Collecting a Revolution: Antiracist ePortfolio Pedagogy and Student Agency that Assesses the University

Peter N. McLellan
Oxford College of Emory University

ePortfolios are spaces in which students create knowledge that can transform the university if faculty and administrators are willing to listen. This article explores the revolutionary potential of ePortfolios as spaces for antiracist institutional assessment in conversation with the twentieth-century cultural critic Walter Benjamin. Programmatic assessment has trended toward survey and review measures determined within a racist structure: higher education. As tools that encourage student agency and sense of ownership, ePortfolios instead provide space for students of color to write counternarratives out of their own knowledge. The present essay argues that the knowledge created within these self-owned spaces can run counter to the white supremacist knowledge assessed by and strengthening the academy, offering alternative methods to assessing degrees of curricular and institutional success.

For inside [the collector] there are spirits, or at least little genii, which have seen to it that for a collector . . . ownership is the most intimate relationship that one can have to objects. Not that they come alive in him; it is he who lives in them (Benjamin, 2019a, p. 1).

Within *the word* we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed—even in part—the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world (Freire, 2017, p. 60).

You've wasted your time… but you've wasted the time in the way you choose. There's… power in that (McElroy et al., 2021, 2:15).

Two ePortfolios from our Oxford College of Emory University students have been haunting me for over a year now: one from an international student from China and the other by a U.S. African-American student who created projects that founded their personal narratives in persistence through traumatic experiences (though trauma is never named explicitly). The Chinese student crafted a narrative of "overcoming struggles" of "loneliness" and "worry" attending school in a foreign country. She felt her two years at Oxford were successful because she was able to transform these feelings of loneliness into practical skills in compassion, community-building, and caregiving. The domestic student offered an account that centered work in the face of a society that would give nothing to him. He crafted a narrative founded in his upbringing by strong, Southern, Black women and on a philosophy of self-improvement. Both examples stand out to me because neither themes of *compassion* nor *self-improvement-through-work* are found in Oxford's general education program (GEP) learning outcomes.

This article demands that colleges and universities deploy antiracist ePortfolio pedagogy as a vehicle for student knowledge to assess their curricula and institutions. The problem I have in view is higher education's racist conventions: as Selfa Chew, Akil Houston, and Alisa Cooper (2020) argued, students, teachers, and communities of color have been effectively erased from the academy. Measures of ePortfolio assessment determined by White instructors and administrators within the academy, a Western invention, cannot on their own account for the knowledge created by students of color, knowledge—of joy, of resistance, of ambivalence, of marginalization, of resistance—from their communities. This, at base, is a failure of our institutions to value our own students. My framing question is, "How can we ensure ePortfolio pedagogy is not racist and how can we ensure it builds antiracist institutions?" What follows is a young, theoretical attempt to begin a response; it is an invitation to other higher educators to join us at Oxford College in a project of examining what it means for our institutions to participate in a legacy of White supremacy and how to deploy ePortfolios in an antiracist, pedagogical transformation. This work first involves interrogating what ePortfolios are (an ontological question) and what they do (a phenomenological question). To that end, my argument focuses largely on early knowledge gained from our experience at Oxford and philosophical and antiracist foundations for reframing ePortfolios' relationship to programmatic assessment.

My theoretical framing of ePortfolio pedagogy begins with twentieth-century cultural critic Walter Benjamin's essays on collections and history. Two of Benjamin's pieces, in particular, "Unpacking My Library: A Talk About Book Collecting" and "Theses on the Philosophy of History," give us an opportunity to see student knowledge constituted in ePortfolios as revolutionary sites of learning and teaching precisely because the stories told have lives

that exceed the boundaries of an assignment. Benjamin's (2019) exploration of book collecting elaborates a process of ordering the "chaos of memories" (p. 2) as the collector themself "lives in them" (p. 10). I argue that the student similarly lives within their ePortfolio. So, then, what happens when we engage these student collections? Again, Benjamin is helpful here, observing in "Theses on the Philosophy of History," the work of the "historical materialist" who identifies "monads" of the past as present moments frozen in time. These frozen moments—which I will call in this essay "artifacts"—are shot through with "chips of messianic time" (pp. 207-209). That is, the past is filled with countless potential moments of revolutionary action, just waiting to be grabbed by the historian—in this case, the student constructing their ePortfolio.

For this reason, ePortfolios by students of color have the potential for disturbing the whiteness of the academy. In the process of reflection-through-ePortfolio, students build a space that assesses every level of the higher education institution with the very knowledge produced within the ePortfolio—this moment of assessment shimmers with antiracist potential. I draw on Dewey's (1916; Rodgers, 2002) notion that reflection happens in community, which, Kathleen Blake Yancey argued (2016) "re-invent[s] the university" in the process (pp. 10-11). Yancey (2016) asserted that when knowledge is taken up in reflection—perhaps in an ePortfolio—and recontextualized into the student's embodied experience, new knowledge is created and contributed discursively back into the learning community. Students of color can create revolutionary ePortfolios because their collection of artifacts include, to use Benjamin's language, "chips" of their very lives that explode the historical narratives of the White Western academy from which they emerge. The two students mentioned above were not assessed on the values they espoused in their projects, nor should they have been. But accounts like theirs pose serious challenges to institutions of higher education: How do we expect to allow students to change our expected outcomes through the knowledge they bring to campus? Are we open to knowledge from lives lived in loneliness, isolation, and with a sense that you will never receive the support you deserve? Is persistence a value we want to foster when our universities provide the experience through which they must persist? The ePortfolio project itself becomes an antiracist project through the creative work of the student; our institutions take up that antiracist project only insofar as we allow these artifacts to assess *us*.

