



A Qualitative Look at ePortfolio Reflection

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Research purpose & question

- ❑ The **purpose** of this study is to examine the role of reflection in the electronic portfolio processes and outcomes at IUPUI.
- ❑ Our **research question**: Why, how, and with what success is reflection, as a teaching/learning process, employed among ePortfolio projects at IUPUI?

Reflection: some general definitions

- ❑ “a meaning-making process that moves a learner from one experience to the next with deeper understanding of its relationships with and connections to other experiences and ideas. It is the thread that makes continuity of learning possible.” (Rodgers, 2002)
- ❑ “learning in which learners try to understand material that they encounter and to relate it to what they already knew.” (Moon, 2005)
- ❑ “often a process of reorganizing knowledge and emotional orientations in order to achieve further insights.” (Moon, 2004)

IUPUI Context

- ❑ Blended campus of Indiana and Purdue Universities
- ❑ Urban research university, Indiana’s health/life-science campus
- ❑ Largely commuter, ~30,000 students (2/3 undergrad, 1/3 graduate and professional)
- ❑ Autonomous, diverse academic units offering more than 250 degree programs
- ❑ Longstanding emphasis on high-impact practices

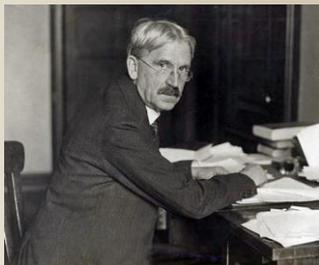


Research participants

- Undergraduate & graduate levels
- Courses, programs, high-impact practices
- Assessment, learning, development, & presentation
- Fields included social work, nursing, education, art, biology, psychology, music technology, Spanish, dentistry, English, organizational leadership, business, American studies, museum studies

General participant definitions

From:



To:



Summary literature review

❑ Reflection:

- Designed, implemented, & reported successfully across range of fields and settings to enhance learning
- Common terminology, definition, processes remain elusive—can domino, cause confusion

❑ Electronic Portfolio:

- Accelerated increase in adoption since 2010
- ePortfolios offer support for learning paradigm
- Rubrics promoted often as assessment measure

Summary literature review

❑ Reflection in ePortfolio:

- ePortfolio practices & pedagogies effectively facilitate reflection- or vice-versa?
- Electronic platform expands reflective form→ evaluation challenges
- Is the reflection process quantifiable?

Research process in a nutshell

- ❑ Research Strategy: Qualitative case study
- ❑ Worldview: Social constructivism
- ❑ Data Collection:
 - 2-level non-probability sampling
 - FTF Semi-structured Interviews
 - Artifacts
- ❑ Data coding: “Notice/Collect/Think”
deductive/inductive coding
- ❑ Data Analysis: inductive, cross-checking for coding agreement

Research process in a nutshell

- ❑ Validity: Investigator reflexivity
 - Triangulation
 - Rich thick description
- ❑ Reliability: Good documentation of case & qualitative procedures
 - Checked transcripts for accuracy
 - Cross-checked codes & coding
 - Collaborative data analysis & derivation of findings
- ❑ Transferability:
 - Provide enough detailed description of case study context to enable others to compare “fit” with own context

Finding #1

Only a few of those adopting ePortfolios began with reflection as a primary goal.

“I saw those connections between what they were trying to do with PBL, this integrative learning, and what the portfolio promised.”

Finding #2

Whether or not adopters initially understood the importance of reflection in ePortfolios, most recognized and prized that role within the first term of ePortfolio use.

“I’ve come to think that this is not only an incredibly impactful form of assignment for students to do, but it’s also a way that instructors can be assured that the way that they’ve designed their class . . . Is working or not working.”

Finding #3

Instructors almost always expressed surprise at students' limited ability to reflect, and they subsequently devoted considerable effort to helping students learn how to think reflectively.

“I went from hoping that students would draw these deep connections to hoping that they would just simply answer all parts of the question!”

Finding #4

The purposes of reflection related to wide-ranging course or programmatic objectives but may be summarized in two primary categories: to help students make connections and to build self-understanding and metacognition.

“If they're showing evidence of being able to pull all those things together and relate them to whatever particular area they're investigating, that's what I was really after.”

Finding #5

Instructors reported using a range of approaches to elicit reflection appropriate to the context.

- Explanation and advocacy
- Demonstration and practice
- Structure & pacing of assignments
- Social pedagogies
- Formative and summative assessment

Finding #6

Assessment practices vary widely according to both students' abilities and instructors' own understandings of reflection.

“How can you grade reflection? . . . It's like grading somebody on their opinion of something.”

Finding #7

Many respondents perceived greater success with self-evaluation than with depth or quality of reflection about course or program content.

“For usually a few students each year, it’s that light bulb kind of moment: ‘Oh that’s why I’m drawn to this kind of work!’”

Finding #8

Respondents often described success in terms of the professional reward of seeing evidence of their students’ learning and of seeing that the program or course had value for their students.

“Really, really gratifying . . . The students seemed to use their individual ePortfolios as a transformative, reflective learning experience.”

Finding #9

Respondents also noted direct benefits for themselves and their projects from improved understanding of their own curricula as they “closed the loop” on their assessment and reflected ever more deeply on their own teaching practice.

“We made a major curricular change . . . and a lot of that was due to the way we’re doing the capstone portfolios.”

Implications and Discussion



Understandings of reflection

- ❑ The varied understandings and definitions of reflection ripple through decisions about how reflection is used and whether or how it is assessed.
 - What are the risks?

Assessment vs. reflection?

- ❑ Common faculty perceptions of “assessment” exist in tension with understandings of “reflection.”
 - How can we reconcile these understandings?

E-Portfolio?

- ❑ The multimedia benefits of e-Portfolio are still not often achieved due to dominance of writing as the preferred expression or product of reflection.
 - How might we foster increased comfort with assessing alternate modes?

“It takes too much time!”

- ❑ Personal reflective essays seem to prompt instructors’ desire to return personal responses in feedback, which in turn can add to faculty perception of greatly increased workload.
 - Suggests a focus for professional development?

Information

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