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# THE AAEEBL LEARNER

The Association for Authentic Experiential and Evidence-Based Learning

ePORTFOLIO  
**AAEEBL  
2014**



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- 2 **What I Did on my Summer Vacation**, by Gail Ring, Clemson University
- 4 **Cindy’s Column: Embodied Learning**, by Cindy Stevens, Wentworth Institute of Technology
- 5 **What can you Expect from an AAEEBL Summit?**
- 6 **AAEEBL’s 2014 Executive Summit: Embodying the Path**, by Marc Zaldivar, Virginia Tech
- 7 **Think About It**, by Julie Ambrose, Lehigh Carbon Community College
- 8 **Campus Conversations: G. Alex Ambrose**
- 13 **Earn AAEEBL-Credentialed Badges and Contribute to the AAEEBL Community Online (ACO)**, by Kathryn Coleman, Deakin University
- 15 **A Message from you AAEEBL Co-Leaders**, by Trent and Judy Batson
- 17 **New Resources Featured on the AAEEBL Online Community**
- 18 **Calendar of Events 2014-2015**

We hope you like our new look as TAL continues to evolve. This issue features a stunning cover by designer Rob Fabiano, contributions from knowledgeable and talented leaders in the field and a fine layout design by Wentworth Institute of Technology Coop student, Megan Savage.

Ideas or feedback?  
Let us know how we're doing!

## A Message from AAEEBL’s Board Chair



It was a great pleasure to see so many of you (280, to be exact) at the AAEEBL Annual Conference in Boston this past July. Judging from the sessions I attended and the comments I heard from others, the conference was a wonderful success; the Ignite sessions were perhaps the biggest hit, along with the excellent plenary sessions offered by Bret Eynon and Laura Gambino, Kathy Takayama, and Bryan Alexander. The most important take-away for me this year was the sense that the inter/national conversation about ePortfolios is becoming increasingly rich and sophisticated, as ePortfolios continue to emerge as a field of practice with its own theoretical underpinnings and body of evidence-based research. I spoke with many other conference participants who voiced this impression. It’s gratifying to know that AAEEBL, as the nexus for exchange among ePortfolio practitioners and researchers, has played a central role in encouraging and catalyzing these developments.

Let me also congratulate Trent, Judy, and the respective planning committees for AAEEBL’s two successful regional conferences in November, the Southeast Regional Conference at the University of Georgia and the Midwest conference in Chicago. I attended the Chicago meeting where the discussions were again both provocative and sophisticated in their approaches to eportfolio practice.

Now it’s time to look toward the next annual conference and to mark your calendars for July 27-30, 2015 in Boston. The theme will be “Beyond ‘One Size Fits All,’” with a focus on three “Targets for Transformation”: Evidence-Based Learning; Personalized Learning Paths; and Holistic Outcomes Assessment. Expect to see the Call for Proposals in your inbox soon.

Happy holidays to you all—I’m looking forward to a year of continued advancement of the ePortfolio field and to seeing you at AAEEBL national and regional events.

All the best,  
Susan Kahn



## What I Did on my Summer Vacation

Gail Ring

*Director, ePortfolio Program  
Clemson University*

I led the 2014 ePortfolio Summer Assessment Institute. Ok, let me back up and give you a bit of history and context. Here are a few things that you should know:

- Clemson uses the evidence in undergraduate students' eportfolios for the assessment of our General Education program.
- Until recently, the eportfolio was a graduation requirement for all undergraduates.
- As the Director of Clemson's ePortfolio Program, part of my job is to facilitate the ongoing assessment of student learning outcomes related to general education.

Though the primary purpose of the ePortfolio Program is the assessment of our General Education curriculum, we believe that engaging students in purposeful and ongoing eportfolio development encourages critical self-reflection and analysis, adding value to their collegiate experience. It is through the selection of appropriate college-level work, and the articulation of how that work demonstrates the competency that students begin the process of organizing and evaluating their experiences.

Each summer I bring together a group of faculty from across the university to review these student artifacts. This process occurs over the course of one week and is intended to provide insight on the quality of student artifacts, clarity of the competencies, and usefulness of the scoring rubrics. In the next few paragraphs I will share why I think this is the best way to spend your summer.

There are three primary goals for the Summer Assessment Institute: expand faculty knowledge of the ePortfolio Program while correcting possible misconceptions they may have, conduct an assessment of student artifacts, and engage in course/programmatic revision based on the review of these artifacts. In our model, faculty participants review a stratified, random sample of student artifacts from the previous academic year to ensure student work from all majors for all competencies is sampled. To increase the sample size, the number of faculty assessors increases most years.

The first thing on the agenda is introductions, but with a twist. In addition to introducing themselves and telling everyone what they teach and in which department they reside, each participant must mention one thing they [think they] know about the ePortfolio Program. The word think is important because we find that what participants know isn't always accurate. In addition, everyone must mention something that hasn't already been said and each statement is written on the white board where it will remain for the rest of the week serving as a reminder of these misconceptions. We have found this activity to be invaluable as we begin our work for the week. The process of asking faculty what they know and how they know it, and correcting possible misconceptions immediately opens their eyes to the vast amount of misinformation surrounding this program. Equally important is identifying what the sources of the misinformation are.