Early Days: An Oxford College Example

Oxford College provides a useful case study for antiracist ePortfolio pedagogy, because it is not a predominantly White institution (PWI) while maintaining a traditional administrative structure and a majority White faculty and administration. Our institution is itself unique within the academy. Only 32% White (Oxford College of Emory University, 2019), a vast majority of our students attend Oxford for two years to receive an intentional liberal arts education, earning an associate's degree before completing their 4-year undergraduate education on Emory's Atlanta campus. Our general education program (GEP) curriculum requires students to complete a Milestone ePortfolio during their Oxford tenure, in which they reflect on their learning and integrate that knowledge into an account of how they are changing as a student. The ePortfolio is assessed pass/fail, with an attached evaluative rubric. This evaluative portion of the rubric is an opportunity for graders to tell the student how much they have grown and where they see room for future development as a learner. While the Milestone program is young—as I write this, our first pilot cohort of Milestone students has only just graduated from Oxford—we observed differences in the types of accounts given in ePortfolios from students of color and disparities in assessments by faculty readers. At this early moment of curricular, most of the data in this project remain anecdotal, and the argument of this essay should be taken as an initial theoretical exploration.

Our initial pilot cohort of 13 Milestone ePortfolios itself was demonstrably impacted by structural racism within the project assignment. The two African-American students who submitted ePortfolios received the lowest marks in the cohort, and a third made a clear decision to not even participate in the voluntary program. The assignment (Appendix A), structured around a "Reflective Analysis" and three "artifacts"—which can include academic creations, extracurricular experiences, social experiences, among other things—asked students to provide a narrative of growth over their first two years in college, but it did not define that change. Their reflections and artifacts met our assignment's criteria, and even offered new knowledge that no other student could create but was deemed unacademic and therefore did not demonstrate the sort of growth our institution expects of their students. Faculty graders, who have manifested commitments to racial justice in their own right, were left to their own devices and own experiences, informed by collective decades within the Western academy. In short, the work these students did exposed the Milestone assignment as one that benefited students who could properly follow a hidden curriculum.

The issues we identified with our first assignment could be boiled down to (a) jargon that encouraged a particular kind of reflection and (b) unclear requirements interpreted differently between students and between the panel of faculty graders. To the first point, the assignment vocabulary focused heavily on the

"story" students had to tell about their "development." Asking anyone to provide this sort of narrative necessarily encourages them to provide a neat, linear recounting of their undergraduate experience with themselves as an achiever, not a complex account of their uneven growth as a learner or thinker. Moreover, the assignment was branded frequently as an Oxford-specific reflection, asking students to describe how Oxford played a role in their development.

This language seemed problematic to us, because it assumed our institution was a healthy environment for all students to learn and grow, ignoring the complexity of human experience, which often also involves suffering. Certainly, in the ePortfolios I referenced above, Oxford students of color demonstrated abilities to overcome difficulties posed by the structural Whiteness of higher education. This is impressive. Our assignment, however, neither required nor excited reflection of how our college campus may have contributed, which built barriers to their successful learning. Nor did we ask how our campus may have opened space for these students to succeed despite broader racist social structures. That we know neither of these things is a failure on our part as teachers and administrators, but we have no measures to know the degree to which we have failed.

Meanwhile, our students have made visible barriers to learning through their ePortfolios. Structural racism impacts Oxford students beyond the gradebook; perhaps more perniciously, the academy sets assessment measures that overlook or even silence knowledge marginalized students produce. Students of color who participated in our first two semesters of the Milestone pilot and another cumulative ePortfolio project included incisivereflections about learning from co-curricular activities. The two domestic students of color described knowledge created through participation in Oxford's basketball team: one explored knowledge that they have a whole team behind them when they struggle personally and academically; the other went further, noting they learned how to "persevere through adversity," particularly when their school did not value their accomplishments on the court. The second of these two projects even included their first semester transcript, with a disappointing grade in a chemistry course, and offered a concept of success-as-a-pathway. The Chinese student who had described her loneliness in our community, described how this feeling led her to participate in a program giving other international students resources to feel belonging at Oxford. This narrative tacitly acknowledged that such resources do not normally exist in this environment, so she created them and felt this experience meaningful enough to reflect upon and draw into her identity as presented in her Milestone ePortfolio. Critically, she created material products and lived experiences for others within our college community, experiences that are not represented by our learning outcomes, but can live on within the ePortfolio and the members of our community she helped. Her ePortfolio is a testament first to her brilliance and only a testament to our institution's brilliance to the extent that we acknowledge how this student's presence has revolutionized it.

While our reflective ePortfolio pedagogy is just leaving the implementation phase, we have found enough evidence to interrogate ways students of color have struggled to succeed or belong not just in our Milestone course, but at Oxford in general. By making space for students to take ownership of their learning, their own accounts have shown where the intentional learning opportunities our institution offered and the community it has created are insufficient for or harmful to student flourishing. In short, our students of color have performed assessment of Oxford College; other institutions deploying integrative ePortfolios have no doubt also received this assessment: when and how will we accept it? And how will it change our learning communities?

