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Introduction

Eportfolios provide an effective way to gather important data showing the progression of student works over time while generating critical artifacts that can be used to assess and guide teacher instructions. It also fosters a variety of critical elements to encourage reflections, self evaluation, and feedback while maintaining versatility for different purposes and different audiences.

In our world of technological advancements, we have a plethora of tools that can successfully collect and manage artifacts for the intention to grow students with purpose.

According to Buzzetto-More & Alade (2008):

Electronic portfolios are a student-centered outcomes-based assessment regime involving learners in the gathering, selection, and organization of artifacts synthesized into a compilation purposed to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and/or achievements supported by reflections that articulate the relevance, credibility, and meaning of the artifacts being presented. (Buzzetto-More & Alade, 2008)

Eportfolios also allow for differentiated teaching practices while fostering many learning styles. They may offer the possibility to collect data involving multiple intelligences such as recordings (visual and audio), photos, text, and connectivity between teacher, student, and parent. Eportfolios can demonstrate student progress towards standards as well to better serve and accommodate the momentum of student progress mapping. However, Nelson (2011) states,

E-portfolios can be used to do more than just demonstrate student progress toward standards. They can also allow students to show who they are as individuals, while also providing a means for tracking growth from kindergarten all the way through. (Sharleen Nelson, 2011)

This is good news for the advocates that want the whole child to be considered and not just a grade or meeting the standards. Eportfolios create an authentic concern of student abilities through the documentation of artifacts.

In adding from Buzzetto-More & Alade (2008):

Electronic portfolio adoption continues to grow exponentially...because academic leaders are excited by the prospects presented through electronic portfolios as they offer a contemporary and authentic way for students to demonstrate learning and the understanding of that learning in accordance with established objectives. (Buzzetto-More & Alade, 2008)

Eportfolios are a vehicle for learning for all stakeholders, but mainly students. They serve to create a learning community that nurtures and supports all learners with evidential reasonings for the learning taking place. Love & Cooper (2007) states: "Over the years, the focus has changed from what things people have been taught to how and what people have learned as well as the meaning behind the learning." (Love & Cooper, 2007)

Data Analysis

Eportfolios provide an effective way to gather important data showing the progression of student works over time while generating critical artifacts that can be used to assess and guide teacher instructions. It also fosters a variety of critical elements to encourage reflections, self-evaluation, and feedback while maintaining versatility for different purposes and different audiences.

For this project, I have gathered data to effectively create and apply the implementation of eportfolios in my classroom with students. I interviewed a number of teachers at my school district to get their opinions and feedback about the use of eportfolios and their benefits in an educational setting. These teachers instruct mathematics, computer technology, media specialist, language arts, and science.

It was unanimous in the response about eportfolios to effectively document the progress of students' efforts, abilities, and growth over a period of time. Additionally, it was noted that eportfolios really act as an evaluative tool for the student as well as the teacher to better learn and facilitate best practices. However, not all the teachers I interviewed use eportfolios in terms of collecting artifacts that document the visual forms of projects, assignments, and assessments, but more in terms of grades. A letter grade was more common among the group I discussed eportfolios. Those using eportfolios shared their excitement collecting artifacts to share with stakeholders during parent/teacher conferences, IEP feedback, and discussion points with students.

Also, in my research, I have found a number of articles supporting benefits of using eportfolios.

According to Buzzetto-More & Alade (2008):

Electronic Portfolios may be developmental, demonstrating individual progress overtime and serving as a form of value added assessment; reflective so as to include personal reflection on the content, what it means, and how it demonstrates learning mastery so as to encourage critical thinking and metacognition; or professional/representational where they showcase an individual's achievements. (Buzzetto-More & Alade, 2008)

The most challenging things in education is getting students to "Learn." It is quite daunting and can be inclusively impossible at times even with the lengths that teachers go through to motivate, impress, and bend over backwards to create an engaging atmosphere that nurtures the intrigue of learning. However, once learning has taken root, the next challenge is to get students to think about their thinking. Eportfolios foster an effective metacognitive platform to develop critical thinking that is high-order and evaluative.

To create an atmosphere that supports eportfolios, it is critical that proper training and support is fostered to nurture its longevity.

According to Luera, Brunvand, & Marra, (2016):

It is important to have a variety of resources available to teach students, staff, and faculty the technological skills needed to create an ePortfolio. We have found that faculty do not have or want to use classroom time to teach students how to set up their ePortfolios. (Luera, Brunvand, & Marra, 2016)

To combat against this plausible problem, it is critical that the IT department plan for necessary trainings outside the classroom time that better suits and prepares for the

implementation of eportfolios. Then follow up with necessary updates and support to continue the necessary tools for engaging teachers and students with eportfolios.

How do models from previous units apply to your data analysis and subsequent recommendations?

