What is an Electronic Portfolio?

It seems the digital age will leave no stone unturned. It offers the promise of instant access to information, a richer, more detailed ability to represent our skills as teachers, and a way to intuitively organize and display large amounts of information. It is not uncommon for us to have multiple E-mail accounts. We display our own personalities through Web pages. Companies are racing to discover the best way to leverage the mass appeal and easy access offered by the Web. These signs point to an approaching sea change in the way we communicate. The field of education is no exception.

Colorado State University's Teacher Licensure Program recognizes this change. Pre-service teachers must be able to teach and excel in an expanding digital environment. Additionally, pre-service teachers need to document their skills, growth, and knowledge for a variety of groups, including the Colorado Department of Education and NCATE, the accrediting agency for teacher education programs. The Electronic Portfolio is designed to act as a historical repository charting your successes as you move towards completing your teaching certificate at CSU.

The idea of a portfolio has long been an integral part of teaching careers. The teaching portfolio is centered on the process of creating and cataloging examples of your work or artifacts best illustrating your abilities as a teacher. Typical artifacts may include: lesson plans, exams you created, reflections about teaching experiences, and other teaching related material. The Electronic Portfolio is a digital extension of the portfolio process.

Nicolas Negreponte, in his book "Being Digital," makes the distinction between an atom-based way of approaching the world such as books, paper, and the linear methods of navigating through such items and the non-linear, digital world of bits and bytes. Traditionally, teachers have maintained a paper portfolio or in other words an atom based collection of artifacts. This collection of artifacts must be stored in paper files that take up physical space, making it very difficult to edit artifacts once they are committed to paper, and offering limited flexibility in the way artifacts can be displayed. An Electronic Portfolio provides a more dynamic means of storing artifacts. Digital artifacts are easily saved, highly editable, and much simpler to keep current. With the growth of computer multimedia, Electronic Portfolios can be displayed with a "richness" unparalleled by paper portfolios.

The Electronic Portfolio for CSU's Teacher Licensure program is designed to provide you with a framework in which you can store, edit and update your own personal digital portrait of your growth as an educator.

The Electronic Portfolio Process

There are several steps you will need to take in order to set-up and add artifacts to your E-Portfolio. Each step will be discussed in detail throughout the packet. To give you a better understanding of the E-Portfolio process here is a summary of the steps:

1. You should already have an eID and a CAHS (M:) drive computer account. If you do not have either account; you can:
   - Establish your electronic ID with CSU by going to http://www.eid.colostate.edu.
   - Apply for an (M:) drive account by going to any one of the Applied Human Sciences computer labs.

2. Starting with ED 275 and continuing through all of the classes in the Teacher Licensure program, you will choose and save assignments corresponding to different Colorado Department of Education standards as artifacts to be displayed in your E-Portfolio.

3. Once you reach ED 331 you will learn:
   - How to download the E-Portfolio template to your personal folder on the (S:) drive.
   - How to change your artifacts into Portable Document Files (PDF).
   - Where to place the PDF files within the Web site framework.
   - How to edit the Web site to reflect your personal information (Name, Ed. Philosophy, Resume data etc.).
   - How to create multimedia and add links to your multimedia creations.
   - Publishing your E-Portfolio on the Web using the (W:) drive.
   - Create a back-up of your E-Portfolio to your (M:) drive.

4. Each subsequent class in the teacher licensure process will produce new artifacts that will need to be added to your (S:) drive E-Portfolio, some replacing previous artifacts. It will be up to you to choose which artifacts best represent your abilities. This will be a continual process charting your growth.

5. Once you have completed the Teacher Licensure program you will have a dynamic reflection of your abilities as an educator. This completed E-Portfolio will be published to the World Wide Web using your (W:) drive. Here potential employers will be able to view your E-Portfolio.

6. As a final note, always create a back up on your (M:) drive each time you make a change to your (S:) drive E-Portfolio.