A Framework for Antiracist ePortfolio Pedagogy

The struggles of Oxford students of color, as detailed above, are not unique to our school and certainly not because we have an actively racist faculty and administration. Western universities are participants in and beneficiaries of systemic racism; they are, in short, White supremacist institutions. This notion has been traditionally obscured to most higher education researchers and administrators because universities tend to aggregate data on phenomena like completion rates, argued McNair et al. (2020). Assessment practices that look at averages of student performance, without making race visible, help maintain White privilege in higher education as an invisible, omnipresent reality. To this end, antiracist pedagogy seeks to make privilege and oppression visible and actively dismantle it. This project takes Chew et al.'s (2020) definition of antiracism as its starting point: "The work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Antiracism tends to be an individualized approach and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviors and impacts" (p. 10). Chew et al. (2020) expanded this definition to education, arguing that antiracist pedagogy "actively acknowledge[s] and oppose[s] racism in all aspects" of learning—in the course and the institution (p. 10). Antiracist pedagogy, in short, raises consciousness of racist practices and structures in education—wherever they are—and does whatever is necessary to eliminate them. In the academy, antiracism homes in more specifically on erasure of non-white people from its histories, its values, its curricula.

Indeed, the starting point for antiracist work in the academy is the assumption that its very structures are suffused with whiteness and unable to center black people in their current iterations. Alda Blakeney's (2005) signal essay on antiracist pedagogy distinguishes the philosophy from three additional models, popular among progressive educational theorists: the assimilationist model, the integrationist model, and the cultural pluralism model. Broadly, all three call for the integration of students of color into classrooms, without acknowledging the structural problem of Western education's foundations in White supremacy. Blakeney (2005), wrote:

> Antiracist Pedagogy makes provision for understanding the impact of race on opportunity as well as the cultural differences associated with upward mobility patterns by focusing on the constructs of these inequalities. Antiracist Pedagogy also addresses the historical constructs that facilitate inequalities and seeks to create an antiracist paradigm that in time will serve to historically condition a new antiracist society (p. 120).

Crucially, then, antiracist pedagogy understands that racism is embedded into the fabric of teaching and learning because it is embedded in the cultural and historical—read: systemic—forces of our everyday life in the Western world. The Oxford students I mentioned earlier, for example, were all "integrated" into the life of the college—they participated in activities, indicated they had achieved academic success—but they also offered knowledge that most colleges would not weave into their structures for assessing their own efficacy. Antiracist pedagogy also understands teaching and learning as integral tools in the process of dismantling those same structures.

So, what might ePortfolios offer our assessment of institutions like Oxford, Emory, and others? Robert Amico (2015) helpfully laid out the particular problem White supremacy poses in our classrooms: our educational system has been designed by White people, our teachers are White people, and our White students are invested in maintaining their privilege. For Amico—as with Paolo Freire (2017) before him—educators are faced with an assessment problem if their assessment lacks critical reflection and, more importantly, consciousness of privilege (Amico, 2015; Blakeney, 2005). I do not doubt all higher educators' commitment to assessment that is just for all students, but I question whether our assessment tools are just when the terms of assessment are set only by part of an institution: its administration and faculty. That is, institutional and programmatic assessments, ideally, turn the critical lens back on the educators and administrators of that school; however, it is the administrator, the professor, the accrediting board who

ultimately set the terms for this assessment. To this point, as McNair et al. (2020) noted, a small number (17%) of AAC&U members' institutions disaggregate their data on student learning outcomes by race, economics, or parents' education. That is, even if an entire university professes a desire to become an equitable higher education institution, they currently lack the tools to "know who [their] students are" (McNair et al., 2020, pp. 13-14). This is hardly a call to abandon learning outcomes-based assessment; rather, I acknowledge that learning outcomes that are too often set without consciousness of the knowledge students contribute to their learning communities.

ePortfolios, on the other hand, offer something different: a learning space wholly owned by the student, where their agency can be exercised. To what extent do these digital places, created by living subjects, present a challenge to institutional self-understanding? Moreover, what happens when we read—deeply, honestly—the ePortfolios owned by students of color? Are we, as higher education laborers, able and willing think about what assessment might look like that foregrounds the agency and voices of students as expressed in their self-owned portfolios? The aforementioned Oxford ePortfolios were created by students who were telling us who they are. Without these tools, our faculty, staff, and administrators would have continued using assessment measures that did not ask for students to tell their stories. Now that we have given students the opportunity to speak with agency into a medium that is also assessable, our institution has an opportunity to use qualitative data, infused with agency, to transform how we come to know more about ourselves.

Reflection as an Address to the Academy's Racist Structures

Because higher education is infused with racist structures, reflection from postsecondary students will necessarily confront racism within the academy. Chew et al. (2020) argued that reflective writing opens a space in which "students . . . become aware of and articulate their perspectives" (p. 21), opening themselves to a world of knowledge from antiracist scholarship and their peers. The practice of reflection acknowledges the chaotic, potentially liberatory, and often painful experience of learning by asking the learner to make connections between their embodied learning experiences. In short, reflective practices ask the student to take stock of the relationships and experiences that have shaped their ongoing development and create new knowledge that emerges from those connections. Our task as teachers is to take that knowledge seriously.

