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Assessment Brief: The ePortfolio Process and Student Learning

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UNST Assessment Brief



The ePortfolio process and student learning

In Freshman Inquiry, ePortfolios serve several functions, for both students and UNST. The ePortfolios promote students' development and understanding of themselves as learners and scholars. As Reflection is an important educational tool, ePortfolios allows students to examine their learning over time and make connections with UNST goals. Finally, these electronic documents give the program a snapshot of students' learning in the first year of the program, and provide information that can help adapt and improve the curriculum over time.

In an effort to understand the way ePortfolios are taught across FRINQ, and how those practices are related to student learning, a series of questions were added to the Spring 2009 end-of-year survey, and repeated in Spring 2010. Students were asked when they began their portfolio, and what activities they did each term to support their work. We also asked students how much they agreed (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) with statements about how the ePortfolio had contributed to making connections between course content, themselves as learners, and UNST goals. We found that *students who reported starting portfolio activities fall term reported more learning than those who began in Winter or Spring terms*. For example...

SOURCE OF DATA

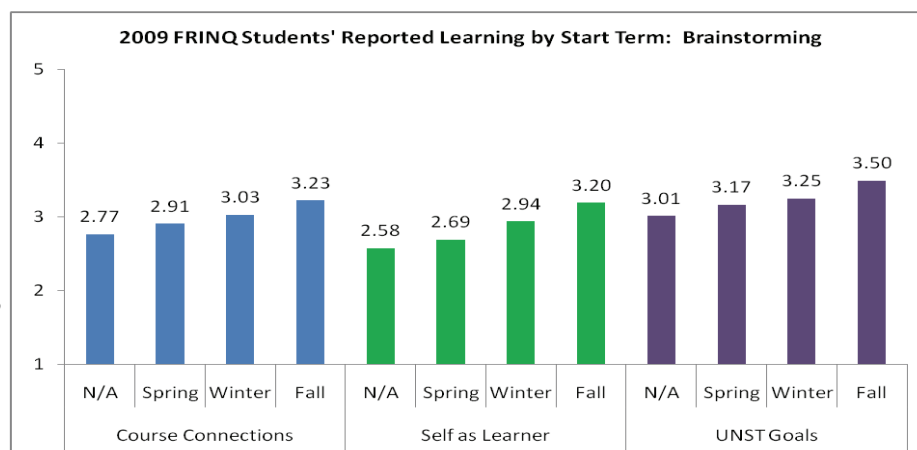
Freshman Inquiry

End-of-year Survey

On-line survey administered during the last two weeks of the academic year in mentor sessions.

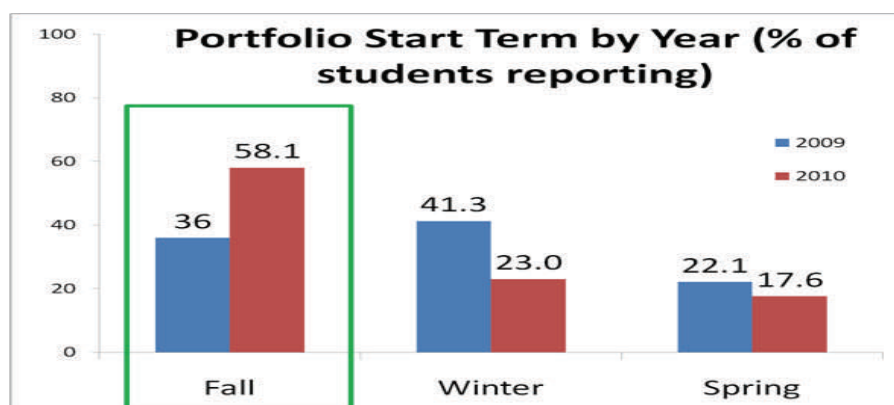
Spring 2009 (N = 841)

Spring 2010 (N = 1,031)



Change in Practice

We shared this data with FRINQ faculty and our practice has changed. More students in 2010 than in 2009 report that they started their portfolios during fall term.



ePortfolio Support Activities

We also asked students about what activities they did to support the development of their ePortfolios, and related these activities to their own learning. Across both 2009 and 2010, the most frequently reported activity was a formal reflective assignment. The activity reported least frequently was presenting the portfolio to their classmates.

For each activity, students who reported that they had done the activity reported higher learning than students who had not done that activity. The differences in reported learning were the greatest when students had an opportunity to revise their ePortfolio, and receive feedback from faculty or mentor.

Implications for Action: Starting the ePortfolio process early and allowing time for a revision and feedback process helps students learn more as they are creating their ePortfolios.

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