Using ePortfolio to Document and Enhance the Dispositional Learning Impact of HIPs: Key Concepts

Documenting and enhancing learning outcomes are increasingly important. Some outcomes are essential for effective performance across virtually all types of work and family and civic life such as interpersonal and intrapersonal competence and neuro-cognitive skills. Certain college experiences (e.g., HIPs) appear to be especially effective for helping students cultivate these outcomes. An especially promising approach for curating, extending, and deepening the benefits of these outcomes is a well-designed ePortfolio practice.

*High-impact practices (HIPs)* are intentionally structured to engage students in combinations of educationally effective activities associated with empirically verified elevated levels of focused effort, persistence, completion, and desired learning outcomes.

*Interpersonal competencies* involve expressing information to others as well as interpreting others’ messages and responding appropriately.

*Intrapersonal competencies* involve self-management, growth mindset, and the ability to reflect on and manage one’s behavior and emotion to reach goals.

*Neuro-cognitive skills* represent both (a) crystallized intelligence and (b) fluid intelligence that together are needed to monitor and self-regulate thought processes and behavior, which is essential to the development of inter- and intrapersonal competencies as well as the ability to demonstrate applied knowledge.

*ePortfolio* is a Web-based, student-generated collection of learning artifacts (papers, multimedia projects, speeches, images, etc.) and related reflections focused on learning and growth, all of which make learning visible and connect and deepen integrative learning.
Using ePortfolio to Document and Enhance the Dispositional Learning Impact of HIPs

Getting Ready: Please spend the next few minutes reflecting on your goals for this afternoon. In the space below, write down your thoughts to the following questions:

*Using ePortfolio to Document and Enhance the Dispositional Learning Impact of HIPs encompasses a number of different topics. What drew you to this workshop? What do you hope to learn this afternoon?*

*What are you already doing on your campus related to ePortfolio, dispositional learning, and HIPs?*

*What questions do you have?*
Our goal for the afternoon is for you to develop a set of processes or tools you can use to document and enhance dispositional learning associated with a high impact practice. For our purposes today, dispositional learning represents intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies and neuro-cognitive skills (see the key concepts handout). To do that, we ask you to:

1) jot down initial thoughts towards a plan as we work together through a set of steps,
2) participate in a charrette-like activity during which you will give and receive feedback on your draft plans with a small group, and
3) compose a revised set of processes/tools based on what you’ve learned and the feedback you’ve received.

You will use the table on the next to take notes and charrette activity and the Documenting and Enhancing Dispositional Learning Flowchart for developing your revised plan.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Individual Reflection</strong></th>
<th><strong>ePortfolio Practice and Evidence of Learning</strong></th>
<th><strong>Charrette Feedback</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use the space below to write down your initial thoughts about ways to connect your selected High-Impact Practice to outcomes, competencies, and neuro-cognitive skills.</td>
<td>How can ePortfolio practice enhance student learning? How can you document student learning using ePortfolio?</td>
<td>Use the space below to write down the suggestions you receive from your peers during the table discussions.</td>
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**Step 1: Learning Outcome(s)**
What student learning outcome would you like to focus on this afternoon? Write 1 (or possibly 2) learning outcomes below.

**Step 2: High-Impact Practice**
What high-impact practice will provide students the opportunity to develop and practice this learning outcome?

**Step 3: High-Impact Practice Key Features**
What student behaviors does this practice elicit?

**Step 4: Inter-/Intra-Personal Competencies**
What inter- or intra-personal competencies can students develop when they participate in the high-impact practice you identified?

**Step 5: Neuro-Cognitive Skills**
What neuro-cognitive skills does this practice support? How will you assess whether students have gained those skills?
High-Impact Practice

Learning Outcomes

ePortfolio Practice/
Evidence of Learning

HIP Key Features

Inter-/Intra-Personal Competencies

Neuro-Cognitive Skills
High-Impact Educational Practices: A Brief Overview. The following practices have been widely tested and shown to be beneficial for college students from many backgrounds. These practices take different forms, depending on learner characteristics, institutional priorities and contexts. On many campuses, assessment of student involvement in practices such as these has made it possible to assess the practices’ contribution to students’ cumulative learning. However, on almost all campuses, utilization is unsystematic, to the detriment of student learning. Below are brief descriptions of high-impact practices that educational research suggests increase rates of student persistence and student engagement.

First-Year Seminars and Experiences
Many schools now build into the curriculum first-year seminars or other programs that bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students’ intellectual and practical competencies. First-year seminars can also involve students with cutting-edge questions in scholarship and with faculty members’ own research.

Common Intellectual Experiences
The older idea of a “core” curriculum has evolved into a variety of modern forms, such as a set of required common courses or a vertically organized gen ed program that includes advanced integrative studies and/or required participation in a learning community. Programs often combine broad themes—e.g., technology & society, global interdependence—with curricular and co-curricular options.