The present project suggests that the persistent racism built into the academy is a source of disorder for

many students, but first a working definition of *reflection* is necessary. I follow Naomi Silver's combination of John Dewey and Donald Schön's reflections. For Silver (2013), Deweyian reflection first requires a "forked-road situation, a situation which is ambiguous," for which one might propose "alternatives" (p. 11; Dewey, 1916). Continuing in a Schönian frame, Silver (2013) noted that this ambiguity is confronted, named, and framed to make explicit the tacit knowledge aligning theory and practice (Schön, 1987). In short, reflection is a decision made by a learner to take act in light of new input from a given source—a formal learning experience or not—and to create new knowledge. To put it another way, in the words of Kathleen Yancey (2016),

> Through the practice of reflection, we draw on what is culturally known and infuse, interweave, integrate it with what we as individuals know—cognitively, affectively, and socially—to make a new knowledge that draws from the extant but is not a replication of it, that is, instead, unique, a knowledge only each one of us can make as it is in dialogue with what is (p. 11; see also Yancey, 2009, pp. 5-17).

Reflection, then, is an ethical act rooted in one's contextual environs, performed with their own agency, toward the creation of unique, situated knowledge.

My challenge in this essay is to demonstrate that even mundane reflections from our students can provide important critiques of the academy. A challenging assessment of an institution's racist structures is not a given. And while we have seen our students of color receiving lower marks on their Milestone ePortfolios, their reflections have not explicitly condemned White supremacy on campus or in our curriculum. However, this does not mean racism is non-existent in the curriculum, nor does this mean the work of our students of color does not condemn a racist curriculum. In fact, searches for racism in the open may obscure places where students are not explicitly naming its impact on their person. Learning outcomes assessment, as important as it is, runs the risk of missing social violence of this sort; therefore, it cannot be our only means of programmatic assessment. Following Yancey's (2009) notion that reflection reiterates knowledge from learning back into the context in which the student body lives, we can argue that any reflection performed by students of color reinvents the university itself. The question for us, as teachers and administrators, is whether we can see that and how we choose to conceptualize it. When students of color narrate their experience on campuses that by definition were designed for people with privilege and situate them in self-owned platforms like ePortfolios, those minoritized accounts are powerful, meaningful, and revolutionary on their own terms.

Walter Benjamin, Artifacts, and Collections

Early 20th century cultural critic Walter Benjamin offered language for thinking about both collections and artifacts. Here I converse with two of his essays to lay out a concept of what happens to readers when they engage material from another's life gathered for a specific purpose. First, in "Unpacking My Library," a reflection on book collecting, Benjamin (2019a) explored what happens when a collector confronts the "chaos of memories" with a "magic circle" of order (p. 2). Importantly, for Benjamin (2019a), the owner of the collection imbues a host of wholly unknowable experiences, and therefore the collection loses its meaning without the owner. No doubt, this notion already poses a difficulty to assessment of ePortfolios, if we consider the ePortfolio's curated artifacts a collection of memories into a coherent order: to what extent are we, as teachers, even appropriately or ethically assessing these works? Though the path I present is serpentine, I believe Benjamin's (2019b) essay, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," answered. Benjamin (2019b) responded to progressive history with his own understanding of "materialist historiography," which grabs for "monads"—read, for our purposes, *artifacts*—and recognizes the dynamic past and potential they have for revolutionary, "messianic" change in the present (pp. 207-208). The vibrant, living collection of artifacts the student composes is filled with knowledge, experiences, memories of a world foreign to the viewer and thus necessarily primed to revolutionarily shift the subjectivity of the viewer.

In "Unpacking My Library," Benjamin (2019a) elaborated on book collecting as an activity soaked through with lived history, eschewing the image of a collection-as-inventory. Of primary importance for Benjamin was the "history of acquisition," not necessarily or solely the thematic content of a collection (p. 3). Indeed, more than the act of reading them. Benjamin (2019a) wrote:

> And the non-reading of books, you will object, should be characteristic of collectors? This is news to me, you may say. It is not news at all. Experts will bear me out when I say that it is the oldest thing in world (p. 4).

Benjamin (2019a), in other words, attempted to move our understanding of collections away from knowledge-banking or inventorying and toward a more chaotic realm: that of memory. The value of a book, of any collected item, is the unruly spectral host of past experiences, subjects, hopes, and anxieties. Creating a collection of books means acknowledging the unbound "magical" properties these artifacts can hold: "The

period, the region, the craftsmanship, the former ownership—for a true collector, the whole background of an item adds up to a magic encyclopedia whose quintessence is the fate of his object" (Benjamin, 2019a, p. 2). These books contain stories that are not just written in words but in the script of time and space.

If we are to consider ePortfolios as collections, it behooves us, according to Benjamin (2019a), to focus our gaze on the intimacy the collector feels for their artifacts. As readers, we can never imbue collections with the same force of meaning that the collector can. The collector's relationship with their collection—perhaps from inheritance, memories, traumas, lost passions—is such that only the collector might maintain the same connection with their property. Benjamin (2019a) wrote:

> For inside [the collector] there are spirits, or at least little genii, which have seen to it that for a collector—and I mean a real collector, a collector as he ought to be—ownership is the most intimate relationship that one can have to objects. Not that they come alive in him; it is he who lives in them (p. 10).

