

New pedagogical e-spaces: Keeping pace with staff readiness

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Higher education teaching staff faces increasing pressures to consider digital technologies as solutions to meet external and internal demands. Significant drivers within the sector include evidence of quality assurance and academic standards at the programme level. The use of ePortfolios as a tool for student learning is one option addressing these drivers. Mixed methods research from a small regional university exploring staff perceptions of the value of potential ePortfolio implementation for student learning found that external and internal drivers for improved professional graduate standards motivated early adopter staff to incorporate ePortfolios into their learning and teaching practice. Reflection on the results highlights that although interested academic staff are pedagogically motivated, the impacts of the technologies themselves mean that teachers have to first negotiate the new virtual space, understand it and keep using it, while hopefully forming a pedagogy that capitalises on the affordances of this space. The pedagogical leadership role of the academic is crucial in forming e-spaces. The TPACK framework is considered as a possible model for supporting teaching staff to conceptualise how content, pedagogy and technology interact in the context of ePortfolio use. The authors conclude that ePortfolios can be one of these pathway tools as long as implementation is driven by a pedagogical agenda and conceptual and practical support is provided to ensure academic pedagogical readiness.