

## E-PORTFOLIOS -A LEARNING TOOL AND AN ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

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### **Rezumat**

*Articolul prezintă o metodă modernă de învățare a limbii engleze și de evaluare a cunoștințelor studenților - portofoliul electronic cunoscut sub denumirea e-portfolio. În articol sunt specificați factorii ce au contribuit la utilizarea acestei metode; sînt prezentate tipurile de portofolii electronice și avantajele utilizării acestora în procesul de predare-învățare a limbii engleze.*

E-portfolios are a valuable learning and assessment tool. An e-portfolio is a digitized collection of artifacts including demonstrations, resources, and accomplishments that represent an individual, group, or institution. An e-portfolio is more than a simple collection-it can also serve as an administrative tool to manage and organize work created with different applications and to control who can see the work. E-portfolios encourage personal reflection and often involve the exchange of ideas and feedback. A teaching e-portfolio can be used to showcase a fully member's accomplishments for career-related purpose. It can also be a collection of course- or discipline-related plans, strategies, and artifacts to be shared with colleagues, which often promotes improved teaching and learning. At the broadest level, student and teaching e-portfolios can be aggregated into an institutional e-portfolios containing a wide variety of digitized representations that provide evidence for self-study and accreditation [4, p. 183].

The sudden growth in e-Portfolio usage has been caused, according to [J. Elizabeth Clark](#), by some factors:

1. the technology itself has matured. The ability to put them online expanded their accessibility enormously. Additionally, the online platforms for making e-Portfolios have greatly improved over the past few years. Additionally, due to the popularity of social media tools such as Facebook, students are more comfortable creating digital representations of themselves;

2. a pedagogical change has occurred in higher education, one that values student-centered, active learning. The lecture-based tradition of the "sage on the stage" is being challenged by the pedagogical model of the "guide on the side." Social Constructivism (the learning theory that proposes that people learn best when they construct their own knowledge in a social context) continues to transform how education happens;

3. for many people, especially students, life has become more "fluid" than it once was. Students are more likely than they once were to change institutions or to take courses from several institutions as the same time. Recent graduates, too, are more likely than they used to be to move from one employer to another. As a result, it's beneficial for them to have what J. Elizabeth Clark calls an „education passport”, which helps them to „represent their learning and carry it with them as they move from one setting to another”[1, p. 178].

### **Advantages of the use of e-portfolios in the classroom**

- E-portfolios make classroom learning more accessible to parents, teachers and administrators.
- They showcase both student achievement and student learning over time.
- They provide additional assessment information beyond what can be collected from traditional letter grade.
  - They provide students with a vehicle for regular feedback and dialogue with their teachers.
  - They allow students to think critically and reflect upon their work.
  - They enable teachers to develop a picture of the learning that is taking place and show them areas that need more attention.
- E-portfolios increase student engagement, promote a continuing conversation about learning between teachers, parents, and students, and extend academic lessons beyond school walls.
- Digital portfolios also offer opportunity for students to showcase skills and kinds of intelligence that often are not measured on standardized tests.

- Creating digital portfolios provides an opportunity to teach students technology skills such as how to import pictures, resize images, take screen shots, or use a digital or video camera [2, p. 132].

### **Portfolio Types**

According to teacher vision, portfolios can be divided into two groups:

#### **Process oriented**

Process oriented portfolios tell a story about the growth of a learner. They document the processes of learning and creating, including earlier drafts, reflections on the process, and obstacles encountered along the way. They may be organized into skill areas or themes, yet each contains a student's work from the beginning, middle, and end of a learning unit. For example, there may be three drafts of a short story: a preliminary draft, a reworked draft reflecting teacher and peer feedback, and a final draft. The student can comment on the ways one is better than the other. In this manner, the artifacts can be compared providing evidence about how the student's skills have improved. In any number of ways, in writing or perhaps during a parent-teacher conference, the student would reflect on the learning process: identifying how skills have changed, celebrating accomplishments, and establishing present and future challenges.

#### **Product oriented**

Product oriented portfolios are collections of work a student considers his or her best. The aim is to document and reflect on the quality and range of accomplishments rather than the process that produced them. It generally requires a student to collect all of her work until the end, at which time she must choose artifacts that represent work of the highest quality [3, p. 247].

In general, e-portfolios are helping students become critical thinkers and aiding in the development of their writing and multimedia communications skills. E-portfolios can help students learn information and technology literacy skills and how to use digital media. Beyond academic evidence, they give students the opportunity to create digitized showcase of their work and skills that can be presented to prospective employers [4, p. 129]. For decades, students have been completing assignments in school. Often, these were seen only by the teacher, graded and returned to the student. Sometimes, the work was posted on a classroom wall or in a school hallway. Many teachers kept portfolios of student work for report card conferences, and the rare teacher taught students how to build their own portfolios from their work.

### **Bibliography**

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2. Cambridge, D., B., Cambridge and K. Yancey (eds.), *Electronic Portfolios 2.0: Emergent Research on Implementation and Impact*, Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2009, p. 189.
3. Chen, H.L, and T. Penny Light, *Electronic Portfolios and Student Success: Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Learning*, Association of American Colleges and Universities, Washington, 2010. p. 268.
4. Penny Light, T., Chen, H.L., & Ittelson, J.C., *Documenting learning with ePortfolios: A guide for college instructors*, Jossey-Bass, 2011, p. 209.