

Exploring connections between assessment and technology in eportfolio use

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Over the past two decades, the growing enthusiasm for using eportfolios in higher education and moves to enhance learning-orientation of assessment in higher education have come together in the promotion and exploration of eportfolios as higher education assessment. While the potential of eportfolios is widely acknowledged, significant concerns remain about their effectiveness, especially for assessment. The current literature on eportfolios in higher education disproportionately focuses on interest, enthusiasm and potential, rather than critical examinations of key variables and their relationship to success. Studies that do adopt a critical perspective reveal benefits but also significant difficulties, ranging from the challenge of adopting new technology to validity and reliability concerns. Research into eportfolios as assessment in HE hence needs further development. This presentation reports on the process and results of systematic research designed to address this need. The research utilizes a theoretical framework that brings together both conceptual and utility components of assessment and technology. Four courses from two disciplines (Education and Law) have been examined using a complementary (qualitative and quantitative) approach. Data collection consists of student surveys, student focus groups, interviews and examination of work product. Findings include connections between students' and instructors' technology acceptance and learning oriented assessment. Within this is the key finding that students' perceived ease of using technology has significant interaction with depth, frequency and quality of student assessment task engagement. Course-based case studies as well as a comparative analysis across courses are presented in an accessible and discussable format within a poster session.