To put it crudely, the outsider who peruses a collection is not possessed in the same manner as its owner. This means collectors can gather anything: they can certainly carefully curate leatherbound tomes within their bookshelves, but others may be enraptured by comics, pamphlets, marginalia, or religious texts; regardless, their gathered artifacts have grabbed their very spirit, according to Benjamin. Collector and collection live within one another. Whether that collection is a book or an ePortfolio, the audience's engagement—let alone their *assessment*—may never approach the genuine character of the artifacts gathered.

We can push this critique further: the collection within an ePortfolio a student finds most meaningful may not be the assigned collection but something within the reflections. To return to one of the African American students mentioned above, it appears all along that his most important artifact was not, in fact, any of the "artifacts" specifically required by the assignment. Following the assignment prompts, he described how his academic challenges and sciences courses have prepared him to pursue a medical degree, but the reflections he offered treated his pre-college life as the most valuable learning experiences—his caregivers, his achievements in martial arts, and his self-awareness. This student detailed how his pre-college life shaped him into the college student he is two years into his undergraduate education. In short, he bracketed off his college world from the rest of his life as a vehicle for achieving a goal—a medical degree—prior to his arrival at Oxford. The ePortfolio, as assigned by his instructor, provided the opportunity to

tell this story powerfully, but it also did not assess him on this narrative; his account stood outside the bounds of both the assignment and the rubric.

For the higher education teacher, then, this phenomenon poses a challenge: how can we effectively assess ePortfolios, a tool we know is a high-impact practice? Again, Benjamin (2019b) is instructive, laying his concept of historical materialism over the pedagogical meme of artifacts. Indeed, treating a student's past as presented in their ePortfolio cannot be an exercise only in detecting a stated narrative. No doubt, coherence is important; communication skills are necessary for their participation in public life. However, in "Theses on the Philosophy of History," Benjamin (2019b) warned of erasure when we privilege grand narratives over the mundane and abject: intense focus on triumphs and treasures of the past erases the potential for redemption we can find in silences, in ordinary artifacts, in items left unanalyzed. Put in terms of ePortfolio pedagogy, if our assignments and assessments are only looking for and rewarding specific curricular outcomes, then we run the risk of missing valuable stories, evidence of learning, critiques of institutional norms and practices, or traumas in the student's life. The study and telling of history for Benjamin (2019b) need not be a triumphant, heroic endeavor to find the extraordinary. Instead, it is an active, persistent experience of—and he uses theological language here—the messianic power hidden in the mundane.

Exploring the past involves picking at the excesses, abscesses, and absences in historical material for messianic, revolutionary energy. Benjamin (2019b) confronted the irony that historians often profess their duty to tell the whole story of humankind, while ignoring even the most minor acts. Instead, he argued that all people are imbued with a "weak messianic" power to remember the past and "redeem" it by exploring historical quotidian things, people, and moments: "To be sure, only a redeemed mankind receives the fullness of its past—which is to say, only for a redeemed mankind has its past become citable in all its moments" (Benjamin, 2019b, p. 197). The entire past, in other words, is open to remembrance in the present and therefore to the potential for making revolutionary change in the present. For Benjamin (2019b), historical materialism always has the power to look backward, find an artifact from the past, and pose challenges to the present, challenges that rebuke the "conformist" narratives of "progress" that keep rulers in power (pp. 198-199, 202). Narratives of progress are conveniently neat, eliding any potential stories of resistance or evidence of weakness to ruling authorities. Benjamin (2019b) instead recommended a different source for historical knowledge: "Not man or men but the struggling, oppressed class itself is the depository of

historical knowledge" (p. 204). Indeed, historical accounts that do not account for the lives of billions but, instead of progress or great men, are disconnected reality.

Hearing history from the marginalized by grabbing ahold of mundane artifacts or historical idiosyncrasies causes "the continuum of history to explode" (Benjamin, 2019b, p. 206). Artifacts from the everyday and from our most marginalized students show where and what kind of learning happens; these artifacts demonstrate the limits of our curricula and the stories our institutions tell of themselves. Perhaps more urgently, artifacts from below also potentially include silences that speak to student traumas we, as educators may have missed, traumas our institutions may be responsible for, at worst, but also those traumas our students experience, and we might begin to engage.

Oxford College's First Steps Toward ePortfolio Re-Assessment

At Oxford College, we have begun small steps toward antiracist work with ePortfolios through our Milestone curriculum. While our work is in its infancy, I encourage the reader to examine time-spaces at their institutions where the potential for Benjaminian-style revolutionary curricular change might burst into the material world. Our initial attempts at developing an antiracist ePortfolio pedagogy and programmatic assessment at Oxford have focused on our Milestone assignment, shifting from the aforementioned assignment that encouraged students to compose narratives of achievement to an assignment (Appendix B) that clarifies our curriculum, and assessment of our overall curriculum through analysis of student ePortfolio language and narrative.

