

HETS BEST PRACTICES SHOWCASE

Celebrating Technology Innovation
for Hispanic Success in Higher Education

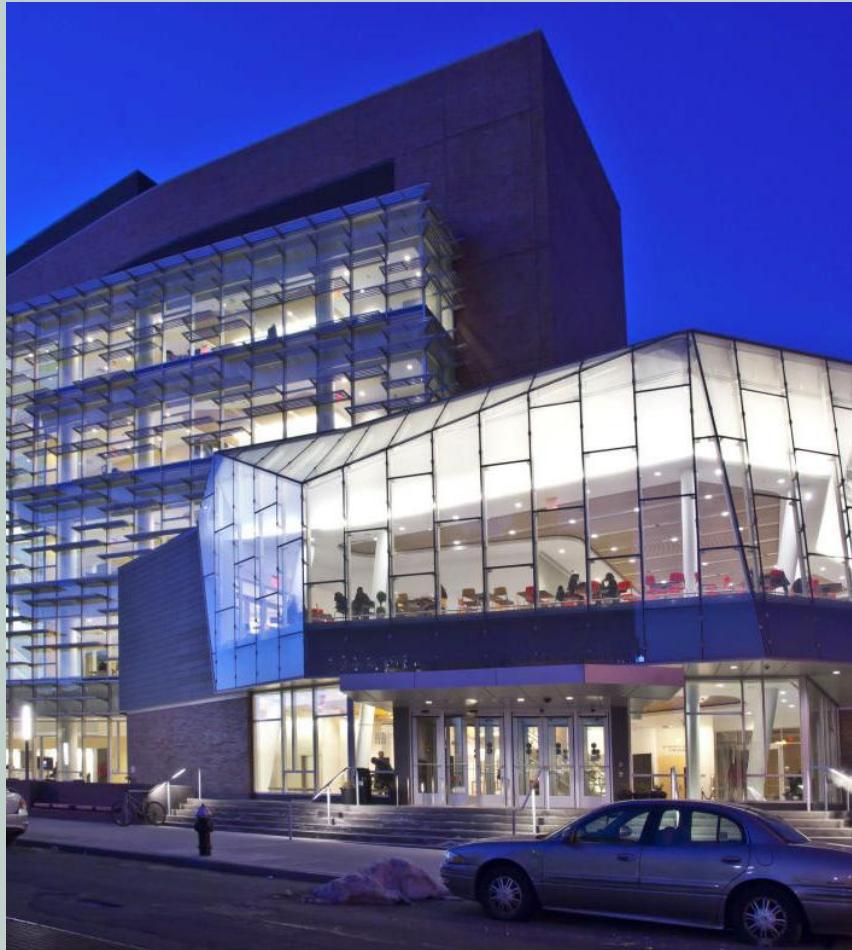
ePortfolio: Situating Ourselves in a Global Context



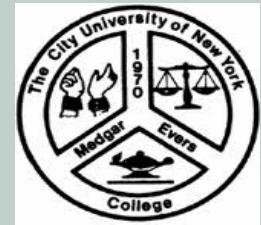
A Collaborative Interdisciplinary
Cross-cultural Distance Learning
Pilot Project



Medgar Evers College, CUNY & Universidad de Puerto Rico, Mayaguez



Medgar Evers College, CUNY



- Established in 1969, as a result of actions by NYS elected officials and Community leaders, and named for martyred civil rights leader Medgar Evers Wiley.
- Located in Crown Heights, one of the largest, most densely populated and ethnically varied sections of Brooklyn.
- One of eleven senior colleges of the City University of New York.
- One of the few CUNY colleges that grants both BA and AA degrees.
- FTE In Spring 2013 was 6,391, 87% were of African descent, 13 % was comprised of Hispanic (9.1%), European American (1.2%), Asian/Pacific Islander (1.6%), Native American (.6%). Latino population has more than doubled in the last 5 years.
- Currently offers 18 baccalaureate degrees, 8 associate degrees and one credit-bearing certificate in its degree-granting programs.

UPR, Recinto Mayaguez



- Originally established as the College of Agriculture of the University of Puerto Rico on September 23, 1911.
- By 1966 UPR Mayaguez had grown to become the 2nd largest college in the UPR system & the only one with a School of agriculture and a Graduate program in Marine Science.
- Today, UPRM houses 4 Academic units; Agricultural Sciences, Engineering, Arts and Sciences and Business Administration.
- Matriculated student enrollment, both undergraduate and graduate, totaled 11,838 for Fall 2013.
- The mission of UPRM is to prepare an educated citizenry of critical thinkers to work as professionals in the fields of agriculture, engineering, business administration and the humanities, so that they might contribute to the social, cultural and economic growth & development of Puerto Rico.