Each summer first-time faculty participants as well as those that have participated once or twice previously are invited. Although we find participating in the institute is beneficial in eliminating or reducing misconceptions, we have found that most participants don't fully understand the Program and begun to adjust their courses and assignments until after their second or third year of participation. Faculty participants are paired based on competency and discipline, for example a math professor and an engineering professor would be paired to review mathematics artifacts while a psychology professor might be paired with a sociology professor to review social science artifacts. The reviewers then retrieve a random sample of student work from all undergraduates across all colleges. Using the rubric developed and refined over the years by groups similar to this one, these artifacts are not re-graded, but assessed based on how well they meet the competency.

Next, participants are divided into content/competency groups and meet with the faculty facilitator for their competency. Here they can ask questions about the assessment process and the facilitator will provide information on the types of artifacts that are commonly seen, and which ones demonstrate the competency well and which do not. Next, the groups achieve inter-rater reliability through a practice



*Continued from Page 2*

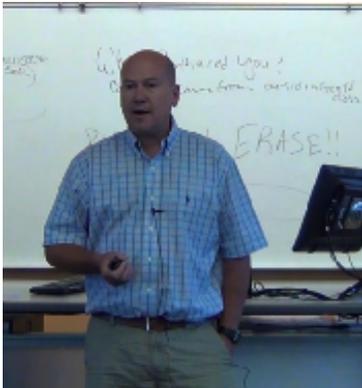
scoring session in which they look at student artifacts, score them using the rubrics, and discuss their results. This continues until they have reached consensus on the scores promoting the process of review and discussion. The intention of this iterative, collaborative process is to encourage participants to think about their courses and assignments so that they can begin to “tweak” them to better demonstrate the competencies. A follow-up session the next summer provides another opportunity to review student work and continued tweaking, as necessary.

You may be asking yourself why I think this is such fun. Well, because interspersed with the hard work of assessment are extremely powerful conversations about learning, participant presentations about how they fine-tuned their courses and assignments, and discussions centered on student learning.

I am not the only one who sees a benefit to this process as evidenced in the comments below from our participants.

*“The eportfolio has made me a better teacher, it gives me a chance to reflect and see what my students are really learning in my class.”*

*“I have come to appreciate how it serves and is an effective assessment instrument for the University. That it isn’t so nebulous; it is simple and effective. That as an educational tool it provides good data on the competencies.”*



*“Helped me understand what the competency requirement is and as a result I have changed the way I teach to shift toward a more critical analysis of the Social Science methodologies. Currently the assignment works, but I plan to tweak it so it works better for more students.”*

In the video linked to his picture (left), Jim, a history professor, discusses how minor tweaks to courses and assignments can be made by faculty to align both with the core task of the competency.

We will continue to build on the success of the Institute, introducing new faculty each year in an attempt to transform the undergraduate curriculum. We believe the opportunity to participate in this authentic assessment of student work is a powerful way to engage faculty in the sometimes difficult process of reflection on and the continuous improvement of the general education curriculum.

## Calling all AAEEBL 2014 conference presenters! We need your help!

Many people who wanted to attend AAEEBL 2014 in Boston were not able to join us. To share the conference experience with them, and with anyone who wants to learn more about your topic, we’re assembling an AAEEBL 2014 resource webpage and need your help to make sure it’s complete. If you were a featured speaker or a workshop, session, panel, poster or Ignite session presenter, please share any or all of the following by December 10:

- The title of your session with names of presenters with whom you shared the spotlight. Include institutions, and add Ph.D. or other designations to names as you wish to be represented.
- PowerPoint (or other) presentations, preferably saved as a PDF.
- Links to any web sites or resource pages you shared during your presentation.
- Copies of session hand-outs provided to attendees.
- Any other relevant links to materials such as YouTube videos or institutional sites pertinent for sharing as a resource related to your presentation.

Many people mentioned that AAEEBL 2015 was a significant moment indicative of the way eportfolios are evolving and advancing as a significant field in practice and research. The presentations exemplified this. Please make sure you’re included in this valuable and important collection. Send material to [judy@aaeebl.org](mailto:judy@aaeebl.org) by December 20.



## Cindy's Column: Embodied Learning



**Cindy Stevens, Ph.D.**  
*Professor, Co-Editor of the  
AAEEBL Learner*  
Wentworth Institute of Technology

I learn so much at the AAEEBL Boston conferences every year and this past July 2014 conference was no different. This year what stood out to me the most was the Executive Summit session. In the Wentworth management department we struggle with student reflection pertaining to all work and all levels from freshman to senior years. The Executive Summit workshop provided some excellent tools to consider for eportfolio reflection, as well as general student or group work learning experiences. I found myself taking as many notes at this session as possible and I was truly surprised to discover that the group workshop exercise truly worked for me. I had such a deep learning experience with the break out session that I decided to try a few ideas in my own classroom.

