E-Portfolio assessment of, for and as learning.
Reflections on the Learning Technologist role in Technology-Enabled Assessment

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Abstract

The role of a Learning Technologist (LT) is one of support and facilitation and increasingly relevant in our technology enhanced Higher Education sector. This extended abstract is a reflection on delivering technology-enabled assessment (TEA) from an LT perspective and explores the challenges and lessons learned over a two year roll out period. The ePortfolio used was a be-spoke version of Mahara devised at University College Dublin (UCD), where I worked as an Educational Technologist (ED Tech) from 2014 until October 2017 with the School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science (SPHPSS). The two programmes which I introduced ePortfolios to were diverse in subject and level and equally varied in the modes of use designed for <u>assessment of, for and as learning</u>, one of this year's ICEP conference themes.

Having worked in the HE sector in the UK and Ireland for several years as a lecturer and more recently a LT or Ed Tech I had been aware of ePortfolios as a multi-faceted learning and assessment tool. I was therefore very keen to use the Mahara version available to "add value" to the programmes I was supporting. Both student groups engaged enthusiastically with ePortfolios, as this technology is used within their professional context as a "showcase" for skills and qualifications and a framework for Continuing Professional Development.

This paper will reveal some of the lessons learned from experience, intuition and reflection on a rapid assessment roll-out including some very positive results which were achieved. I will look at the indispensable role played by the LT in scaffolding technology-enabled assessment and the practice and experience of using this particular digital learning tool – what worked, what didn't and why. I will also explore the various aspects of assessment of, for and as learning, as demonstrated through the deployment of ePortfolios in this particular context and use National Forum literature review findings to show examples of how this technology has been embedded into practice in the wider HE sector.

Keywords:

e-Portfolio, Assessment of/for/as learning, Technology-Enabled Assessment

1. Introduction, Inspiration and Motivation for use of TEA

In 2015 UCD's established BSc in Physiotherapy deployed ePortfolios for TEA. In my position as Educational Technologist for UCD's SPHPSS I used my technical and pedagogical understanding from a decade working in the sector to devise a set of protocols for the Mahara UCD ePortfolio. Through a series of discussions with fellow Ed Techs and IT support technicians I tested and worked out a methodology which thankfully stood us in good stead for the next two years. A variety of reflective, collaborative and multi-media, individual and group submissions were revised and published for this platform. TEA assessment for the programme, including use of reflective journals and group projects (assessment **of** and **for** learning) were designed and rolled out. Then again in Sept 2016 the newly created MSC in Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics requested my help in the use of e-Portfolios for their practice placements (assessment **as** learning). In both programmes a series of instructional guides, in-class student training and pedagogically and technically supported roll-out was facilitated by me, in conjunction with the module academic staff and central IT support.

I was inspired by a recent workshop at the National Forum (27th Sept 2017) to reflect on the experience of using this ubiquitous and somewhat misunderstood learning tool (Bennett, S., et al.,) with particular emphasis on comparing and contrasting evidence based research into TEA, which resonated with my findings. This extended abstract paper will distil the functions of the LT facilitator within the context of the National Forum (2016) (2017) TEA framework and their advice in this area.

2. Conclusions and Future Work

Reflection on the supportive role of LT (EdTech) in the context of TEA using ePortfolios, is important for deployment of this resource and could be of use as evidence based research within the sector. Drawing on the comprehensive literature review at the aforementioned NF workshop has helped clarify the significance of scaffolding, staffing and student support to avoid unsatisfactory learning situations using ePortfolio for assessment purposes (Grennan, et al,.) In my new role as Learning Technologist Manager with Griffith College I hope to apply the findings of these reflections as I continue to use this multi-facetted and powerful learning tool.

References

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Aforementioned NF TEA workshop

Technology-Enabled Assessment : Evidence Based Discussion

Presentation : Enabling Technology-Enhanced Assessment OF/FOR/AS Learning in

Higher Education: Themes from the Evidence   **27thSeptember, 2017**

Dr Mairead Brady Dr Ann Devitt Dr Rachel Kiersey