

<b>Best Practice &amp; Topical issues</b>
<b>Title:</b> Strategy Now!: A review of the literature of ePortfolio use in work integrated learning
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<b>Background:</b> Since the arrival of Web 2.0 technologies use of ePortfolios in higher education has dramatically increased in all disciplines. These portfolios are used to encourage students to collate and curate their learning experiences. EPortfolios are sometimes used in assessment processes, and this is challenging as views are mixed as to how a fluid and dynamic portfolio of learning can be effectively assessed. Issues such as access, security, privacy and ownership are further complicating the use of portfolios. There is some use of ePortfolios in work integrated education, and while some practitioners are convinced of the benefits for students, host organisations and academic institutions, other point to significant challenges in implementation and creating positive student learning experiences. This paper is a summary of the writing and emerging issues from implementation of ePortfolios in work integrated learning.
<b>Unique Features:</b> EPortfolios offer a range of advantages over traditional methods of collation and curation of learning experiences and development. Within an ePortfolio students have the opportunity to collate artifacts, reflect on their practice and plan their professional development. They can tailor their portfolios for different purposes and audiences.
<b>Discussion/Argument:</b> <p>The benefits of using ePortfolios in work integrated learning courses were identified by Dermott &amp; Gallagher (2011), Mather (2011) and Koch, (2010). The advantage of ePortfolios for student learning include a holistic overview of student learning beyond the classroom, and incorporation of personal, social and work learning. EPortfolios are particularly useful in programmes of study as they can be presented to demonstrate graduate attributes. Learners have control of their ePortfolios, extracting different artifacts to evidence different learning outcomes. The flexibility of the ePortfolio allows learners to plan and evidence their own learning, and customise their accomplishments for prospective employers.</p> <p>Peet, Lonn, Gurin, et al. (2011) observed that all learning, in and out of the curriculum was appearing in learners ePortfolios, describing this as integrative learning. Van Rooijen (2001) identified an emerging educational trend that has an impact on traditional higher education. He has differentiated between work integrated learning and learning integrated work and believes further study is needed to determine the nature of integrative learning, and how ePortfolios may be used to manage it for students, employers and academic institutions.</p> <p>Various challenges in implementation of ePortfolios in work integrated learning were identified in the research, including digital literacy skills of students and teachers, reflective writing skills of students, managing professional bodies and students expectations, choosing workable platforms and providing technical and academic support to students and teachers. One of the greatest challenges is managing the process of moving existing processes online. McNeill and Cram, (2011) and Mather, (2011) identified the high level of support required for successful implementation and the need for a co-ordinated integration of portfolios throughout a whole programme of study.</p> <p>Another emerging trend is the development of standards supporting ePortfolio implementation. There are bodies undertaking the role of providing developing standards for ePortfolio strategy development and use, such as the National VET ELearning Strategy in Australia, Queensland University (with a guide to ePortfolios for employers, professional bodies and career services (2009)) and the Council on Higher Education in South Africa.</p>
<b>Implications/Issues:</b> Those experiencing the highs and lows of ePortfolios are conscious of the need for more research and sharing of good practice (Dermott & Gallagher, 2011). Others (Koch, 2010, Van Rooijen (2011) call for strategic approach from higher education organisations, with the aim of providing a strategic design strategy to support implementation and to enable a student to develop his/her portfolio for life-long learning purposes.