Before I describe what I tried in the classroom, I feel like I should provide you with a few details about the session and why it was so transformative for me. At the Executive Summit, Melissa Peet discussed the difference between disembodied and embodied learning experiences and also how to ask students the right questions to help with reflection and a deeper learning experience. After listening and absorbing what Melissa said, I realized I am a culprit of pretty much asking disembodied questions for who knows how long. In short, a disembodied question might ask what did you learn and an embodied question might ask what frustrated you. This was very interesting to me, because I am a true believer that we learn through experiences - both good and bad. I thought to myself then, why have I not approached student learning like this? This is how I live my personal life. Why haven't I brought these ideas into student experiences? However, I was not quite convinced. It wasn't till Melissa had us break out into groups with total strangers and follow through with a set of embodied questions to answer and share with each other. As we answered these questions provided to us, reflecting privately to ourselves, it wasn't until we each shared our answers with total strangers that themes began to emerge for each of us. The theme that surfaced for me truly offered an, a-ha moment. I discovered through this break out workshop session that true reflection needed to start with an embodied question, private reflection, and then finally follow up with telling my

story to others. Telling my ideas to someone who does not know me allowed me to open up and not worry about what they thought. These strangers also helped me to see themes emerge along the way. Now, I know this might all seem somewhat vague or confusing to anyone reading this article. I will be happy to share a few more details if anyone wants to email me. Also, I am sure Melissa Peet would be happy to share resources to provide you much more information on transformative learning, along with asking embodied questions. For now, hopefully the ideas I have provided with you explain enough for you to understand what went on in this session.

This is where it gets more interesting. I decided to give this a try in the classroom for a group project that needs to be posted to student eportfolios. For years, I have been asking questions, such as:

1. What did you get out of group work?
2. Share what you learned?
3. What would you do differently?

These questions are not bad per say, but I do not feel students are very involved when providing answers.

This past semester, after the conference, I decided to ask what I thought were embodied questions of a group project instead, such as:

1. What made you angry?
2. What shocked you?
3. What made you feel good?

It worked! My students gave open and honest answers. They seemed truly engaged and motivated with reflection. Several students were able to be honest with each other about team conflicts, major successes, what they would do differently, and what skill areas needed work. It's hard to explain the difference. I am sure anyone reading this article knows the feeling of when your students are motivated, engaged, and paying attention.

I plan to continue asking embodied questions from this point forward. I also plan to have students sit in reflection groups soon with other students they do not normally team up with to see how sharing their embodied answers works out. These may seem like very simple ideas in the scheme of things, but in the end, if it works better, why not try it!

Let's continue this discussion at the AAEEBL site [blog](#).



## Snapshots from the AAEEBL 2015 Executive Summit

AAEEBL 2014



Thanks to PebblePad for sponsoring the 2014 Executive Summit. Here AAEEBL Co-Leaders, Judy and Trent Batson (left and right) enjoy a photo op with Shane Sutherland, Colin Dalziel and Holly Lewis.

Attendees share creative ideas and make new connections while learning in authentic and experiential style!

An additional value to Institutional Members and Corporate Partners is access an invitation to attend the Executive Summit, held at AAEEBL's Annual Conference.



AAEEBL Executive Summits offer a great opportunity for Corporate Partners to meet and greet each other and to share ideas. Here Mahara (Kristina Hoepfner) meets Foliotek (Geoff Leigh).

Each year's Executive Summit brings corporate representatives together with academics who benefit from each other's perspectives.



Table work at the 2014 AAEEBL Annual Executive Summit was animated and fun!



Colin Dalziel of PebblePad and Gail Ring (Clemson University) doing group work at the Executive Summit 2014.



Jeff Yan (Digication) and Cindy Stevens (Wentworth Institute of Technology) converse about tacit knowledge and eportfolios.

AAEEBL is committed to proving more-than-lectern presentations at conferences, and the Executive Summit is always exemplary of how we aim to practice what we preach.



## AAEEBL's 2014 Executive Summit: Embodying the Path Marc Zaldivar Director of Active Technologies for Engaged Learning Virginia Tech



This past July, at AAEEBL's fifth international conference, I had the opportunity to sit in a room of friends and colleagues and learn from one of the discipline's shining stars, Dr. Melissa Peet, at the Executive Summit hosted graciously by PebblePad. I've known Melissa since I joined the professional eportfolio world as a dynamic speaker and a vibrant personality, and that life-inspired work fills out the corners of her academic interest as well. She took a room full of people who knew each other just a little bit and asked us to embody what we know, to think through the surface reflection and to look deeper, and it left a lasting impression on me.

In a room of fifty semi-strangers, it can be hard to know who you are. Each of us carries tags of meaning: the professors, the eportfolio leaders, the creative, the traditional...so many shapes. One of the strengths of Melissa's approach to "generative knowledge" is its ability to ground reflective thinking in experiential, (em)bodied knowledge. She asked us to work as individuals and to share as a collective ways in which we have had meaningful, engaged experiences. What were the contexts for those experiences? Why were they meaningful? How do they engage us?

By looking not only forward and back, but also sideways and through the cracks, we can begin to unpack a lifetime of experiences that make us meaningful contributors to our own life paths. That became very apparent to me as I both thought through my own moments of purposeful engagement and got to share with a relatively new acquaintance some of hers. Through just a few pointed questions and a well-thought-through



Marc Zaldivar (left) at "Generative Coaching: Fostering Transformative Learning in People and Organizations," the 2014 Annual Executive Summit, sponsored by PebblePad with facilitator Melissa Peet.

listening strategy provided by Melissa's guidance, we had a chance to share and to learn from each other, finding both points of connection and points of difference that offered a reminder and clearer definition on my purpose, as an academic and as a working mind.

