learning and acts as a decisional base for doing career search and academic major choices. The *folio thinking* process prepares students for life-long continued career development which demands an entrepreneurial approach of managing ones own progress as a knowledge worker in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In our presentation we will share the academic approaches to creating e-portfolios as passports to student success, career maturation, and global citizenship.

The folio thinking process is implemented using the RACCE College Student Portfolio Process, which stands for Reflect + Assess + Collect + Connect + Express, developed by Dr. Joan E. Leichter Dominick (copyright 2002). These are the first stages for building the *Reflective Portfolio* and the *Best of Show Portfolio*. The *Reflective Portfolio* is your private portfolio, which moves through the stages of Reflect + Assess + Collect. These three stages help the students reflect on their learning experiences, learn how to assess their work, and how to continue to collect learning evidence. Once the students have established their *Reflective Portfolio*, they will begin the process of developing their *Best of Show Portfolio*, which is their public portfolio. There are two stages for this portfolio which are Connect + Express. The two stages help them connect and express their learning story through the production and presentation of the *Best of Show Portfolio*. This public portfolio showcases their learning story, connects their societal roles in career and global community, and helps to highlight their future learning goals. Here is the RACCE College Student Portfolio Process grid:

***The Folio Thinking Process: RACCE College Student Portfolio Process Grid***

**Reflect + Assess + Collect + Connect + Express** [Avaliable from: [www.joandominick.com/foliothinking.html](http://www.joandominick.com/foliothinking.html)]

Reflective Portfolio (Private) & Best of Show Portfolio (Public)

<b>R</b>	Reflect	<i>Mapping Your College Learning Self-Assessment Instruments</i>	Reflective Portfolio
<b>A</b>	Assess	<i>Self-Assessment + Faculty Assessment + Peer Assessment + Stakeholder Assessment</i>	Reflective Portfolio
<b>C</b>	Collect	<i>Collect Evidence of Your Learning</i> <i>Set up a Reflective Portfolio File</i>	Reflective Portfolio

C	Connect	<i>Develop the Mission, Design, and Format Portfolio</i>	Best of Show Portfolio
E	Express	Present Portfolio to Public <i>Best of Show Portfolios are used for presenting your learning story publicly:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Academic Advising</li> <li>▪ College Scholarships</li> <li>▪ Internships/Co-ops</li> <li>▪ Study Abroad</li> <li>▪ Part-time Employment</li> <li>▪ Career Interviews</li> <li>▪ Post Graduate Internships</li> <li>▪ Graduate School</li> <li>▪ Employment Reviews for Promotion</li> <li>▪ Entrepreneurial Endeavors</li> </ul>	Best of Show Portfolio

### **The KSU On-line Career Portfolio Defined**

The Career Services Center at Kennesaw State University has created the On-line Career Portfolio (OLCP) to encourage the success of our students. For a sample of the portfolio consult: <http://olcp.kennesaw.edu/CoverPage.aspx>

- By utilizing the OLCP, you will have a better understanding of how your experiences both on and off campus develop skills that prepare you for your career after college,
- The OLCP allows you to reflect and record experiences that you might otherwise overlook in the learning journey that is college.

### **Benefits of the On-line Career Portfolio**

- Gives you the ability to communicate your skills in interviews for both jobs and graduate school admittance,
- Offers you an effective way of reflecting and commenting on the relevance behind your classroom and outside experiences,
- Allows you to use a results-oriented method of displaying work. For example, not just, "I sold cookies"; instead, "I sold 500 cookies every day",
- Helps you in planning your college experience based on skills rather than chance. Assists you in understanding which courses will best prepare you for your career,
- Provides you with the ability to easily retrieve, and refer to, valuable documentation of your experiences.

### **Conclusion of Work in Progress**

Combining the developmental theory behind RACCE with the application process of the Online Career Portfolio, we are able to provide our students with the tools essential in their career maturation. The end result will hopefully be retention of our students who have clear career goals in sight and timely progression towards graduation. They will then, hopefully, become successful in their chosen careers and contributors to our society.

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