Why ePortfolios Matter?

Óscar Fernández, Portland State University

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/Oscar-Fernandez/28/
Fall Workshop, 21 September 2016,
UNST Faculty Orientation

WHY ePORTFOLIOS MATTER?

1. To showcase faculty work for promotion and advancement purposes
   - Virtual and interactive representation of your CV for promotion and advancement purposes
   - ePortfolio “travels” with you

2. To encourage students to be less defensive about this “new” technology
   - Students learn when the classroom is relaxed about new approaches and when I am positive about new approaches.

   "People in a state of Relaxed Alertness experience low threat and high challenge (Caine & Caine, 1991/1994, 2010). Essentially, the learner is both relaxed and to some extent excited or emotionally engaged at the same time. This is the foundation for taking risks in thinking, questioning, and experimenting, all of which are essential to mastering new skills and engaging higher-order thinking. In this state the learner feels competent
and confident and has a sense of meaning or purpose."

- Students respond positively when I complete assignments I ask of them. I share with them aspects of my ePortfolio and explain how they have been helpful in my own profession.

3. To make the job of writing letters of reference a richer experience for faculty members and students

- In a nutshell, your professors will write better letters of reference if you can provide them with an ePortfolio. If you are applying for a scholarship, would including an ePortfolio help your cause?

4. To advance student's own career planning


In addition to a résumé and college transcript, a large majority of employers say an electronic portfolio demonstrating a student's work and key skill and knowledge areas would be useful in evaluating candidates for hire. Four in five (83%) employers say an electronic portfolio of student accomplishments would be very (43%) or fairly (40%) useful to them in ensuring applicants have the skills and knowledge to success in their company or organization. Just 17% say the portfolio would be only somewhat useful or less. (11)

5. To support our UNST ethos as evidenced by research that
ePortfolios dramatize high impact practices we already carry out in our classrooms

- What are high-impact practices in higher education?

Research supports George Kuh's contention that the following teaching practices are notably beneficial to college students: first-year seminars and experiences, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, service learning/community-based learning, internships, and capstone courses or projects. In addition, research suggests that participation in HIPs may also have compensatory effects for underprepared and historically underserved students (Kuh 2008; Brownell and Swaner 2010; Finley and McNair 2013).

- How do ePortfolios dramatize high-impact practices? (f. Eynon, Gambino, and Török 2014)

  a. The first thing to note about e-portfolios as a high-impact practice is that they are composed. When students compose e-portfolios, they make higher-level choices about matters of order and arrangement.

  b. When students build their e-portfolios, they also enact a shift from being a consumer to being a producer of their own education.

  c. Asking students to represent their learning introduces another hidden benefit, the so-called "audience effect." Writing in Wired magazine about the benefits of writing and social media (blogging, Twitter, Facebook), Clive Thompson (2009) points to research that shows a "shift in performance when we know people are watching."

Additional References


  http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/writingbeliefs.


- David Hubert, interim assistant provost of learning advancement, Salt Lake Community College.

- Jason Pickavance, director of educational initiatives, Salt Lake Community College; and Amanda Hyberger, Quality Enhancement
Plan director and professor of music, Chattanooga State Community College