This comes at a particularly important time in the development of eportfolios in higher education. The field is clearly maturing: the entire conference was a mix of the new, oft-overwhelmed looking individuals seeking to find a grounding and a beginning in this rather large field of inquiry and of the old, oft-ground-down looking individuals seeking to keep the movement going forward, looking for the rejuvenation of the new. The conversations, both at the Executive Summit and at the rest of the conference were, for me, on a much higher level than I had ever experienced previously: it wasn't only about cool new tech features or undefined "reflection," but about meaningful adoption of student engagement, about multimodality of learning and expression, about helping our students (and ourselves) self-direct and self-acknowledge learning and experience. That is very powerful stuff, and Melissa's guidance through the Executive Summit was a wonderful capstone on that experience at the conference. In that room are the visionaries who will take us to the next experiences as a field; in that room are the individual experiences whose



Executive Summit facilitator, Melissa Peet (University of Michigan) presenting about Generative Coaching. She also provided opportunities for attendees to gain an experience in generative interviewing and discovering the value of tacit knowledge.

stories we will embody as we move forward as a discipline. It's comforting to have a strong, bright voice at the front of the crowd asking good questions and showing a good path to walk.



## Think About It



**Julie Ambrose**  
*Career Portfolio Specialist*

Lehigh Carbon Community College

This piece is a reflection on assessment of the eportfolio initiative on one campus: mine.

This fall I begin my third year as the Career Portfolio Specialist; my anniversary coincides with the anniversary of the college's eportfolio initiative which began with my hiring. A primary question that I've had to answer in designing and promoting the concept of using portfolios with student learners has been, "What are the benefits of using an eportfolio?" Now that I'm working

with fourteen classes, scholarship programs and groups, and have a waiting list of faculty who are interested, I need to begin answering that question with evidence, rather than predictions.

What are the benefits of using an eportfolio? I write this question because its answers are both elusive and self-evident. The benefits we look for and try to measure depend on our orientation and goals. On my campus, each of my faculty partners has her own orientation and goals.

For example, my position is based in the Career Development Center. Our interests include the college's goals for increased student retention and persistence through graduation which may be measurable over time through retention and graduation statistics once our participant numbers are larger if the research department is able to assist us with some data assessment – phew! We are also interested in intentional career decision making, post-graduation transfer and job attainment, and employability skills.

Before we had an online component, one program I worked with started with a paper version that emphasized student reflection. The students in the program all receive scholarship money. For each of our three completed semesters, they rated the value of the reflection component higher than they rated the scholarship money on a Likert scale. This data is useful and affirming, but does it answer the question?

When I discuss the use of eportfolios with a faculty partner, I now ask specifically, "What are your goals for using this tool? How will we measure the impact that the eportfolio has (on your students? On your course? On your teaching?)?" So far, only one person has had a concrete idea for measuring the benefits. She suggested a pre-test/post-test analysis of students goals (one of the standard sections for our campus because the initiative is housed in the Career Development Center) using surveys to see whether there are differences between the students in the eportfolio classes and a control group of students not exposed to the eportfolios. Phew! Phew!

Yes, research is needed – but is this the best approach? Might a qualitative study be more effective at understanding the benefits to students on our campus? Would those results be useful? Would that method be respected?

Of course, we all have those students who totally embraced the concept and have stories to support how the eportfolio benefitted them in the transfer or job search process, the students who won a scholarship or who were highlighted in our campus ePortfolio Awards – but are these anecdotes sufficient evidence to answer the question?

Some faculty suggested that we to move forward and let the market show that there is a benefit. It has been suggested, "Ask employers to come tell us how valuable they are!"

So far, the pressure to answer the question, "What are the benefits of using an eportfolio?" is self-imposed, but I want to be ready when it is posed by others.

Could you answer the question, "What campus is this article about?" with the response, "Mine." If so, consider joining the conversation about how to measure the benefits of using eportfolios on your campus on the AAEEBL online forum.



## CAMPUS CONVERSATIONS

Sharing and learning through discussions about eportfolios



### The Intersection of Digital Badges and ePortfolios A Q&A interview with G. Alex Ambrose

*The eportfolio platform is not only best optimized to take stock and provide evidence for earning digital badges, it is the most logical space to support or showcase them. - G. Alex Ambrose*

G. Alex Ambrose, Notre Dame's associate director of eportfolio assessment has leveraged the pairing of eportfolios with digital badges for his institution. Here, he shares some of the opportunities and challenges for institutions looking to develop this space.

**Q: What's unique about the pairing of digital badges and eportfolios?**

A: Both eportfolios and digital badges have been around for a while, and each technology has garnered a lot of attention. But I see a nice overlap, or intersection.

The thing that I was getting stuck on, at first, with digital badges, was the problem of where to put them within the institutional framework. I was very excited about the idea of digital badges but I was running into a practical obstacle: People earn digital badges, but where do they "put" them? Obviously, people have their own portfolios, and to me, that's the best place for the digital badge.

But going back even one step before that, as someone who is designing a digital badge system for my campus, I have to ask for evidence of skills and accomplishments based on a set of criteria. The best medium and means I know of that can offer that evidence is an eportfolio. The student is in effect saying, "Here is my badge, and here in my eportfolio you can see what I did to earn that badge."

So, the "set" of eportfolios and badges together is optimal: The eportfolio platform is not only best optimized to take stock and provide evidence for earning digital badges, it is the most logical space to support or showcase them.

**Q: Who will create generalized expectations and familiar models around the pairing of digital badges**

**and eportfolios?**

A: Although I'm very encouraged about formal efforts to create standards, I still think you have to put the control back with the individual student. They may wish to showcase particular badges with particular types of portfolios. For example, a student might not want to mix their gaming badges with their career learning badges, or their political badges. For badges, we want individuals to have the same type of flexibility, control, and access that we've developed in portfolios.