As a small first step, we focused our changes to this first revised assignment on language and clarification of the assignment requirements to make the whole process more transparent and open to a wider range of student experiences. Central to these changes was a shift from narrative language to asking our students to "give an account" of their undergraduate experience (Bernard-Donals, 2011). This attempt to use what Michael Bernard-Donals (2011) called "archival writing" was intended to encourage students to create ePortfolios interested less in themselves on a heroic journey and more as people connected and indebted to communities of accountability. In short, students can see themselves wrapped up in a host of additional stories and in systems—not excluding oppressive systems. Moreover, we made explicit the understanding that many accounts of undergraduate life may not be positive and encouraged students to offer critical takes of Oxford College. Finally, we clarified our assignment requirements. Primarily, we made clear the precise number of academic artifacts expected by our faculty.

The assignment still prioritizes students' academic experiences but provides a precise minimum number of academic artifacts, thereby also making clear students may include any number of additional artifacts from social and extracurricular experiences. If assessed properly, I believe we can begin creating an archive of minoritized knowledge that also makes change on how our students learn and live.

Next, we will design assessment practices that permit students to speak for themselves through the ePortfolios. Our current assessment proposal is a coding analysis of a sample of ePortfolios. This practice involves multiple levels of data gathering and synthesis from student work, using the language and concepts within the ePortfolios to demonstrate categories of student needs, strengths, and knowledge. Moreover, deploying coding of ePortfolios as an institutional assessment methodology gives us the tools to explore ways students may not express discontent explicitly; instead, we will look for language or behavior that is manifestly unhealthy for undergraduates. We will then compare the data gathered to Oxford's other learning outcomes and other assessment data to determine whether we are meeting the needs of our students and to determine where the students can show us where we have fallen short. That is, coding permits our institution to understand where the multiplicity of its own student body is critiquing our own curriculum and community. In short, are we contributing to our students' flourishing or to loneliness, isolation, and discontent?

ePortfolios as Antiracist Revolutionary Collections: Prospective Challenges to Higher Education

An ePortfolio as a revolutionary collection, in a Benjaminian vein, is embedded with power that comes from its owner, not its reader or assessor. Importantly, then, ePortfolios are not given influence by any outside entity; this includes the racist structures of higher education—from accrediting agencies to curricula, to professors and peers in the classroom. In fact, because ePortfolio reflections occur within higher education's Western, colonial culture these collections contribute resistance from students of color to broader discourses within these spaces that have been built to exclude these same students. While racist structures are built to either exclude or assimilate marginalized people, ePortfolios offer a space-within-a-space from which genuine resistance emerges. These resistances provide qualitative, but more importantly, revolutionary institutional assessment.

Any response an ePortfolio author might make to institutional practices arises from their ability and freedom to generate a project infused with themselves. Following Benjamin's (2019a) collections, we have no need to explore whether a student has attained certain

benchmarks in their learning—although we may do this in other ways—but instead honor the collection as a "magic encyclopedia" (p. 2). Treating student work as such opens at least two opportunities: (a) ensuring that ePortfolio assignments provide space for authentic and valuable student growth and reflection, and (b) ensuring that the reflections on student experiences within our own institutions is as close to authentic as possible.

In this spirit, I offer three preliminary suggestions for altering institutional assessment considering student expression through ePortfolios: (a) continual revision of capstone ePortfolio assignments, (b) revisit ePortfolio capstone assignment outcomes in consultation with student life professionals, and (c) build qualitative review of ePortfolios into your institution's assessment practices.

Continual Revision of Capstone ePortfolio Assignments

Ideally, this is a change administrators can make quickly and repeatedly without too much resistance. If your institution deploys ePortfolios as a medium for capstone projects, revise assignment language and requirements in two ways: (a) elide any requirements or vocabulary that communicate to students their undergraduate experience must have been a positive one; and (b) open the assignment requirements to as broad a range of artifacts as possible, representing as many experiences as possible, while providing clear guidelines for how the project should be completed. Students should feel both the freedom to reflect in a genuine manner without guessing what their instructor or institution wants them to write (Yancey, 2016). Then, repeat this process with data from programmatic assessments from students and analysis of the ePortfolios themselves.

An additional opportunity for assignment revision is in your ePortfolio rubrics. This may be more difficult than updating assignment language and requirements, particularly if your rubrics are integral to certain elements of institutional assessment. However, rubric revision offers ePortfolio educators at least two vehicles for student-led transformation of ePortfolio pedagogy. First, clear rubrics make faculty assessment of student work easier, leaving less room for ambiguity and harm caused by the personal bias of the faculty member. Second, alterations to an ePortfolio rubric, if they are reevaluated in light of student work, provide an opportunity to change the sort of knowledges we are looking for as educators. Rather than seeing previously unassessed knowledge as irrelevant or even a deficiency, exciting students to explore their own localized knowledge that they bring to the classroom can help empower students of color.

Revisit ePortfolio Capstone Assignment Outcomes in Consultation With Student Life Professionals

Many of our institutions are blessed by dedicated student and residential life staff with expertise in student development and the culture of student life on our campuses. They also interact with students in a different capacity than faculty. From student clubs and events, to counseling, to resident assistants, student life professionals are often a critical piece to extracurricular experiences, which liberal arts colleges profess are central to integrated education. If ePortfolio assignments ask students to reflect on how their classroom and social learning inform one another, it behooves us to ask colleagues in our communities with a window into extracurricular experiences to contribute to our curriculum. Indeed, some recent conversations with our student life staff at Oxford were integral to our revision of our Milestone assignment. They showed us how things assumed in much of our curriculum, like learning outcomes, also guided much of their programming. As we altered our Milestone assignment to encourage students to showcase the knowledge they created in college, we are now able to excite students to include narratives of how their learning in class and in cocurriculars were integrated.

