

## **CETL Briefing Papers – Implementation and roll out of E-portfolio.**

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#### **Aims of the Initiative**

The aim of this initiative is to implement and roll out the use of e-portfolio to enhance the learning experience of first year undergraduates. There are two main elements to this area of activity. These are university-wide activities which are feeding into the Blended Learning Strategy curriculum redesign and development. In SED this is implemented via mentoring of core staff in use of technology and attendant pedagogies.

#### **Description of the Initiative**

The learning potential for e-portfolios is rapidly attracting attention in higher education. A recent JISC (2008: 5) publication on the effective use of e-portfolios stated that there was an indication from research and practice that the 'use of these tools can promote more profound forms of learning'. This briefing paper will reflect upon how e-portfolio-based learning has been introduced and integrated into the curriculum in the University of Wolverhampton.

#### **Why e-portfolio?**

The Centre for Recording Achievement (CRA) define the e-portfolio domain as a broad one which is, or which *might be* (2008), 'a repository, a means of presenting oneself and ones skills, qualities and achievements, a guidance tool, a means of sharing and collaborating and a means of encouraging a sense of personal identity'. What is important about this definition is its explicit ambiguity – e-portfolio is a contested term and set of practices which have often been dominated by discussions about the tools used rather than the transformations in learning and teaching that such a domain and conceptual shift might support.

#### **Situating e-portfolio work – the shift to learning**

Yancey (1997: 4) writing about developmental portfolios in the USA identified that, 'classrooms hospitable to portfolios center on partnership and collaboration; they foster active construction of knowledge, student reflection and self-evaluation, and community structures in which students and teachers work together as readers, writers, thinkers, researchers and learners.' This initiative endeavours to deliver and embed this approach to learning, to enhance the learning experience of first year undergraduates.

#### **Evaluation and impact of the Initiative**

The evaluation of this work considers the influence and impact of this initiative. These will be detailed below.

#### **Influence:**

National Influence: Influence is measured the substantial number of mentoring relationship undertaken within and outside the department, which aimed to up-skill staff members in the understanding and use of e-portfolio in the enhancement of the learning experience and generating a culture of e-portfolio based learning. Mentoring has taken place within SEd and with partner institutions. Cascade

mentoring has also been implemented, so those who have been mentored (primary mentee) have gone on to mentor others. This has led to the mentoring of approximately 50 SEd staff who have worked with 1172 students. This constitutes approximately 39% of the student body in SEd. Approximately 12 staff have been mentored in partner institutions who have worked with 285 Foundation Degree students. The principle mentoring relationships are detailed below:

Course taught by or location of Mentee	Internal of external work	Number of staff who have been mentored	Number of Students who staff worked with	Length of time students worked with e-portfolio
PGCE	Internal	6 * <sup>1</sup>	95	1 year
DTTL	Internal	3	40	2 years
FD	Internal	4	140	2 years
CoWC	Internal/Partner	4	50	2 years
BA	Internal	3	300	3 years
BEd	Internal	5	100	3 years
MA	Internal	1	22	1 year
TCAT	Partner	1	50	2 years
Sandwell	Partner	2	20	1 year
Solihull	Partner	1	25	1 year

<sup>1</sup> For the last two years the use of E-Portfolio has been a compulsory element of the course

Seven members of staff from 6 other schools have also been mentored in the use of e-portfolio. Furthermore, 10 members of mentored staff have been awarded Learning and Teaching Prizes for their work with e-portfolio.

As a result of staff working with e-portfolio 6 members of SEd staff have engaged in Masters or Doctoral level research into working with e-portfolio. Additionally, 13 other staff are engaging in research or developing scholarly profile drawing upon their e-portfolio work. These staff have produced peer reviewed publications, conference papers and generated external funding to the sum of £137,500.

