

Can developing Mahara e-portfolios foster the habits of reflection and connection to enhance learning and professionalism in student teachers on a school based route?

Interim Report to IATL (Strategic Project Grant)

Jo Trowsdale

The project plan to date

Initial scoping of this project began in July with Goldsmiths University Drama department and through consulting e-learning staff in WiE (Mary Stott, Chris Coe and Nicola Wilkinson) and more widely in the University. Since this time, but on a different timescale, my colleague at Goldsmiths has been funded to develop an expansion study and the potential complementary foci have diverged. Consequently consultants on the study have been primarily Warwick based: in Languages and Education, but also been developed through academic research, training and the school host provider.

Seven student teachers on the Teach First programme began the project in October. Following consultation with the University Moodle staff development team it was clear that a host could not be identified for the GTP students (two of whom were keen to trial the e-portfolio) before the end of the Autumn term which made it too late to be a viable portfolio gathering format. Consequently the project has progressed with the Teach First sample. Two of the seven students have left this programme for personal reasons although data from them may still inform the qualitative part of the study. Disciplines involved are as planned with the exception of Drama. Despite these changes the project has otherwise progressed as planned.

The following development work has taken place

October - December

- John Henry Newman Catholic College enrolled Jo Trowsdale and created a moodle account. Discussions with Webanywhere, their host provider guided the framework support we initiated. Statistics about number of visits were not however obtainable.
- All participants (trainee teachers, mentors and tutors engaged / informed) and baselines taken
- 25th October - Jo Trowsdale attended JISC e-portfolio training day 'How Can e-Portfolios Support 21st Century Learning?'
- First draft model for e-portfolio set-up and guidance developed
- Support meetings with trainee teachers collectively to set up mahara account
- Ongoing 1to1 support using e-portfolio feedback, facilitating peer support, JING 5 minute video tours and face to face meeting times
- Teresa McKinnon, Languages provided support in framework and guidance development, constructed self help videos and also provided some 121 consultant support to trainees
- Academic research
- Development of research markers and framework draft
- Conference proposals were sent to INTED HEA and BERA.

January - April

- Conference proposal accepted for INTED 2013
- First evaluations with trainees and mentors
- Developments of model for e-portfolio set-up and guidance developed

- Support meetings with trainee teachers collectively to develop e-portfolios
- Ongoing 1to1 support using e-portfolio feedback, facilitating peer support, JING 5 minute video tours and face to face meeting times
- March 3-5th INTED 2013 (Virtual presentation: Paper and Filmed PowerPoint).
- HEA proposal rejected
- Conference proposal accepted BERA.
- Short presentations have been made to staff through WiE PGCE group 11th Feb; Moodle Users group 26th March, drawn upon within Mahara training 19th March and will be made to CLL on 4th June.
- Trainee led informal presentations of their fortes through eportfolio
- Second evaluations with trainees and mentors
- Virtual poster proposal accepted for Warwick University's Teaching and Learning Conference on 19th June 2013.

Project development has been supported by Nicola Wilkinson and Teresa McKinnon in addition to literature and online research to identify and review literature and develop markers and data gathering tools

In the final phases of the project

- On going support using e-portfolio feedback, facilitating peer support, JING 5 minute video tours and face to face meetings
- Final evaluations with trainees and mentors
- Analysis of markers and data involving Jo Trowsdale, Nicola Wilkinson and Teresa McKinnon
- Review and evaluation of markers, data, used framework and recommendations
- Interviews with 5 trainee teachers
- Development of post project framework, models and examples/ resources
- Development of 2013-4 framework, models and examples/ resources for e-portfolio model for Schools Direct and PGCE
- BERA presentation 4th September 2013
- BJET article September 2013

Final outcomes will therefore be

- a transferable framework and recommendations for supporting students in generating personal accounts of work-based activities
- models of effective practice
- a series of conference papers, articles and resources.

To date the project suggests a significant role for e-portfolios in supporting the student to represent otherwise unseen dimensions of practice, to be engaged in a more dialogic and formative sense of their progress, develop their identity, confidence and professionalism as teacher.

Further research would be required to test this in a context beginning at student registration, where all stakeholders are involved and assessment methods are integrated. It would be useful to test developing views on how to widen emphasis on the student to lead choices of design, content creation, emphasis for the reader and connection with other sources links with social media contexts (digital literacies) whilst also being assessment compliant.