**Q: We have an existing learning ecosystem, an education establishment that we've all been dealing with for decades. I know that's changing, but how can this pairing of digital badges and eportfolios become operational across most institutions?**

A We've all watched disruptive trends in the last 10-15 years. Banking has changed, newspapers have changed... I cannot believe education still has not completely, fundamentally, and radically changed. To me, it's just a matter of time. Whereas we spent the last decade chasing tools and technologies, we can now see the trajectory of and get an appreciation for disruptive transformation.

I think of digital badges and eportfolios as being among the emerging technologies for traditional institutions to get ahead of. We need to consider how we can flank and hedge these disruptive innovations.

I see an important opportunity to do just that, with the co-curricular. There are many things students do in the co-curricular, like multiple

*Continued on Page 9*



*Continued from Page 8*

internships, possibly multiple student jobs across four years, developing clubs or leadership programs, doing research deeply for 2-3 years with a professor... These things are not really given much justice on traditional transcripts, or even on a resume.

So, if institutions like ours can use the digital badge to make visible, and recognize the co-curricular, I think that's going to create a new currency that starts changing the balance.

**Q: It sounds like this pairing of digital badges and eportfolios could encourage a lot of really creative work in the co-curricular: Students will not have to be afraid of losing this part of their story.**

A: Yes! And the eportfolio has of course been, through recent years, an effective tool to "tell your story" on its own. But at this point, we just don't have robust design and integration of portfolios into programs or plans of study. I work very hard at my institution to set gateway and capstone bookends, but it's tough keeping the momentum going, especially during the time in between. That's why I look to the co-curricular as an incentive to what I call keeping the eportfolio pulse alive. We don't want students to build an eportfolio only once in that gateway course and not touch it for three or four years only to back up and scramble at the point of the capstone. We want to stay up-to-date, keep touch points going, and keep that EKG engagement pulse alive for portfolios and digital badges. Engagement with the co-curricular allows us to do that.

**Q: Are there champions of digital badges and eportfolios on your campus? Or any limits affecting your efforts?**

A: The leadership here on campus has been very helpful, offering both encouragement and perspective for initiatives in that intersection of digital badges and eportfolios. From my discussions with several key leaders, I've learned some good parameters to work within.

I do stay away from the curricular, from the dollar, from the credit, from the hour, and from the grade. That's because if you try to create a certificate, or certification, or create a certificate program, you'll find that those are all loaded terms having deep, deep ramifications—with accreditation, with the Department of Education,

with financial aid... and I don't want to step into those areas.

**Q: At least for now, right? Or forever?**

A: For now, I would say. I often call myself a disruptive innovator. And I really would love to see the day when we knock out the transcripts and the high-stakes tests... and the accreditation agencies and bureaucracies...

**Q: How will new opportunities presented by the pairing of digital badges with eportfolios fit into the existing institutional framework for most colleges and universities? Are there communities of practice or oversight emerging now to be aware of?**

A: I'm fairly wary after being an elementary school teacher, and seeing No Child Left Behind... Although standards and compatibility are important, sometimes things go too far in terms of the apparent need that arises for top-down control and regulation. I get nervous about this. That's another reason why I say that I stay away from the curricular. I don't think the potential opportunities eportfolios and badges may present together will really need an organized 'table-of-contents list of badges', nationally or globally.

Like eportfolios have been for years, the more recent pairing of badges and eportfolios is really just a platform. It's not an entity in itself and nobody owns it. It should be used by the individual, Number One, and then the local program level, Number Two. And these parties should communicate and define in their own way how this platform is being used.

Keep in mind that the higher you go up, often the more bureaucracy, the more regulation, the more complicated things get... and everything slows down.

In a true sense, all we are really doing as an institution is giving stickers on eportfolios. And students are just trying to earn some of these to help create and tell their own story... to make sense of their learning.

**We're gearing up! Get Ready!**





AAEEBL Partner, Deakin University Australia Leading International Event for Curate, Credential and Carry Forward Digital Learning Evidence

**Kate Coleman**

*Board of Directors*

Deakin University and AAEEBL

Mozilla's Open Badges project has opened up a new way of recognizing skills and learning through an open, stackable framework and provided an opportunity to recognize more detailed aspects of learning. For example, whereas achievement of learning may be somewhat invisible in collated marks and grades, open badges enable the warranting of capabilities including those that are difficult to measure (such as team work and intercultural competence). Badging skills, experiences and knowledge can supplement or even replace traditional assessment signals such as marks and grades. Open badges can also enable a more social approach to assessment: badges can be issued or endorsed by designated stakeholders - peers, mentors, industry, associations - both within and outside of an institution and build the learner's ability to judge their own and others' performance.

This national forum will showcase examples from the thought leaders in the field in prior learning, credentialing, open badges practice and research, and offer an employer's perspective.