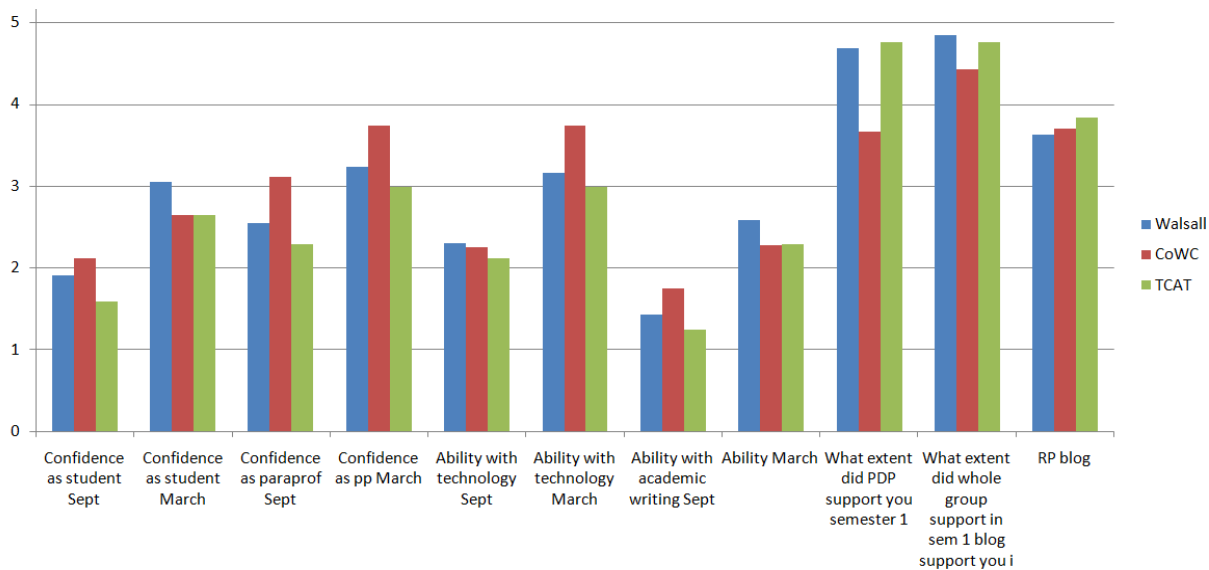
International Influence: This initiative has had substantial influence in the international market. There is increasing evidence that the University of Wolverhampton is leading the international field. This is evidenced through the work of the University within the International Coalition for E-portfolio Research (ICER). The University of Wolverhampton is one of two UK Universities who are members of the ICER and the only UK Institution to have been a member of two research cohorts. The University also hosts the 'Telling Stories Conference' which highlights how this work has contributed on an international scale. Further more the University of Wolverhampton is the only UK institution to be full institutional members of the Association of Authentic Experiential and Evidence Based Learning, who are the professional association for the world e-portfolio community. Members of the University staff are also advisors with Escalate and provide consultation to other academic institutions in the development of e-portfolio.

Impact:

The impact of the implementation of e-portfolio on students' first year experience has also been measured. 110 students (85% response rate) in 3 partner colleges and onsite were asked to evaluate the intervention and its impact on their learning and development as HE students

Statement	Percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed
The feedback on blogs from tutors was important to my Personal and Professional Development	98.58%
Having the opportunity to reflect ongoing on my PPD was important	92.4%
The feedback on blogs from peers was important to my PPD	87.37%
Having blog contact with my tutors supported my transition into university	95.03%
Having blog contact with my peers supported my transition into university	88.35%
The online blogging activities have contributed to my achievements in semester 1	82.53%

Also, in an anonymous online survey, students were asked to reflect upon and rank their development across the year. 95 students responded. The graph below shows responses from the Walsall cohort, City of Wolverhampton College cohort and TCAT cohort.



The table below illustrates further the graph presented above.

