

## The development of an e-portfolio: *Participant-centred assessment as a by-product of innovation*

Mary Lawson

Centre for Medical & Health Sciences Education  
Faculty of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences  
Monash University

## Questions to be addressed

- What is the context in which the e-portfolio is used?
- Why was it developed?
- How was it developed?
- What is it used for?
- How do principles of participant-centred learning apply to the educational tool?

## Context for the Development

- Graduate Certificate in Health Professional Education (GCHPE)
- Interprofessional course for any teacher in the health professions
- 1 year part-time programme since 2003
- Monash University approved for probationary training
- 4 core units

## Why was the e-portfolio developed?

- As an example of contemporary educational practice
- To integrate the assessment of professional teaching behaviour into all units of the course
- To provide a reflective tool available in the workplace
- To enable the preparation, sharing and submission of assessment items in the actual workplace of the course participants and to facilitate self, peer and tutor feedback.

## How was it developed?

- E-portfolio developed with innovative teaching grant from Faculty IT committee
- Developed as a pilot for undergraduate arena
- Web-based - system is written in Coldfusion MX and hosted on a Microsoft SQL Server 2000.
- Tutor, participant and administrator 'views'

## Underpinning assumptions and philosophies

- Opportunity to provide structured reflection
- Opportunity to complete reflection augmented by group activity
- Opportunity for participants to present evidence for assessment of professional behaviours in relation to teaching practice
- **Mirrored in other aspects of course delivery**

## Description of e-portfolio activities: Participants

- Password-protected access
- Personal journal (NOT accessible to tutors).
- Space for submission of assessments to share with tutorial group members, tutors or whole cohort prior to submission if desired.
- Opportunities to exchange views with other participants
- Access to web-based feedback (giving and receiving)

## Description of e-portfolio activities: Tutors and administrators

- Access anywhere
- Simple and flexible assessments
- For tutors, the e-portfolio provides information on and access to participants' assessment tasks and space to provide feedback.
- For administrators, the e-portfolio allocates participants to tutors, allows design of assessment tasks and maintains records of participants' and tutors' submissions. Electronic reminders of impending assessment deadlines are generated via the system.

## Examples of assessment tasks

- Practice in written feedback
- Critical incident analysis

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Graduate Certificate for Health Professional Education Site. The header includes navigation links for Home, News & Events, Campuses & Faculties, and a search bar. The main content area features a welcome message and a list of links: Home, Objectives, Current Students, My Profile, Home, and Help. The 'E-Portfolio' link is highlighted in yellow. At the bottom, there are links for Help, Contacts, Sitemap, Staff Directory, and Search, along with copyright information for Monash University.

The screenshot shows the 'My Journal' page in the e-portfolio system. It features a sidebar with navigation links for Home, Journal, Learning Activities & Grades, and About Student. The main content area has a 'Submit a new Journal Entry' form with a text area containing the following text: 'Today I taught a small group of undergraduate medical students. Usually I would try to pick on each of them in turn to demonstrate how little they know. Following feedback on my practical teaching assessment I decided to try some different techniques and got the students to discuss responses to my questions in pairs...'. Below the form is a table with columns for Date and Subject, showing a list of journal entries with their dates and subjects.

The screenshot shows the 'My Learning Activity' page in the e-portfolio system. It features a sidebar with navigation links for Home, Journal, Learning Activities & Grades, and About Student. The main content area displays details for a learning activity, including the title 'Recording teaching activity, providing evidence of change, planning to maintain excellence and setting targets for continuous improvement (6%)'. Below this, there is a text area with instructions: 'In this section you should record elements of the feedback you received on your microteach. You should demonstrate with examples, how you have incorporated the feedback in to your regular teaching practice. How has this feedback altered the way you teach, how easy has it been to incorporate the feedback and to what extent do you feel your teaching has improved? You should also try to include an evaluation of which of the educational models or theories you read about in your course pre-reading you find has the 'best fit' with your own personal perspective and philosophy of teaching and learning.' At the bottom, there is a 'Word count: 750 - 1000 words' and a 'Description' field with the text: 'This is a final test from Mary on Wednesday 7th May 2003.'