The models from previous units apply directly to my data analysis and subsequent recommendations. After looking at the data and comparing it to the procedures by the IT directors as well as fellow colleagues, the four factors are critical for determining and implementing any type of technology effectively. The four factors provide evaluative measures that allow for analytics that form a path to appropriate technology. In regard to eportfolios, it is highly productive to have a system in place that is user friendly and beneficial to the learning environment which can be guided by the SETT and ADDIE models specifically. The SETT and ADDIE Models in particular are helpful in keeping focus on the needs of students and the required components for building an effective learning environment with necessary strategies to make this happen. In adding, using FBAs can also contribute to the evaluative process to discover and implement necessary technologies to better support student learning. Ultimately, keeping in perspective that technology, though powerful and very useful, is only a supportive tool for enhancing and assisting the learning environment with the goal to grow every learner.

Additionally, considering the needs of students, as well as teachers, was another important aspect my data reflected to better use and implement technology. Knowing what exactly is best for students helped with determining appropriate technology and possible uses. Then focusing on what type of accommodations and modifications to support students with the implemented technological tools provided more specific criteria on its uses and possibilities as well as limitations. The data also revealed the way technology was incorporated and applied, causing for more strategic brainstorming. In adding, the use of technology and eportfolios revealed the necessity for soft skills and their development for 21st Century Learning. Soft Skills, according to Layton (2015), are: "Communication skills, making decisions, self-motivation, leadership skills, team working skills, creativity, problem-solving skills, and time management" (Layton, 2015). However, the importance of these soft skill may change as new technology is introduced and implemented.

Recommendations on the use of accompanying technology for producing student assessment artifacts for student ePortfolios

Along with myself and my fellow educators at my school district, it is highly recommended that technology must do a variety of things to produce student eportfolios. These are and not limited to: the collection work samples, documentation of a child's achievement in specific areas over time; can include test scores, writing work samples, videotapes, audio recordings etc. Ultimately, eportfolios should be a thoughtful collection of materials that documents learning over time.

According to Love & Cooper, (2007):

The pedagogic benefits of electronic portfolios have been identified as:

- Authentic learning, where learning is more meaningful when it is linked to real world experiences,
- Experiential learning, where students ‘learn by doing’ rather than learn through telling,
- Competency-based education, where instruction is outcomes based using electronic portfolios as part of student learning outcomes-based performance assessment where assessment may include higher order skills,
- Lifelong learning, where learning is directed by the individual and guided by the individual’s interests,
- Autodidactism, where learning is self-taught and self-motivated, and
- Self-directed learning, where students take responsibility for their own learning. (Love & Cooper, 2007)

Additionally it is productive to know the necessary supporting elements for students as well as the needs of the classroom when using eportfolios. For in today's classroom, an educator must be able to pull from a number of resources to differentiate among students in a way that meet each student learning style. Implementing technology that can effectively do this is priceless and is able to generate a better assessment of the whole child while providing necessary feedback for teachers. However, when deciding on an eportfolio technology, it is imperative to have a list of questions formulated and guided by the SETT Framework and the ADDIE Model.

Also, Lynch (2018) shares a few suggestions in connection with eportfolios:

The first thing to do is to define the needs of the classroom. There are several questions to ask, including the following:

- Can student work be made public?
- Can students view and comment on each other's work?
- Can the teacher provide feedback for the student privately?
- Are the portfolios transferable from year to year as students move through the school?
- Can students access their work or export it when they leave the school?
- Does the platform allow for multiple file types (documents, sound files, video files)?
- What are the costs for using the tool or platform?
- Can a teacher create a teacher account and student accounts, or do students sign up on their own? Is there a minimum age to sign up?

(Lynch, 2018)

Three Eportfolio Technologies

There are three eportfolios technologies that can be considered for a school district. Each of these technologies have many advantages, but also disadvantages. They all serve to generate a number of artifacts that can serve to assess student progress. The eportfolio technologies are Class Dojo, E-BackPack, and Mastery Connect.

Class Dojo

ClassDojo is a classroom communication app used to share reports between parents and teachers. Teachers track student behavior and upload photos or videos. The gamification style system teaches developmental skills through real-time feedback. It has multifunctional capabilities involving video, photo, and audio to generate versatility with student abilities and learning levels. Additionally, it serves as an effective communicative tool between teacher and parent. The cons involving with Class Dojo is the possibilities for students to post unrelated or unnecessary content. Also, Students may not publish their best works or non-related posts and potential legal concerns if images of non-consent students are posted. Class Dojo best serves in the primary grades to the middle level grades with personal logins for the jr. high grades.