Learning Communities
The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with “big questions” that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors. Many learning communities explore a common topic and/or common readings through different disciplines.

Writing-Intensive Courses
These courses emphasize writing at all levels and across the curriculum, including final-year projects. Students are encouraged to produce and revise various forms of writing for different audiences and disciplines. The effectiveness of this repeated practice “across the curriculum” has led to parallel efforts in such areas as quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and, so on.

Collaborative Assignments and Projects
Collaborative learning combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one’s own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences. Approaches range from study groups within a course, to team-based assignments and writing, to cooperative projects and research.
Undergraduate Inquiry and Creative Activity

Many colleges and universities now provide research experiences for students in all disciplines. Undergraduate research, however, is most prominently in science. The goal is to involve students early in courses and through other activities with systematic inquiry approaches with contested questions, empirical observation, technologies, and the enthusiasm that comes from working to answer questions or create new formulations through literary or artistic endeavor.

Diversity/Study Away/Global Learning

Many colleges and universities now offer courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies—which may address U.S. diversity, world cultures, or both—often explore “difficult differences” such as racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power. Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by study abroad.

Service Learning, Community-Based Learning

Field-based applied learning with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a course requirement. The goal is for students to directly experience issues they are studying and engage in ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity to both apply learning in real-world settings and reflect in a classroom setting on service experiences. These programs model that giving back to the community is an important college outcome and that working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life.

Internships

Internships are increasingly common form of applied, experiential learning. The idea is to provide students with direct experience in a work setting—usually related to their career interests—and to give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field. If the internship is taken for course credit, students complete a project or paper that is approved by a faculty member.

Capstone Courses and Projects

Whether called “senior capstones” or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they’ve learned. Capstones are offered both in departmental programs and, increasingly, in general education as well.

ePortfolio

ePortfolio is a portable, expandable, updatable vehicle for accumulating and presenting evidence of authentic student accomplishment including the curation of specific proficiencies and dispositions at given points in time. Done well, ePortfolio it is also a powerful pedagogical approach that requires meaningful student reflection and deepens learning while making achievement visible – to students themselves, to their peers and faculty, and to external audiences.

Sources


High-Impact Practices: Eight Key Features and Examples

Performance expectations set at appropriately high levels
Example: A writing- or inquiry-intensive first-year seminar in which assignments, projects, and activities such as multiple short papers, problem sets or projects challenge students to achieve beyond their current ability level as judged by criteria calibrated to students’ pre-college accomplishment evidenced by placement tests or ACT or SAT scores.

Significant investment of concentrated effort by students over an extended period of time
Example: A multiple-part class assignment or community engagement project on which a student works over the course of the academic term, beginning with a synopsis of the problem or issue to be examined and the methods or procedures that will be used, followed subsequently with narrative sections describing the methods, findings, and conclusions which together culminate in a completed paper, demonstration or performance evaluated by an independent third party or faculty supervisor.

Interactions with faculty and peers about substantive matters
Example: Out-of-class activities in which students in a learning community or first-year seminar come together at least once weekly to attend an enrichment event such as lecture by a visiting dignitary and/or discuss common readings and assignments facilitated by an upper-division peer mentor.

Experiences with diversity, wherein students are exposed to and must contend with people and circumstances that differ from those with which students are familiar
Example: A service learning field assignment wherein students work in a setting populated by people from different backgrounds and demographics, such as an assisted living facility or shelter for abused children, which is coupled with class discussions and journaling about the connections between class readings and the field assignment experience.

Frequent, timely, and constructive feedback
Example: A student-faculty research project during which students meet with and receive suggestions from the supervising faculty (or staff) member at various points to discuss progress, next steps, and problems encountered and to review the quality of the student’s contributions up to and through the completion of the project.

Opportunities to discover relevance of learning through real-world applications
Example: An internship, practicum or field placement that requires that students apply the knowledge and skills acquired during their program of study, or supervisor mediated discussions among student workers that encourage students to reflect on and see the connections between their studies and experiences in the work setting.

Public demonstration of competence
Example: An oral presentation to classmates of the required capstone seminar product that is evaluated by a faculty member and/or an accomplished practitioner, or a narrative evaluation of an internship, practicum or field placement by the work setting supervisor and/or supervising faculty or staff member.

Periodic, structured opportunities to reflect and integrate learning
Example: Linked courses in a learning community wherein an instructor of one course designs assignments that require students to draw on material covered in one or more of the other linked courses supplemented by a peer preceptor who coordinates student attendance and discussion at relevant campus events, or a capstone course in which students finalize their ePortfolio and explain the relative contributions of the artifacts contained therein that represent the knowledge and proficiencies attained at various points during their program of study.