

ePortfolio Affordances

Education has been caught up in grading scales to measure a student's content mastery. We as educators provide content instruction, assess the students knowledge through formative and summative methods, reteach for understanding, and then move on to the next lesson or unit. Has the student actually grasped the subject matter and acquired knowledge of the content? Did the student construct any learning and was the learning student-centered? Was technology utilized during the instruction and learning? These seem to be questions educators and administrators are asking and in turn evaluating instructional strategies.

ePortfolios are an option for students to utilize technology to focus the learning as student-centered. The student is the one doing or constructing their knowledge through collecting artifacts (work the student has done) and reflecting or connecting the purpose of the portfolio and the content. The ePortfolio provides an assessment **OF learning** with artifacts selected for the ePortfolio. The artifacts selected will be able to showcase the learning and progress of the content. The ePortfolio connects the student's prior knowledge of the content and compares it with any new knowledge or artifacts added to the portfolio. ePortfolio affordances concentrates on what we do and not what we do it with.

ePortfolios provide opportunities **FOR learning** through the process students used to select artifacts for the portfolios. The students may reflect upon and connect the knowledge they acquired through their construction of artifacts. The reflection process may connect their learning to the artifacts in the portfolio or across content areas. The portfolio provides writing, critical thinking, self-evaluation, learning across subject areas, and life learning opportunities. The opportunities for learning affordances with ePortfolios is able to provide authentic student work and achievements throughout the classroom that exams are not able to capture. Student artifacts document skills, abilities, and content learning through self-expression and student constructed tasks.

Lorenzo & Ittelson (2005) provide examples how ePortfolios provide "lifelong" learning opportunities for students, professionals, and the general public. Many states, colleges, and institutions are providing ePortfolio opportunities to showcase assessment of an individual's skills and knowledge. The "lifelong" learning with an ePortfolio is not limited to only a student's academic endeavors, professional career, or personal life, but rather a means to highlight personal development and skills throughout an individual's life. This "lifelong" learning is depicted by the artifacts selected for the portfolio. An ePortfolio can be portable and follow a student after their education to their professional career. This portability showcases the "life-wide" learning in the selection and reflection of the artifacts included in an individual's post-education ePortfolio.

References:

Lorenzo, G., & Ittelson, J. (2005). An overview of e-portfolios. *Educause learning initiative*, 1, 1-27.