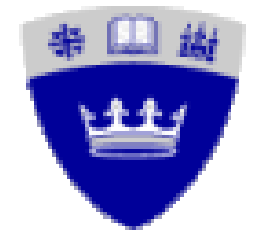


Exploring the learner experience of ePortfolios for formative and summative feedback in the health sciences



Susi Peacock (CAP), Sue Murray (CAP) and Alison Scott (Radiography), Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh
speacock@qmu.ac.uk; smurray@qmu.ac.uk; ascott@qmu.ac.uk

What?

The Centre for Academic Practice and Radiography at Queen Margaret University have been awarded a mini project bid from the Higher Education (HEA) Subject Centre for Health Sciences and Practice. This study will investigate whether, and in what ways, learners engage with formative and summative feedback delivered through ePortfolios.

Why?

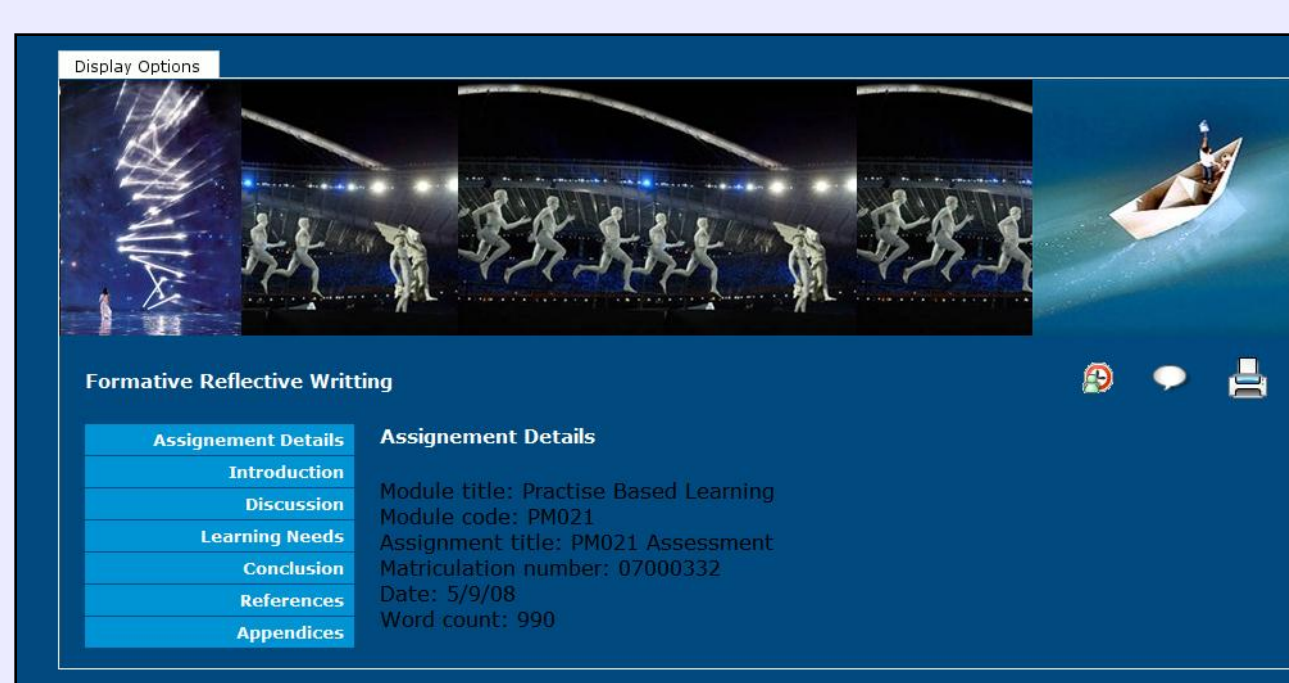
Detailed, appropriate and timely feedback is of the utmost importance for all learners [1]. Feedback can improve achievement in knowledge acquisition and skills development, promote deep learning, improve motivation, increase reflective skills and help learners prepare for future learning events [2][3]. Feedback is particularly important for health science students who undertake activities in the clinical environment which are less structured and predictable than those in the academic setting, requiring students to respond by learning in a highly flexible manner. Interaction with members of the multi-professional team and with clients adds another challenging dimension to the learning process.

Unlike other forms of online assessment and feedback, ePortfolios have the potential to help learners capture, collate and reflect on feedback, assisting them to develop, over time, a more informed sense of their skills and achievements and link to CPD. Potential barriers to learner engagement with ePortfolios and feedback could include computer anxiety, lack of access and usability, or inappropriate use by tutors.

Who?

Participants will be recruited from health sciences areas, such as:

- ★ Radiography
- ★ Physiotherapy
- ★ Nursing



How?

A collective case study approach will be used:

- ★ Studying cases where ePortfolios have been integrated into the curriculum
- ★ Focus groups – to access learners' views and perceptions

Objectives

By conducting an in-depth, comparative study of learner experiences of feedback using an ePortfolio in health sciences, we will be able to:

- ★ Develop an understanding of the impact of using an ePortfolio for feedback on the learning experience
- ★ Build a rich picture of actual learner experiences of engagement with feedback through an ePortfolio
- ★ Develop guidelines and case studies for educators to improve learner engagement with feedback

We seek to explore the following questions:

- ★ Do health science learners engage with feedback provided through ePortfolios? And if so, in what ways? And with what kinds of feedback?
- ★ What are the benefits for learners in engaging with feedback through ePortfolios?
- ★ What are the barriers?
- ★ What do learners do with feedback received through ePortfolios?
- ★ How do their experiences of using ePortfolios for feedback compare with their previous experiences of feedback?
- ★ What are learners' preferences regarding ePortfolios and feedback, and why?

For further information please see our website:
<http://www.qmu.ac.uk/eportfolio/research.htm>



[1] Hounsell, D., McCure, V., Hounsell, J. and Litjens, J. 2008. The quality of guidance and feedback to students. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 27 (1) pp.55-67.

[2] Nicol, D. J. and MacFarlane-Dick, D. 2006. Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: A model and seven principles of good feedback practice. *Studies in Higher Education*, 31 (2) pp.199-218.

[3] Nicol, D. J. and Milligan, C. 2006. Rethinking technology-supported assessment in terms of the seven principles of good feedback practice. In: Bryan, C. and Clegg, K. eds. *Innovative Assessment in Higher Education* [online] London: Taylor Francis Group, pp.1-14. Available from: <http://www.reap.ac.uk/public/Papers/Nicol_Milligan_150905.pdf> [Accessed March 12 2008].