Build Qualitative Review of ePortfolios Into Your Institution's Assessment Practices

ePortfolios narrativize reflection, a necessarily different genre than rubrics or student feedback surveys. As I have noted above, student-owned spaces for agency in reflection are best assessed as sites of knowledge production. In short, colleges need to assume that ePortfolios contain data points about teaching and learning practices presently uncaptured by established outcomes; rather, the knowledge students produce from ePortfolios can offer a deeper understanding of how learning outcomes are being met and whether these outcomes are sufficient for capturing the sort of learning occurring on our campuses. I discussed earlier one strategy we are exploring at Oxford—deploying qualitative coding analysis of our students' Milestone projects—this may or may not work for your institution; for our purposes here, what matters is that student voices speak through their ePortfolios and that those voices are treated as legitimate assessment of their own college community's teaching and learning practices and outcomes. Taken together with analysis from student and residential life professionals, qualitative analysis of ePortfolios provides student reflection on the process of learning, not student opinion on learning nor administration-driven assumptions of student need.

Furthermore, qualitative review of ePortfolios helps disaggregate data on student learning, as suggested by McNair et al. (2020). The knowledge creation narrated by students in ePortfolios, in fact, is extremely specific and can provide hyper-local datapoints about campus life and curricular success when explored on an individual level. These data can also be coded in ways that allow us to see patterns within various demographic groups on campus. I encourage ePortfolio practitioners to approach institutional research professionals on their campus for tools and best practices for gathering student ePortfolio data and deploying it for institutional change.

These suggested changes are intentionally vague because ePortfolios are vehicles for student knowledge creation from their undergraduate experience. I acknowledge that these suggested pedagogical and institutional changes may not mirror the language of "revolution" I have used throughout this article. My goal here is to identify practices that acknowledge the unique knowledge each student brings and ensure space for that knowledge to make change within our schools. This student knowledge is the revolutionary force working within ePortfolios. Where it takes our institutions, by definition, is as yet invisible within a higher education infused with white supremacy. And so, the traditional measures I suggest must always be in service of enabling something new to emerge within the academy, and what could be more alien to postsecondary learning than equity, justice, and "magic" programmatic assessment?

While programmatic assessment in higher education privileges objective measures and methods for making change within a college or university, ePortfolios-as-collections always already respond to their author's immediate context with "magic" and "spirit." The author of an ePortfolio who narrates their own experience, curates, and presents evidence of that experience, with an import that cannot be defined by the curriculum. The imagination with which they create may have been evoked by university requirements, but that imagination also contains multitudes of stories that have mediated the student's life at the institution. Whether powered by experience or imagination, magic or spirit, the stories of life as postsecondary students contained within ePortfolios narrate material realities at an institution of higher learning that the institution itself could never anticipate. That is, such narratives tell readers about the successes and failures of a university before, say, professor evaluations or student body climate surveys are ever written. Moreover, these ePortfolios each set their own measures for what matters at the university. To put an even finer point on it: when the institution, imbued with the burden of racist history, seeks to end its own racial violence, it lacks the tools; when students of color tell their stories from within that institution, their stories transform it.

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PETER McLELLAN, PhD, is an Educational Analyst at Oxford College of Emory University. He received his PhD in Bible and Cultures from Drew University and now puts his interest in social justice, the sacred, and student agency to work directing the Milestone ePortfolio program at Oxford.

Acknowledgements

Appendix A
Oxford's Original Milestone Pilot Assignment

The Milestone Portfolio is your chance to showcase who you have become at Oxford in a digital portfolio of your work created for the members of the Oxford community. Specifically, the Milestone is an opportunity to turn the lens of inquiry on yourself by asking and answering a meaningful question about who you have become through your liberal arts education at Oxford. We hope that it will deepen your journey of self-development at Oxford by providing you with a chance to explore and reflect on how you have changed during your time here. We call it a Milestone because your graduation from Oxford is not the end of your journey of self-development, but rather an important moment that deserves to be marked, reflected upon, and celebrated before continuing your life journey.

Telling Your Story

Together, the parts of your portfolio should add up to a coherent story or argument about your development as a thinker through your liberal arts experience at Oxford. Another way to think about this is that you are showcasing what you have learned while at Oxford, but it will be easier to integrate this into a coherent whole if you consider your learning in terms of yourself and your personal journey of self-development.

Developing your central idea about yourself should happen through an ongoing and recursive process of selecting, reflecting, drafting, and revising. You will benefit from ongoing collaborative discussions with peers, teachers, mentors, and your advisors in order to genuinely "re-view" your work and journey and gradually develop and polish your portfolio. We recommend that you begin this process during your Discovery Seminar by beginning some sort of reflective journal and by beginning to collect artifacts that might go in your portfolio.