### International Thought Leaders

- Associate Professor Dan Hickey, Indiana University; Director of the Open Badges Design Principles Documentation Project
- Dr. Nan Travers, SUNY, Director of the Office of Collegewide Academic Review National

### Thought Leaders

- Associate Professor David Gibson, Curtin University
- Allyn Radford, CEO, DeakinDigital InPractice
- Dr. Michael Evans, Neukom Fellow, Dartmouth College
- Joanna Normoyle, Experiential and Digital Media Learning Coordinator; UC Davis Professional perspectives
- Janet Strivens, Centre for Lifelong Learning Educational Development Division The University of Liverpool, Senior Associate Director, The CRA
- Susie Steigler-Peters, Education Industry Executive, Telstra

[More Information](#)

## Wentworth Co-Op Students Take Over The AAEEBL Learner Production

Megan Savage is a senior at Wentworth Institute of Technology studying Business Management with a concentration in Technology Project Management. She took the position of producing *The AAEEBL Learner* as her last Co-Op at Wentworth. Co-Op is a semester long internship that provides all Wentworth students the opportunity to get hands on experience within their field of study before they graduate. All students have to complete two Co-Op work semesters to graduate from Wentworth. Megan is originally from West Warwick, RI but now enjoys living in Boston, MA. She is a big New England sports fan and works part-time at Fenway Park. When she's not working or studying, she enjoys cooking and exploring the city.





## Earn AAEEBL-Credentialed Badges and Contribute to the AAEEBL Community Online (ACO)

**Kate Coleman**

*Board of Directors*

**Deakin University and AAEEBL**

We are moving forward with AAEEBL's badging and digital credentialing initiative given a global movement with greater recognition of badges for Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) and credentialing. We are stepping up on this regardless of our lag in the 2013 launch since we believe that PLA and alternative credentialing are vital components of 21st century learning, and we endeavor to offer significant and innovative ways for AAEEBL Community members to earn designation of engagement through badging.

### **But, What is a Badge?**

1. A device or emblem worn as an insignia of rank, office, or membership in an organization.
2. An emblem given as an award or honor. [Freedictionary.com](http://freedictionary.com)

JISC tells us that "in its most basic form, an Open Badge is a digital reward which can be stored inside a student's 'digital backpack'. The badges can be achieved by completing tasks and goals set by an issuer, such as a learning provider (awarding badges for achieving soft skills) or a website (for completing an online task), basically anyone who wants to keep a user motivated and interested. The issuer creates the criteria needed for the user to achieve the badge. This is embedded inside the badge in the form of metadata, along with who issued the badge, when it was issued and an expiry date if relevant" (<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/blog/so-what-are-open-badges-28-aug-2013>).

Digital badges are artifacts that signify credit upon endorsement for a skill, capability or competency. They represent to the earner that they have achieved a significant milestone and demonstrate accomplishment to enrich and motivate, incentivize and acknowledge both informal and formal learning experiences. They have an international standards body (Mozilla Foundation) and many supporting platforms for award and display. Badges provide evidence of learning in a variety of situations and can be issued by any evaluator of the badge assigning a value to it such as museums, schools and organisations such as AAEEBL. In 2011 the Mozilla Foundation developed the Mozilla Open Badge infrastructure, this created a common system for the issuance, collection, and display of digital badges. In the art world they are becoming valuable digital currency in museums and art galleries, particularly in North America where the American Alliance of Museums, including the Museum of Modern Art New York, The Smithsonian and the Dallas Museum of Art issue trusted and valuable art credits to learners. Digital Badges can assist our students as they develop lifelong learning skills and development of self through portfolios to:

- Credential demonstration of evidence, process and product
- Display competencies, skills and capabilities
- Develop identity and explore notion of self through badge earning as they make skills explicit to the community
- Capture and demonstrate the various learning process pathways
- Encourage and motivate learners through formative feedback
- Support innovation, trial and experimentation as they can be designed to capture a variety of skills

### **Flashback to 2013**

Regarding the 2013 launch, one person noted that she thought the badging was "sorta silly," but then she was "disappointed to not get badges" since she actually earned them.



*Continued from Page 13*

One sticking point last year was how we lacked a way to upload more than five people at a time to Credly, our partner in badging. Sadly, nobody on the 2013 Badge-Issuing Team, all volunteer leaders, could dedicate the time it took to issue badges to five earners at a time, and we hope you understand. Credly now can accept larger lists, and we are able to revisit unissued 2013 badges and move forward with a whole new 2014 initiative.

If you earned a badge in a particular category or at a specific level in the 2013 issuing of badges, we can redress and issue your badges now. They don't go out of style like the Princess Phone but gain stature as we all move into 21st century learning together.

Here's what you need to do now:

1. Log into Credly, and set up your account (<https://credly.com/>). Some badges for 2013 and for 2014 are automatic and will be issued to you.
2. Other AAEEBL-issued badges, require you to nominate yourself, or another person, and submit evidence to support achievement of criteria established behind-the-badge to warrant the credit. In some cases, testimonials from colleagues are necessary to earn badges.
3. In some cases, as a participant in the initiative, you are able to issue the badge to others based on the evidence they submitted.

### **Beyond Superficiality: More than just a "pretty face"**

It is important to note that badges are not superficial displays of singular activities, but build upon each other and are representative of increased levels of engagement in the AAEEBL Community and enable display of initial and higher levels of competency and accomplishment in a variety of areas.

Yes, AAEEBL-issued badges are super-handsome, and those who earn them are entitled to display them in social media, on websites, and in signature files among other places, but they signify an issuing from a recognized source for credentialing that supports your learning, accomplishments and contributions to the field.

### **Behind the Badges: Evidence and Testimonials Matter!**

It's what's behind the badge that counts! The AAEEBL badging initiative entitles earners to display AAEEBL-issued credentials at each badge level recognizing deeper learning achievement with evidence about engagement from an initial level that recognizes individual accomplishment to increased shared learning and greater dissemination about authentic, experiential and evidence-based learning with eportfolios. The evidence is embedded inside the badge in the form of metadata, along with the details of the issuer, in this instance AAEEBL, when it was issued and an expiry date if relevant. As mentioned previously, in some cases, the earning of badges is incumbent upon demonstration of evidence to support learning and, in some cases, testimonials from colleagues.