UPR/CUNY Global Connections Project Rationale

Why ePortfolio?

ePortfolio use in the classroom has been lauded for encouraging **critical thinking** and **reflection**. However, as a Social Studies educator, the aspect of ePortfolio that most appealed to me was how it is designed to encourage students to connect the various threads of their life experiences into a **holistic expression of individual identity**. ePortfolios encourage students to reflect on their talents, strengths, areas of knowledges and expertise, and document them, so they can be recognized and acknowledged. I wondered if there was a way to extend this innate structural attribute of ePortfolio to the next level, **making global connections**, and **contextualizing personal experiences** in the light of **historical and contemporary world events**. And so I reached out to fellow educator, Dr. Mary Sefranak, from UPR Mayaguez and created the ePortfolio Global Connections pilot project.

UPR/CUNY Global Connections Project Objectives

- The Global connections project afforded future teachers the opportunity to **learn (by doing)** how to use ePortfolio technology to create interactive cross-cultural distance learning projects that incorporate the use of **multimedia biographies, timelines and reflections**. Participants learned to **structure and facilitate an ePortfolio experience**, which allows students to “link ideas and make connections between concepts, ideas and each other” (Bolinger & Shepard, 2010). The combination of the use of technology and the **creation** of an **online learning community** provided a means for students to “move from the personal to the professional, sociological, and cognitive aspects of learning”.
- By examining and responding to each others’ ePortfolios, students recognized **similarities across experiences**, which has the potential to increase their ability to **communicate effectively** and thus improve feelings of **connectedness to the Global community**.

Project Interactions

ABOUT ME: Interactive Autobiography

1. ABOUT ME:

E-PEN PALS INTRODUCED THEMSELVES ELECTRONICALLY. ENTRIES INCLUDED TEXT, PICTURES AND/OR VIDEO. THEY WERE ENCOURAGED TO INCLUDE ART, POETRY, MUSIC, ETC., ANY TEXT OR MEDIA THAT WOULD PRESENT THE MOST COMPLETE PORTRAIT OF THEMSELVES POSSIBLE.



Project Interactions

TIMELINES: MY LIFE IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

2. TIMELINES:

E-PEN PALS CREATED A TIMELINE OF THEIR LIVES VIA WWW.OURTIMELINES.COM THEY INCLUDED HIGHLIGHTS FROM THEIR OWN LIVES AND POSTED IN A DESIGNATED SECTION OF THEIR E-PORTFOLIO.



Project Interactions

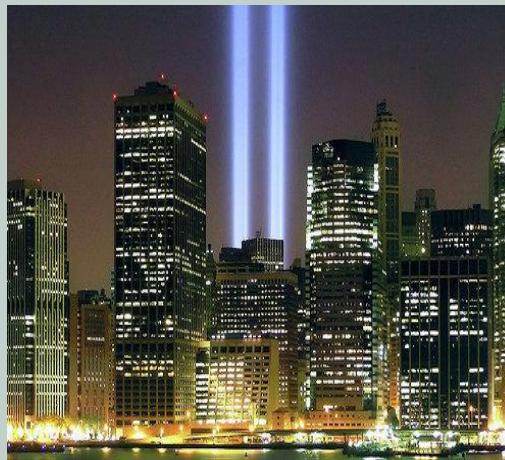
REFLECTIONS: CONNECTING OUR WORLDS

3. DOCUMENT:

E -PEN PALS CREATED & SHARED DETAILED JOURNAL ENTRIES ON THE SAME THREE HISTORICAL EVENTS FROM THEIR TIMELINES, FROM THEIR UNIQUE PERSPECTIVES & INCLUDED FEELINGS, THOUGHTS AND VIVID IMAGES.

4. COMPARE:

E-PEN PALS WROTE SUMMATIVE REFLECTIONS COMPARING THEIR EXPERIENCE OF THE 3 EVENTS CHOSEN FROM THEIR TIMELINE, TO THAT OF THEIR E-PEN PAL.



Project Interactions

FACE TO FACE: DISTANCE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

5. ANALYZE:

THIS PROJECT CULMINATED IN A FACE TO FACE DISTANCE LEARNING EXPERIENCE WHERE E-PEN PALS MET TO DISCUSS AND ANALYZE THE PROJECT OUTCOMES.



Juan Colon

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Lessons Learned



AREAS OF CONCERN:

- Technology: Face to face distance learning component of the pilot malfunctioned due to technical difficulties. Back up plan needed.
- Unequal commitment: Difficult to supervise on-line social interactions and hold students accountable.
- Time Issues: Several students complained that there were not sufficient opportunities for social interaction with their ePen-pals.
- Developing teaching skills: Students needed more time to create their own ePortfolio distance Learning activities.

Technical Considerations



- Compatible Distance Learning systems
- Stable / fast internet connection
- Quality audio re-enforcement and environment
- Front lit subjects



PARTICIPANT VOICES



“I believe we had the same views because we are people with a heart, no matter what country or culture we come from.” (T.J.)



“We both observed the blatant racism American politicians have used to spite the President. It is easier for nations to coexist if we can see that we all share the same sentiments”. (D.H.)



“I was surprised that my Pen pal found it interesting that PR was affected by the war. A lot of Puerto Ricans served & died in that war.” (G.E.)



UPR/CUNY Global Connections Project

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