E.g – perceptions of confidence shifts as a student scoring from 0-5 with 5 high

	Walsall	TCAT	CoWC	
Confidence as an HE student in Sept 08 - average	1.91	1.59	2.12	
Confidence as student March/April 09	3.05	2.65	3.38	Evidence of good development across all provision
Confidence as education paraprofessional Sept 08	2.55	2.29	3.12	Development of workplace confidence increased
Confidence as pp March/April 09	3.24	3	3.75	
Ability with technology in Sept	2.31	2.12	2.25	
Ability now technology now	3.17	3	3.75	
Ability with academic writing in Sept	1.43	1.24	1.75	
Ability with academic writing now	2.59	2.29	2.28	
What extent did use of blogs and action plans (PDP) in pp support your development in the first semester	4.7	4.77	3.67	
To what extent did.....Whole group blog	4.85	4.92	4.43	
To what extent did.....Reflective practice blog	3.64	3.85	3.71	

Finally, a content and thematic analysis of the free flow statements made by students graduating in 2009 highlighted that students discussed the use of e-portfolio as part of teaching and assessment. This suggests that the use of e-portfolio is embedded and common place with in the school.

## Policy Implications

### Stakeholders

- The University should consider offering University-wide verified PDP/ePDP. This should link into any discussion relating to the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) suggested by the Burgess committee.
- The University should commission a pilot focusing on integrating ePDP activities into the holistic landscape of learning in HE where students have the

opportunity to develop eportfolios that encourage the inclusion of experiences spanning the taught, experienced and lived curriculum (Yancey, 2007). This pilot should be linked to the refocusing of the undergraduate curriculum project and should incorporate activities and evidence at all levels within a programme to include evidence from both formal and non-formal learning including extra-curricula activities. The emphasis for this should be on transferable employability skills and graduate outcomes.

- Existing staff development opportunities need to continue. Further developments need to be focused on designing or redesigning learning, teaching and assessment in a blended learning environment.
- The University should gather good practice and ePortfolio pedagogy from ePortfolio champions and members of ePortfolio research projects to offer examples to inform the refocusing of the undergraduate curriculum project. The start of which can be seen at: <http://www.wlv.ac.uk/default.aspx?page=18450>
- Further research should be carried out on how ePDP can be used to improve feedback and non-submission of work and how this impacts on student achievement and progression.
- The University should capitalise on its growing national and international reputation on ePDP and more recently, in the area of ePortfolio based learning, particularly focusing on providing a web based presence under the Blended Learning Unit which offers consultancy to the sector.

Finally, it is worth noting that CIEL's support of e-portfolio activities afforded the university a strong basis for a successful JISC bid that extends ePDP into work based learning.

#### HE & FE Sector/ International Market

- The recommendations relating to ePDP/PDP outlined above also applied to the sector and international market.
- The Sector and International Market should consider the benefits of Cascade mentoring models for staff development in this area. The development of staff from within the organisation enhances dissemination and sustainability.
- Generating cultures and engaging in building capacity are crucial for the sustainability of work in this area. This also can be achieved through cascade mentoring, which encourages the development of individual within the organisation.
- The development of learning culture is crucial. For this to occur there is a need to work with teacher educator in FE as well as those in HE. Recognition of this is essential in Policy and should be incorporated in practice developments.

#### **Business Case**

- Opportunity – Provision of innovation costs and staff development costs are crucial to the successful implementation of e-portfolio to the curriculum. Staff development through cascade mentoring is essential to the development, embedding and sustainability of this work. Engaging in actively developing people within the organisation, developing a culture and expectation of e-portfolio use has enhanced the success of this initiative. This allows the work to move beyond building a culture of use to a culture of expertise. Further, the University should make efforts to exploit its knowledge base in e-portfolio through national and international consultancy.