Unit	Learning Activity	Grade	Tutor Comments
UNIT: MEL0001 - 2003	Changes to teaching practice	5%	Nice try Mary
	Providing written feedback to a colleague	5%	Another nice try Mary
UNIT: MEL0002 - 2003	DISC 1: Report of teaching activity, providing evidence of change, planning to maintain excellence and set targets for continuous improvement	100%	Much better
	DISC 2: Identification and analysis of a critical incident for you as a clinical teacher	100%	try harder
	You do not currently have any grades for this Unit!		
UNIT: MEL0003 - 2003	Task 1: Reflection on changes in your own teaching practice	0%	Mary You have been wicked and not done your work! No marks for you!
	Task 2: Changes in your professional identity as a teacher	5%	Good effort Mary
	You do not currently have any grades for this Unit!		
UNIT: MEL0001 - 2004	You do not currently have any grades for this Unit!		

## Participant-centred teaching 1

- A climate of trust – curiosity and natural desire to learn can be enhanced
- Participatory mode of decision making (participants, teachers and administrators)
- Achieving results participants appreciate / consider worthwhile

Rogers 1983

## Participant-centred teaching 2

- Uncovering the excitement in intellectual and emotional discovery
- Developing the attitudes research shown effective in facilitating learning
- Helping to develop rich satisfaction between learners and teachers

Rogers 1983

## 1. A climate of trust – curiosity and natural desire to learn can be enhanced

- Personal Journal space – completely private
- Levels of access / sharing work-in-progress
- Formal teaching on ways of giving effective feedback

## 2. Participatory mode of decision making (participants, teachers and administrators)

- Possibility for multiple entries / revisions
- Access to peer work to aid reflection / promote thinking
- Choice of assessment topic to align with workplace

## 3. Achieving results participants appreciate / consider worthwhile

- Consistent emphasis on “work” (i.e. the workplace)
- The nature of feedback provided from peers and tutors (Use of non-final vocabulary)
- Ref: David Boud / Rorty 1989

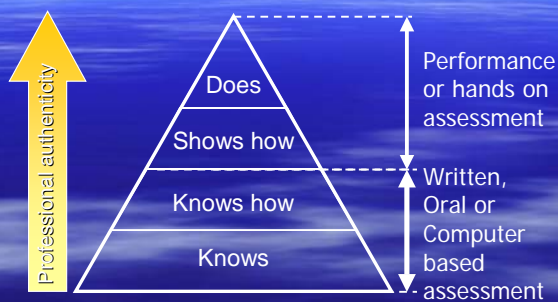
#### 4. Uncovering the excitement in intellectual and emotional discovery

- Use of contemporary educational technology
- Involvement in a pilot requiring LOTS of feedback from staff, participants and administrators (can there be too much excitement in learning?)

#### 5. Developing the attitudes research shown effective in facilitating learning

- Considerable debate about what is effective in the clinical context
- Emphasis on BEME
- Inclusion of assessment of attitudes as an integrated (and significant) component of all units

#### A simple model of competence



Miller GE. The assessment of clinical skills/competence/performance. Academic Medicine (Supplement) 1990; 65: S63-S7.

#### 6. Helping to develop rich satisfaction between learners and teachers

- Peer-to-peer feedback
- Participant to participant interaction and feedback
- Staff to student interaction and feedback
- Opportunities for self and peer review and revision prior to submission of items for assessment
- 'Potential' for immediacy in feedback

#### Examples of limitations to a student-centred approach

- "Talking to the dying" – Monash time-out requirements
- Summative assessment requirements



## Summary / personal reflections

- Participant-centred learning can NOT be achieved by the use of a single educational tool / instructional method
- The process for IT innovation needs to be driven by people who understand learning to promote participant-centred learning (not ALL academics!)
- Assessment always leads to learning – the challenge is to tailor it to the type of learning that is desirable!