



USING BRIGHTSPACE PORTFOLIO

Overview

Module: Becoming a Better University Teacher, Programme: Professional Certificate in University Teaching and Learning,

Module Coordinator: David Jennings

Student Cohort: Academic related staff teaching in Higher Education (#48)



Example Portfolio Layout

Teaching Philosophy

Teaching Statements

Critical Com

Introduction

This is a proposed structure for one's practice portfolio... it will evolve over time, as any portfolio should, and thus may be a little fluid in its design.

The Background

In moving to the new UCD VLE Brightspace, an opportunity arose to leverage the inbuilt portfolio tool as a means to support the assessment of the module. It was already an expectation of the module to begin to create a practice portfolio, however in previous iterations this had often manifested as a collected body of work in a paper-based format (e.g. a Word Doc or PDF), and very few chose to use Mahara, WordPress or other online formats.

What I aimed to do

The presence of the ePortfolio tool in Brightspace enabled the assessment of the module to be articulated in this form. This module is graded as a Pass/Fail, so it is incumbent on the participant to engage and produce a body of work throughout its duration.

The module was re-designed to take account of the student-centred approach to learning and a series of activities were created to prompt learners to populate the ePortfolio.

The end result was to enable learners' the ability to utilize the ePortfolio tool to support their learning as they progressed throughout the module and finally to produce a 'presentation' for assessment of the module. The nature of this module enabled one to devise an assessment strategy that supported this approach. Cumulatively the in-session activities and online assignments built towards a collection of practice examples (e.g. teaching philosophy, session plans, assessment activities, module designs etc.) that were collected in the ePortfolio, then managed and reviewed in light of the final presentation/assignment.

How I did it

Setting up the ePortfolio in Brightspace is relatively simply, the tool sits over the VLE platform and thus can be accessed across modules, allowing users to deposit materials or add reflections from any point.

The users may choose to add files or links to materials, they are then invited to organize these by creating 'tags' that will offer a means to categorize and search. In addition, a user may simply add a reflexive comment or note, providing insight on their own learning experiences.



New Collection

Organize ideas, discoveries, and accomplishments.

In collating the materials users have the added option of establishing a series of 'Collections'. These organize materials into particular groupings, aiding in their management, search and retrieval.

The final tool allows users to create and share aspects of their portfolio. The 'Presentation' tool is a series of .html based pages, within which one may design and present content for sharing, review and assessment.



New Presentation

Showcase your skills and achievements for others.

A short demonstration of the tool early in the module, was followed by prompts and example templates (that one could edit) to facilitate users creating their own portfolios. This was deemed as essential to ensure the learners were clear in the expectations of delivering their own ePortfolios: in

terms of style and design and most importantly in respect of the content required to meet the module learning outcomes.

How it went

Participants were encouraged to engage with the ePortfolio tool throughout the module, this meant providing prompts, either via the VLE tools (e.g. discussions, quiz, survey etc.) or simply in-session.

It is important to note that the content within the ePortfolio is purely for the individual learner alone, in this way it is an ideal means to gather formative learning experiences as well as building up material examples. The result of this process means that the module coordinator or a student peer must be 'invited' to view and comment upon identified materials.

There were a number of prompted exercises throughout the duration of the module that invited the cohort to add materials to the ePortfolio (e.g. some were created as online assignments that encouraged the learner to undertake a particular task and then to add it to their own ePortfolio).

Most of the cohort attempted to begin their own 'collections' and all uploaded a variety of content (e.g. documents, comments etc.). In some instances these were shared amongst peers, and the module coordinator seeking feedback and support from within the portfolio tool.

For the final session of the module all participants were invited to create a presentation. They were 'pushed' a template (i.e. the module coordinator created and shared an exemplar, that may then be 'pushed to the cohort for their own use, see image below) that provided a synopsis of what was being sought. All were able to either amend this or create a new presentation that was shared with peers. The majority elected to submit a version of this as their final assignment.

The collation of materials is relatively simple, but guidance and organization is required to ensure users are clear on the purpose of their work within the portfolio.

The html presentation tool although clunky to use offers a variety of designs that are editable to produce a reasonable final piece of work, one that may be shared within a module and without. However, it is once again essential to provide clear guidance as to what is being sought, gathered and created in this mode, as time may easily be misspent creating digital presentations that lack substance.

In addition to the access via the online VLE there is a mobile app that enables users to capture short videos, and reflections as well as connecting with the ePortfolio to upload and manage content. Going forward there is potential to take the portfolio beyond the module and programme and access content via a web interface, thus enabling alumni on-going access.

The concept of a portfolio offers a great opportunity for student (and teachers) to explore and

deepen ones' learning experience. The Brightspace ePortfolio offers an opportunity to start exploring activities within this field, guidance and clarity of purpose are essential and as the product develops it will become technically easier to fulfil this remit and provide support for creating a genuine and meaningful ePortfolio.

The screenshot shows an ePortfolio interface. At the top left, the word "Eportfolio" is displayed in a large, light blue font. To its right, a smaller text box states: "This presentation captures the core components for the module, demonstrating ones' attainment of its learning outcomes therein." Below this, a row of green binder-like icons is visible. The main content area is divided into two sections. On the left is a dark sidebar with white text: "This page is for 'Sharing' and 'Presenting'", "My Teaching Philosophy unabridged and/or focused", and "My Peer Observation". The right section has a light green background and is titled "My Peer Observation Process". It contains a list of bullet points and a paragraph of text.

Eportfolio

This presentation captures the core components for the module, demonstrating ones' attainment of its learning outcomes therein.

My Peer Observation Process

This should attempt to capture;

- the **content** [what is it all about, the focus, themes arising, describing the session, module, activity etc]
- the **context** [the discipline, the learner needs, the evidence supporting your practice, the environment, noted issues, technological innovations etc]
- and the **consequence** [how and why you do what you do, and the impact of the observation upon that process, the creation of an action plan (re: future iteration)...all leading to a critical insight].

Once again, for the purpose of the assignment, it is not expected to provide the 'private dialog' [obs forms] that occurred during the observations, however evidence supporting the process may be included to demonstrate one's fulfilment of such e.g. identified focus, agreed reporting structure, material evidence of curricula and change/s etc You may wish to highlight pertinent points/comments that have arisen as part of the observation and enabled you to begin to appraise you practice.

This page is for 'Sharing' and 'Presenting'

My Teaching Philosophy unabridged and/or focused

My Peer Observation

Resources

An Introduction to ePortfolios

<http://www.ucd.ie/teaching/resources/technologyenhancedlearning/>

Brightspace ePortfolio - Instructor Guide

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-ePortfolio-Instructor-Guide>

ePortfolio - Navigate Brightspace ePortfolio - Learners

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_O8g0EiCgA