We expect all of our badges and criteria to be posted to Credly soon, and AAEEBL will start issuing badges in as timely a manner as possible given the limits of volunteer leaders.

**High Achiever? No worries! Become an ePortfolio Champion! ———>**

### **Want to Gain Experience in Badging and Alternative Credentialing?**

If you are interested in badges and alternative credentialing, and if you are already part of an AAEEBL Member Institution, we invite your assistance and participation as a leader in this initiative. For more information, contact [judy@aaeebl.org](mailto:judy@aaeebl.org).



Note: Since this is a relatively new initiative, we are all learning as we move forward, so it is important for volunteer leaders to be willing to jump on the learning curve and be ready to learn more about and to contribute to this important alternative credentialing initiative.



## A Message from Your AAEEBL Co-Leaders *Trent Batson and Judy Williamson Batson*

### A Focus on Publications and Resource Development for the AAEEBL Community Online

As a member of the AAEEBL community, you are probably familiar with the migration we made to our new member-management website, the AAEEBL Community Online (ACO) where we are able to handle many aspects of running a 501(c)3 non-profit professional association. You may also be aware



Trent Batson, Ph.D., President & Judy Williamson Batson, APR, CEO

of the hiatus in publication of The AAEEBL Learner (TAL) publication and in our rather rocky launch during the initial rollout. Almost nothing went as planned or expected, and we experienced a deep empathy for other online launches with prominent road bumps, or as with our launch, more like a major interstate highway rebuild.

To say it's taken two years to manage our learning curve on the new platform sounds hyperbolic, and the process has not been a rosy one replete with fresh insights and the serendipitous making of connections. This message, however, is not about all the pain but about rounding a significant corner and now feeling more confident, and even a bit celebratory. We're hitting operational stride once again in spite of the notoriously funky backend of the user interface. We'd like to share several significant strides forward that you'll notice:

1. TAL is back in the publication loop.
2. We're getting resources organized in a more robust and accessible way.
3. We're launching a guest blogger feature you'll enjoy.

What is TAL, and how does it serve those interested in authentic, experiential and evidence-based learning, particularly in relation to eportfolios?

TAL has provided insights, thoughts and experiences from colleagues around the world. Many

contributors offered years of eportfolio experience to TAL readers and convey what they've learned from eportfolio work. We thank The Wentworth Institute of Technology (WIT) for making it possible to once again issue regular releases of TAL. We also thank Virginia Tech for their work since 2009 to launch and serve AAEEBL by handling TAL publication.

TAL is now a quarterly publication, but it was issued six times a year until recently. It has always served as AAEEBL's newsletter, and it will continue to offer the latest in news about events shared with us from around the world. TAL has always occupied an "informal-scholarly" space and likely will remain that way in contrast to IJeP where more formal scholarship and empirical research can be found, usually published by those who are experienced leaders in the field. In contrast, TAL is evolving into an accessible spot where those new to the field may take first steps writing about experiences, best-practices, ah-ha moments, and also sharing questions, reflections, resources, connection-making and exemplary eportfolios. In our new, quarterly format, we'll offer a pathway to publication aligned with our focus on authentic, experiential and evidence-based learning that is your own. We recognize that newcomers to the field have something to contribute to the larger conversation, including students, at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.

We invite submissions by writers who wish to craft and publish based on the authentic evidence and reflective assessment of their own learning experiences. TAL seeks to recognize and give voice to the many learners at all levels that bring contributions to the conversation.

TAL is a microcosm in a much larger network of eportfolio publications and communications. We've already mentioned the double-blind, peer-reviewed, scholarly publication, The International Journal of ePortfolio (IJeP). We also benefit from the presence of a two scholarly publications issued by the Centre for Recording Achievement – PDP UK, and On Reflection. Other pathways to information about eportfolios include EPAC's familiar listserv as



Continued from Page 15

well as publications from the Inter/National Center for ePortfolio Research, the epic-news from ePIC, and archived blogs from ePortfolios Australia to mention a few other English language sources. (If you're reading this and know of others, whether in English or not, please let us know about related communication conduits so we can include them on our publications page resource.)

We've recently taken a step to make past issues of TAL more accessible by launching an archive and index with notes about what can be found in each issue. We hope our nascent index makes it easier for those who want to see what TAL featured in the past and also hope the compilation supports the evolving knowledge about eportfolios. Our contributors, some taking first steps of engagement with eportfolios, generously contributed to TAL based on their own reflections and experiential learning.

The eportfolio movement, a movement that propels us from a focus on teaching to an expanded view about learning, from assuming one-size-fits-all to an awareness about variable learning paths, and from one-dimensional assessment to three-dimensional. More than a "flipped classroom," we might call it "flipping the institution," and we're seeing how these new perspectives are crucial to the ongoing metamorphosis of higher education globally. TAL collects the "how to" of this movement as well as the "how not to" of the movement. It serves to represent questions and lessons-learned (e.g. "mistakes," the kind we tell our students are so valuable to the "learning process"). It is now an archived and indexed publication that has benefitted from the support of Virginia Tech in its first iteration and, now, from Wentworth Institute of Technology for our progressing iteration.