E-BackPack

E-Backpack is a learning management system that enables teachers to bring the “century-old classroom workflow” to the digital realm. E-Backpack engages students, teachers, staff, and parents with an interface on all devices, including Chromebooks and iPads. Students can submit a variety of digital assignments from multiple devices in a range of file formats. Folders can be created and shared with other students for collaborative projects, file sharing, and offering peer review or feedback. Artifacts can be saved in folders and students can build a digital portfolio, however, it's only viewable within the closed system. The interface of eBackpack lacks simplicity and it takes multiple steps to transfer or save artifacts (video or files) in to folders or sub folders that may be daunting for younger children. E-BackPack can work for the intermediate level grades but lacks an interface that is user friendly in my opinion. However, high school students can navigate through multiple steps and various folders.

Mastery Connect

This program allows students to be quickly assessed on material. Each assessment created in Master Connect receives a number. Using their ipads, Students access the Master Connect Student App and put in the number. Once access is granted, students take the assessment allowing me to know what students know and what they've learned. Data is generated from tests, quizzes, and assessments. There is the possibility of taking photos of student projects and assignments but remains in a closed system. Master Connect serves mainly to record assessments and track student progress. Teachers can network with other teachers at their schools, jointly plan curricula, and set up full scope and sequences. Unfortunately, there is limited versatility with its portfolio capabilities. Master Connect best serves in the primary to the 8th grades to record and assess student progress with applicable remediation intervention.

Eportfolio Resources

CLASS DOJO

Class Dojo App

ClassDojo. (2018). Learn all about ClassDojo. Retrieved November 27, 2018, from <https://www.classdojo.com/>

Class Dojo User Guide

Class Dojo. (2018). Getting Started with ClassDojo. Retrieved November 27, 2018, from <https://classdojo.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/202793835-Getting-Started-with-ClassDojo#web>

EBACK PACK

EbackPack App

EBackpack Inc. (2017, October 03). eBackpackLM. Retrieved November 27, 2018, from <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/ebackpacklm/id1128136527?mt=8>

Ebackpack User Guide

EBackpack, inc. (2017). Is there a user guide or quick start guide? Retrieved November 27, 2018, from <https://support.ebackpack.com/kb/a58/is-there-a-user-guide-or-quick-start-guide.aspx>

Epbackpack Ipad Guide for Students

Ebackpack, inc. (2014, July 11). Ebackpack iPad Student Guide. Retrieved from <https://www.ebackpack.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/eBackpackiPadStudentUserGuide-build-410.pdf>

Ebackpack Student Guide

Ebackpack. (2014). Ebackpack Folders Student Guide. Retrieved November 27, 2018, from <https://www.ebackpack.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/ebackpackwindowsstudentguide.pdf>

MASTERY CONNECT

Mastery Connect App

Master Connect. (2018). Apps for Educators. Retrieved November 27, 2018, from <https://www.masteryconnect.com/goodies.html>

Mastery Connect Website

Mastery Connect. (2018). MasteryConnect | Assessment and Benchmark Software. Retrieved November 27, 2018, from <https://www.masteryconnect.com/>

Master Connect User Guide

Mastery Connect. (n.d.). Participants Reference Guide. Retrieved November 27, 2018, from <http://images.pcmac.org/Uploads/MarionCounty/MarionCounty/Departments/DocumentsCategories/Documents/Mastery Connect Training Guide.pdf>

Screen Casts

Eportfolios with Class Dojo

Website: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDt_tcQvN8U

There are many ways in which a student-produced e-portfolio is especially suitable for use in a primary or secondary setting. However, with Class Dojo, eportfolios can be more easily generated demonstrating the “the efforts toward college and career” (Reusch, U., & Schweda, E. (1999) readiness at early ages. Using eportfolios show essential Higher-order thinking skills involving twenty-first century skills; analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Digital tools are increasingly important in refining these skills driven by “Rigorous education technology standards supporting the use of digital tools as well as higher-order thinking skills.”

Informal Assessments

Website: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KhElwJOD-IA>

Informal assessments serve a pivotal role in determining what students have learned after instruction. This directs the instructor to evaluate student progress, remediation, and possible goals to achieve a desired outcome that ensures the success of all students. Informal assessments come in many forms and provide the instructor opportunities to give feedback, ideas, or correction to students to assist with the learning process.

Summary

Eportfolios are effective approaches to gathering necessary artifacts that can serve as an evaluative and reflective tool supporting student learning and the ever-developing educational environment. Additionally, they should serve as a strategic tool that build and strengthen 21st century skills while growing competencies and outcomes-based performances.

According to Jafari (2004):

“Considerations that should guide the electronic portfolio adoption and creation process

- The system’s future users,
- Potential benefits,
- Technological features,
- Usability, and Versatility” (Jafari, 2004).

Identifying core values of the eportfolio being considered is necessary. It should be done as early as possible for the sake of increasing the prospects of supportive stakeholders while strengthening the implementation of eportfolios that drive the development of learning among students with necessary Tech Ed and AT to showcases student learning over time with identifiable purposes and intended audiences toward 21st century learning.

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