e-Portfolios as both self-reflective/developmental and assessment tools: evaluating effectiveness

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Agenda

- Why e-Portfolios?
- QMUL implementation process
- Findings
- Sample student work
- What we have learnt
An argument for implementing e-portfolios

- Rich & flexible tool for teaching and learning
- Can be used for both formative & summative assessment
- More authentic types of assessment
- Allows collection of materials over time
- Requires selection, arrangement & reflection
- Provides avenues for understanding both content & learning experience

E-portfolio can present a personal competence matrix

Luchoomun et al, 2010

Goldsmith, 2007
Challenges

- E-portfolios can be both transformative & disruptive
  - Technological
  - Pedagogic
  - Institutional
- Not all e-portfolio systems fit all purposes
- E-portfolios tend not to fit exactly within existing systems
- Staff and student training
- Resistance
Data collection

‘perceived satisfaction and usefulness correlates with more behavioural intention among learners.’

Liaw, 2008

Students

- Questionnaire (before & after)
  - Prior e-tools experience
  - Prior e-learning experience
  - Student perceptions & attitudes towards
- Focus group discussion (after)

Tutors

- Discussions in weekly meetings (throughout)
Student reactions [before implementation]

Social networking sites for learning purposes

- Sept start: 76.5%
- Jan start: 23.5%

Participation in online communities

- Sept start: 59%
- Jan start: 35%
Student reactions [before implementation] II

September start: rating tasks

January start: rating tasks
Student reactions \([\text{before implementation}]\) III

**Sept start: positive Qs**

**Jan start: positive Qs**
Student reactions [before implementation] IV

Sept start: negative Qs

- I’d rather not; I don’t see the point of doing this
- I’d rather not; I don’t like the idea
- I’d rather not; I think it will add to the workload

Jan start: negative Qs

- I’d rather not; I don’t see the point of doing this
- I’d rather not; I don’t like the idea
- I’d rather not; I think it will add to the workload
Overall, this shows:

- Majority claim they use social media for learning purposes
  - but rarely for blogging or exchanging views
- High frequency of use
- Most frequent use:
  - chatting
  - looking for information
  - promoting themselves
- Moderately positive reactions to positive Qs
- Neutral reactions to negative Qs
- Not significant difference between the two cohorts
Anticipated problems, solutions & end-result I

- Setting-up
  - End-product content
    - 4 assessed pieces of work, 3 of which include at least one re-draft
  - End-product layout
    - meet academic standards
    - leave room for creativity

**Solution:**
- Template

- Low familiarity for staff & Ss

**Solution:**
- Detailed instructions
Anticipated problems, solutions & end-result II

- Content
  - Include in-class tasks
    - Solution: scan the documents
    - Read-only final drafts before submission
    - Solution: pdf final draft
- Room for creativity
  - Solution: personalization
  - suggested non-assessed tasks
  - share function
e-portfolio samples: September start cohort
e-portfolio samples: January start cohort

- No template
- More help from tutors
Student reactions \textit{after implementation}

Actual frequency of use:
- More than 3 times a day
- Once or twice a day
- 4-5 times a week
- 1-2 times a week
- Hardly ever
- I didn't use it; someone else helped me

% probability of different portfolio use in semester 1:
- Personalising your space
- Exchanging views in forums
- Working with other people on a project
- Forming sub-groups of specific interest
- Uploading tasks for your portfolio
- Working on tasks for your portfolio
- Sharing your work with other students
- Giving feedback to other students
- Forming a study group
- Discussing with your study group
- Doing independent study
Student reactions [after implementation] II

- 59% of the Ss continued using it
- 41% stopped using it
Student reactions [after implementation] III

- Not as simple as Facebook & What’s up
- Needed to put in some effort, generated workload
- Did not bother to read long instructions
- Made an attempt but when it proved difficult they gave up
- Not clear why doing more than the bare minimum would be beneficial
- Did the sharing work through other channels i.e. What’s up groups

- Were positive if further improvements in terms of simplicity were done
- Were positive they would do more if this was embedded even deeper within the course i.e. reflection processes
Teacher reactions *throughout*

- Unfamiliarity despite the 2 sessions provided (induction and a meeting)
- Caught up in mundane, technical details
- Had to spent valuable session time to show Ss how to do it more than expected, especially with submission
  - Jan cohort: Ss submitted in class
- Problems with sharing work with tutor for feedback
- It created more workload

**But...**

- Instances of creative use of the concept in class
Conclusion: what we have learnt

- We did not anticipate...
  - Lack of enthusiasm
  - Confusion

**Preconceptions**

**Students:**
- Digital natives so they will work it out
- Whatever is e- is appealing
- This is a form that can work for everything
- More work will be done
- Will be willing to try out all its functions

**Staff:**
- Will know how to help students once they are shown how to use it
- It will simply replace paper portfolio, curriculum will not be affected
- Will relate it to collaborative learning
- Less workload

*Joyes, Gray & Hartnell-Young, 2010*
Conclusion: what we have learnt

- e-portfolios
  - will not necessarily save everyone time
  - do not necessarily fit within existing systems
  - can be disruptive
  - curriculum and pedagogic approaches are affected
  - implementation is complex and involves resistance
  - end-product is not necessarily what we expect
  - need resources and scaffolding for students

- understanding comes with experience

‘Even with guidelines and case studies of exemplars, those implementing e-portfolios seem often to reinvent the wheel, making really ‘obvious’ mistakes…’

Joyes, Gray & Hartnell-Young, 2010
References


Thank you!