The Effects of using e-Portfolios in Teaching and Learning Curriculum

Ami L. Stovall

Texas A&M University-Commerce

**Significance of the Study**

This study might assist those in higher education, including students and faculty, to become better informed in preparation for educational technology tool choices and implementation of e-portfolio uses in curricula and might offer advantages associated with various options of educational technology tools to use when implementing e-portfolios. Additionally, it might identify challenges with e-portfolio implementation and use in higher education teaching and learning curricula. Furthermore, it might offer improved professional strategies to integrate the technology software application and curricula.

**Method**

This qualitative research study will determine the effects of e-portfolios in teaching and learning integrated higher education curricula. It will help better understand the advantages and challenges of integrating educational technology tools such as e-portfolios into higher education curricula. This study will include faculty and student participants from North Texas higher education colleges with dual credit and early college high school students. It will be assembled by multiple-choice surveys, written questionnaires, and observation journals.

**Participants**

The participant sample of educators and students will be from surrounding North Texas community college campuses made up of first- and second-year students within multiple subject matter areas and include dual credit, early college high school students, made up of juniors and seniors. The community colleges will consist of seven institutions of various sizes and demographics located in and around North Texas. This qualitative study will have a minimum of 350 participants who will volunteer to complete the survey questionnaire.

The faculty, students, and administrators were chosen for this study as this research calls for the above participants to best assist with gathering the necessary data to analyze further and draw a conclusion that will help institutions moving forward to smoothly integrate educational technology tools into the curricula to optimally afford faculty and students to produce meaningful reflective e-portfolios for assessments and other types. The above participant groups for the qualitative study will include a diverse demographic representation such as age, ethnicity, academic scores, grade level, nationality, and background, to name a few. The gender ratio of females to males is 2 to 1, which will participate in the study. Dual Credit students (1st & 2nd-year college, ages 16 to 18), Early College High School students (1st & 2nd-year college, ages 16 to 18), First-year college students (1st-year college, ages 16 to retirement ages), and Sophomore college students (2nd-year college, ages 16 to retirement ages) respectively.

The sample will be chosen from all the faculty and students teaching and learning in the EDUC-1300 Learning Frameworks courses, as this course is required for first-year students who have less than four completed college-level hours. This course is an elective for all other students. This course teaches new college students the factors that impact learning in college and succeeding as a student in college. An email will be sent to these students, faculty, and administrators to invite them to participate in the research study. In the email will be the details of the purpose and the research study.

Additionally, information on the collected data and what actions will be expected of the participants. The email will inform the participants of the confidentiality agreement of this study and the time set aside to complete the survey questions. Faculty and Administrators will also be told that they will be observed with the students as it relates to the survey questions and monitor semester e-portfolio use throughout the semester. Finally, they will also be interviewed briefly at some point in the semester. The purpose of the additional interviews for the faculty and administrators is to examine further the reasons for the choice(s) of an educational technology tool or software application selected and used with the students and course curriculum with any additional advantages or challenges learned throughout the term.

**Instrumentation**

The first research instrument used was the informed consent form delivered to all participants who agreed to participate in this study. The consent form was created via Microsoft Forms where a link to the website and a QR code for participants to access, complete, and sign via those two forms of obtaining access to the form from any device from anywhere, provided participants have access to the internet. Once that is done, then before the semester start, researchers will observe faculty and administrators to witness the way they select the educational technology tool or software application that the students will be using during the semester with the course curriculum. The researchers will then interview the faculty and administrators with a series of questions regarding the methods they used to determine the e-portfolio platform that the students and faculty will work with during the upcoming courses. These interviews will be done either face-to-face or via Microsoft TEAMs. The researchers will take notes from the observations and interviews. The researchers will use a predetermined set of questions and follow-up questions for the discussions. Finally, the researchers will compile, organize, and transfer the data into a spreadsheet.

Once the semester begins, and the faculty and administrators have chosen and set up the educational technology tool or software platform(s) that the students in the selected course will use, the researchers will monitor and observe the students and faculty as they incorporate the e-portfolios into the curriculum, coursework, and assessment. As the semester ends, the researchers will make it available to students via the website link and QR code provided for students to access the surveys to complete. These surveys are questions created by researchers using the software application Microsoft Forms. Students can easily access the survey from any computer or mobile device, provided they have access to the internet. As a reward for all students who actively participate in this research study, their professors inform them that they will receive extra credit points towards their overall course grade.

The answers to the completed surveys submitted by the students and faculty will be compiled, organized, and put into data sets in preparation for analysis by the researchers. It is noted that any information that would potentially identify the study participants will be removed. The information obtained from the observations, interviews, and surveys by all study participants will help in the process of learning more about the impact of using e-portfolios integrated into course curriculum, as well as determining any advantages or challenges so that further study, determinations, and conclusions can be established and put into a final report.

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