Within your portfolio, you have several tools for telling your story:
1. selection of your artifacts,
2. evidence-based reflective writing (reflections that make claims about your work and point to or quote specific artifacts or features of artifacts),
3. interactive navigation (e.g., menus, hyperlinks, hyperlinked images),
4. arrangement of the elements of your portfolio, and
5. visual design and multimodal writing (layout, color, images, incorporation of video and audio).

Use these resources to carefully construct the story you want to tell about who you have become at Oxford, considering how these elements create meaning together.

Required Elements

1. *Evidence-Based Reflective Analysis* – Your portfolio will be framed by reflective analysis that guides your reader on your inquiry about your development as a thinker through your liberal arts education at Oxford and that provides coherence and context for the artifacts you have chosen to showcase. Your reflection should point to specific evidence in your portfolio, analyzing why and how events and artifacts have sparked development, detailing the processes by which chosen artifacts were developed, and establishing the artifacts' relationships to the portfolio's central idea. This reflection should be 750-1000 words.

2. *Artifacts* – Your portfolio should exhibit **at least three artifacts** from your time at Oxford that you have selected through a process of inquiry and self-reflection. These should span a range of disciplines, contexts, and experiences to fully engage with your liberal arts experience. Your artifacts should support the story you tell about yourself in your reflective analysis and demonstrate your development through the core dimensions of Oxford's curriculum, such as:
   - Ways of Inquiry
   - Experiential Learning
   - Writing and Communication
   - Information Literacy & Research
   - Leadership

- Social Responsibility

Your chosen artifacts should be artifacts that you have produced or that showcase something you have produced. In addition to traditional academic papers, you should consider incorporating a broad range of artifacts, like an excerpt from a musical performance, a film project, or a picture of a research poster. The artifacts do not have to have been produced in the classroom, but could be from an internship, service learning, travel, club, etc.

3. *Biographical Profile* – In addition to your reflective writing, you should develop a profile page that is biographical rather than reflective.

Beyond these required elements, you may choose to identify other dimensions you feel you have grown in during your time at Oxford. You may also choose to add more than the three minimum artifacts and to include brief reflective introductions for each artifact. Make sure, however, that your artifacts are carefully curated and arranged to enhance your audience's experience of the portfolio

Appendix B
Oxford's Current Milestone Assignment

Your Objectives

1. Connect the most knowledge you gained in your liberal arts experience—from coursework, experiential learning, co-curricular experiences, or leadership—and explain how it has shaped you and your future plans.
2. Analyze and connect this knowledge through reflection, integrating the various elements of the portfolio into a coherent whole.
3. Adapt digital technologies and media to communicate for a specific academic audience and purpose.
4. Use reflective practice to put multiple perspectives, experiences, and contexts into conversation with each other to assess knowledge and performance and produce new insights.

Your Task

In your Milestone Portfolio, using the Digication ePortfolio platform, you will draw together in a coherent analysis the knowledge you gained in the first two years of your liberal arts college education—from the most meaningful ideas, thinkers, projects, activities, and moments. An excellent ePortfolio will use different forms of communication to give a coherent, evidence-based account of how you are changing as a thinker because of your learning in the classroom, in extracurricular activities, and with your community.

Your Audience

Your Milestone project will be viewed by three constituencies: peer reviewers in your advising cohort, your academic advisor as you create your project, and one other Oxford faculty member during final assessment. Therefore, you should plan to write your Milestone Project for members of the Oxford community. Do note, however, that you can control who can view your ePortfolio, using Digication's privacy settings.

The Required Elements

Your Milestone Portfolio must include the following pieces:

1. *Evidence-Based Reflective Analysis* – Your portfolio is framed by a 750-1,000-word Reflective Analysis, in which you write an evidence-based account of how the knowledge you gained at Oxford is changing you as a thinker. Your reflection should be guided by a coherent theme and provide context for your three Artifacts, which are evidence for how your learning is changing you as a thinker.

2. *Artifacts* – Your portfolio should include at least three Artifacts from your college experience so far, at least two of which should be products from academic experiences. Each artifact should showcase knowledge that you have gained over these past two years. They should span a range of disciplines (i.e., from more than one discipline) and experiences from your undergraduate life. Your Artifacts should support the central idea of your Milestone portfolio as evidence.
   a. You might consider artifacts from core dimensions of Oxford curriculum:
      i. Discovery Seminar and Inquiry courses
      ii. Experiential learning
      iii. Writing & communication
      iv. Research & information literacy
      v. Leadership & social responsibility
      vi. Your coursework across disciplines
   b. You have the option to add more than the three-artifact minimum. Make sure, however, that your artifacts are carefully curated and arranged to enhance your audience's experience of the portfolio.

3. *Biographical Profile* – This is a page in your portfolio that elaborates on your biography, demonstrating who you are in the context of your liberal arts education. This profile will help your audience envision who you are becoming in college.

Assessing the Milestone Portfolio

The Milestone Portfolio is graded S/U and includes your participation in MLP 101. See the "Minimum Criteria" in the rubric below.

You will also notice a section of the rubric, entitled "Evaluative Criteria." These criteria are designed to show you where you have excelled in your digital reflection and where you have room to grow as a reflective learner. These criteria are **not** designed to grade your performance, but to offer you a guide for where you might foster growth in your intellectual life as you continue to the Atlanta campus and beyond.