One size does not fit all. In our field, many voices are part of the conversation, and it's important for us to serve by offering TAL where multiple voices can be included and appreciated. Don't wait until you think you have all the questions answered before contributing to The AAEEBL Learner. Developing questions, after all, is one of the most salient aspects to the overall experience of learning!

Show your interest in writing for TAL by sending queries to Judy Batson. The submission deadline for the winter 2015 issue is December 10.



**AAEEBL**

## Quick Links for the AAEEBL Online Community

[Register to join the ACO.](#)

[Learn more about AAEEBL.](#)

[Find "Latest News" in the right panel of our homepage.](#)

[Publish an article in \*The AAEEBL Learner\* \(TAL\) - Winter 2015](#)

[Plan to attend AAEEBL events. View the calendar in the left column of our homepage.](#)

[Add resources at the Digital Storytelling Wiki](#)

**New!** [View the TAL Archive and Index of past issues.](#)

**New!** [Read guest blog posts by Kevin Kelly and Laura Kohl and watch for more to come.](#)

**New!** [Discuss Embodied Learning with Cindy Stevens in her TAL Forum \(Featured on page 4\).](#)

**New!** [Join Julie's "Think About It" forum. \(Featured on page 7\).](#)

[Learn about ways to belong to AAEEBL \(some free\) on the Contact AAEEBL page.](#)



**Coming Soon!** AAEEBL Call for Proposals will be added soon and you will find a landing page for AAEEBL 2015!



## New Resources Featured on the AAEEBL Online Community

### Moving Conversations from TAL to the ACO

Find a new interactive approach to TAL in both Cindy Stevens' and Julie Ambrose's columns in this issue. Both invite readers to join them online for continued discussion.

Stevens draws upon ideas [Melissa Peet presented at AAEEBL 2014's Executive Summit](#) and asks "embodied questions," the sort of questions she plans to focus on in future columns. She plans to facilitate deeper student reflection using embodied questions and will share what she learns with us in a [forum at the ACO](#). (Note: A video of Peet's Executive Summit Session, "Generative Coaching: Fostering Transformative Learning in People and Organizations," is being readied for viewing at the ACO.)

Julie, a new addition to TAL, will present "[Think About It](#)," a column that also invites readers to engage in discussion at the AAEEBL Online Community.

In both cases inquiry, curiosity and authentic learning experiences will drive conversation, and newcomers to the field, as well as experienced implementers, will find a welcoming space that embraces experiential learning. In other words, we are taking more steps to "model" what we value and to invite reflections, questions and discussion such as we appreciate at AAEEBL face-to-face conference gatherings.

### Introducing Guest Blogging at the ACO

The AAEEBL Community Online (ACO) will launch a [guest blogging initiative](#) featuring leaders who will address a variety of topics related to eportfolios and authentic, experiential and evidence-based learning. We're pleased to feature Kevin Kelly, first up for this initiative. Guest bloggers will spend two or three weeks with us at the ACO and will share topics that will be followed by comments, questions and participation.

Kevin Kelly is an entrepreneur and educational leader with more than 15 years' experience in online learning; professional development; knowledge management; institutional advancement; technology adoption and implementation (e.g., ePortfolios, LMS, lecture capture, clickers, student evaluations of teaching effectiveness); assessment and evaluation. He recently completed 3 years directing an ed tech startup for a large publishing company. Currently, Kevin provides consulting services in both corporate and educational settings, and teaches a fully online, undergraduate Gen Ed course at San Francisco State University, called *How 2 Lrn w ur iPod*.





## Calendar of Events 2014-2015

12/15/2014

Submission Deadline for AAEEBL Learner

1/24/2015

AAC&U 2015 ePortfolio Forum  
Grand Hyatt Hotel in Washington, DC  
[More Information](#)

2/19/2015

**Proposals due for AAEEBL 2015**  
Find more information and submit proposals by going to  
the [AAEEBL Community Online](#)

4/16/2015 through 4/17/2015

**Researching and Evaluating Recording Achievement,  
Personal Development, Planning, and ePortfolio**  
Plymouth, UK  
[More Information](#)

7/27/2015 through 7/30/2015

**Save the Dates for AAEEBL 2015**  
Hynes Convention Center in Boston, MA  
[More Information](#)



*Do you have an upcoming event of interest to those involved in authentic, experiential and evidence-based learning? If so, please email [judy@aaeebl.org](mailto:judy@aaeebl.org) with the information for the event, and we'll include it in our Calendar.*

**Researching and Evaluating Recording  
Achievement, Personal Development  
Planning and ePortfolio**  
Plymouth, UK, April 16-17, 2015

The Seminar Planning Group invites practitioners and researchers to a seminar on the theme of "Researching and Evaluating Recording Achievement, Personal Development Planning and eportfolio." Proposals are invited from both established and emergent researchers and practitioners on topics such as: various methodologies; case studies of individuals and small groups; and large cross-institutional studies linked to retention and graduation data.

Learn more by visiting the [seminar landing page](#).



**New Feature on the ACO:**  
Visit our [Community Blog](#)  
to view posts by  
guest bloggers.  
Share your comments  
and questions with our  
bloggers.

Watch for guest bloggers [Nancy Wozniak](#) and [Kate Coleman](#) coming up next!

Thanks to [Kevin Kelly](#) and [Laura Kohl](#) for kicking off our guest blogging initiative!