

Initiating the use of e-portfolio technology to enhance awareness of graduate attributes.

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Abstract

The ALTC e-Portfolio Project recommends the use of e-Portfolio technology to assist learning including learning of the generic skills common across courses. At La Trobe University, the Faculty of Health Sciences has derived a set of Graduate Attributes and embedded them in the assessment tasks of a new Common First Year. The current initiative aims to engage students with the Faculty-derived Graduate Attributes, using e-Portfolio technology. This session will outline how this initiative has been developed and include discussion on the proposed implementation process.

Focus of Session

This 'Nuts & Bolts' session will focus on an initiative that is looking at the implementation of e-Portfolio technology and the potential role of this technology for engaging students with a set of attributes that are expected in graduates. The issues relating to the design and setting up of the initiative will be the emphasis. As well there will be comment, and discussion, on the current status of the implementation process.

Background to initiative

The initiative was born from an Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) project on leadership in higher education (ALTC, 2009; see University of Wollongong, 2008). Participants in the leadership project (including LEJ) are required to develop an initiative that relates to the assessment of students. In planning this initiative, past and present experiences were drawn on, including experience of developing and implementing paper-based portfolio tasks, involvement on La Trobe University's e-Portfolio committee, and participation in University-wide discussions on curriculum review and renewal - including the role of graduate attributes. As well, recent support for the implementation of e-Portfolio technology has been published as part of an ALTC funded-project, the Australian e-Portfolio project (Queensland University of Technology, 2009). As described in the report of this project, there is potential of e-Portfolio technology to support learning including learning that assists the development of generic skills. The current initiative aims to exploit this potential, in terms of engaging first year students in the development of the intended graduate attributes specific to the Faculty of Health Sciences.

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Detail of Initiative

The initiative involves introducing students to e-Portfolio technology with the specific aims of enhancing the awareness of, and engaging students to monitor their development of, Faculty-derived graduate attributes, through reflection on assessment tasks from Year 1.

A working group has been established consisting mainly of staff from the Faculty of Health Sciences but also involving staff from Information and Communication Technology, Careers and Employment, e-Portfolio committee, Library, Language and Academic Skills and the Centre for Learning, Teaching and Curriculum. Student involvement will be staged across the final development of the implementation process.

Working group discussions have consisted of a mix of face-to-face, E-mail and interactions using the e-Portfolio technology. This has helped with the efficiency of meeting time and ensured that staff had the opportunity to experience the technology.

Discussions on the implementation of the technology have considered four areas: timing of implementation; resources required for implementation; student motivation; staff motivation. There has also been initial discussion on evaluation and a survey has been adapted from a previous e-Portfolio trial within the University.

Detail of Session

The design aspects of the initiative will be the focus of this workshop, with associated discussion to include the proposed implementation.

Presentation

The 15 minute presentation will draw on the following topics:

- the ALTC Distributive Leadership Project
- the selection of the e-Portfolio technology
- the design of the first year assessment tasks with reference to Graduate Attributes
- the layers of committees and process that supported development
- the creation of, and resultant activities of, a working group leading to a limited-scope implementation in one first year Unit (Subject)
 - brief outline on progress of initiative including scope and evaluation

Discussion

The 15 minute discussion will focus on three main themes:

- How to develop first year curriculum to support Graduate Attributes
- How to introduce e-Portfolio technology to Year 1 students
- How to embed use of e-Portfolio, and the associated reflective practice, beyond Year 1 (to support development of Graduate Attributes)

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References

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