- Risk analysis - It is crucial to ensure that the steps above are taken so that the initiative is fully embedded into the curriculum at programme level. If ownership across a programme rather than within single modules is achieved, the sustainability of the initiative beyond the life of the initiative implementer. Dynamic and fluid implantation models are crucial to embedding.
- Resource implications - As mentioned above resource are crucial to success. The allocation of time for initiative coordination is crucial. In this instance, this has allowed for time to team teach and provide one to one staff support. This is a medium term initiative, which requires the use of e-portfolio over three iterations before staff see the full benefits of their work. Colleagues have to be aware this is not a quick

#### Publications

Hughes, J. (forthcoming 2010) 'But it's not just developing like a learner, it's developing as a person'. Reflections on e-portfolio-based learning.' in Sharpe, R., Beetham, H. and de Freitas, S. (eds) *Rethinking Learning for a Digital Age*. New York: Routledge

Hughes, J. (2009) Becoming an eportfolio teacher in Cambridge, D., Cambridge, B. and Yancey, K. (eds) *Electronic Portfolios 2.0: Emergent Findings and Shared Questions*. Washington, DC: Stylus Publishing.

Hughes, J., Lacey, C. and Purnell, E. (2009) Using blogs and e-portfolios to support reflective writing and ePDP in Foundation Degree Students in a School of Education. European First Year Experience 2008 Conference Proceedings. Institute for Learning Enhancement, University of Wolverhampton.

Hughes, J. (2008) Letting in the Trojan Mouse: using an e-portfolio system to rethink pedagogy. ASCILITE 2008 Melbourne Australia, Conference Proceedings.  
Hughes, J. (2008) E-portfolio-based learning: a practitioner perspective. ELiSS Enhancing Learning in the Social Sciences Volume 1 issue 2.

Hughes, J. (2008) Exploring eportfolios and weblogs as learning narratives in a community of new teachers. *Journal of International Society for Teacher Education (JISTE)* Volume 12, Number 1.

Hughes, J., Lacey, C. and Wise, D. (2008) 'Beyond Projects and Piloting – Embedding an Eportfolio in a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) – an Innovation Too Far?' *Enhancing the Student Experience. Proceedings of the Third International Blended Learning Conference*. Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Hughes, J. and Purnell, E. (2008) Blogging for beginners? Using blogs and eportfolios in Teacher Education. *Sixth International Networked Learning Conference Proceedings*, Halkidiki, Greece, May 08.

Hulme, M. and Hughes, J. (2006) Patchwork E-dialogues in the professional development of new teachers in O'Donoghue, J (ed.) *Technology Supported Learning and Teaching: A Staff Perspective*. Idea Group Inc; Hershey.

Maiden, B., McCoy, T., Penfold, B., Duncan-Pitt, L and Hughes, J. (2007) *Supporting learning and teaching innovation and building research capacity using*

an eportfolio: University of Wolverhampton, a case study. Educational Developments 8:1.

Purnell, E. and Hughes, J. (forthcoming) Exploring Foundation Degree student experiences of blogging in Calderon, D. and Nutt, D. (eds) International Perspectives on the First Year Experience in Higher Education

#### Practitioner Case Studies

Practitioner use of eportfolio featured in: JISC publication Effective practice with e-portfolios (2008)

Practitioner use of eportfolio featured as a case study in: Goodfellow, R. and Lea, M. (2007) Challenging E-learning in the University. Buckinghamshire. Open University Press

Practitioner use of eportfolio featured in: Supporting Lifelong Learning. The proceedings of the JISC Innovating e-Learning 2007 online conference online conference proceedings

The Learner's Voice and In their own words (2007) JISC publications - featuring two PGCE students (Emma Purnell and Jenny Woodhams) and their use of eportfolio

Practitioner case study contributor to JISC infonet CAMEL Tangible Benefits of E-learning (2007) project

Self and students featured as practitioners in educational documentary programme on eportfolios – TV Choice Film makers (2008)

Approach to facilitating reflective practice featured in Bolton, G. (2005) Reflective Practice. Writing and Professional Development. 2nd Edition. Paul Chapman Publication: London

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