



## INCREASING EQUITY IN GENERAL EDUCATION THROUGH SELF-RELEVANT ePORTFOLIO WRITING

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## INCREASING EQUITY IN GENERAL EDUCATION THROUGH SELF-RELEVANT EPORTFOLIO WRITING

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- Theory of Change
  - Why ePortfolios?
  - Why Self-Relevant Writing?
  - Why Brief Psychological Interventions?
- Methods
- Results

## THE CONTEXT

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- Four-year comprehensive college
- Provides access to traditionally underrepresented students
- 4000 undergraduates
  - 39% Underrepresented Ethnic Minority (URM)
  - 76% Receive federal loans
  - 40% Eligible for Pell grants



## GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES

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- Clear learning outcomes
- Often lack substantive means of assessment
  - Focus on shallow learning
  - Assess abilities not linked to SLO
  - Limit underserved students' ability to demonstrate learning

## CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

### ASSIGNMENTS

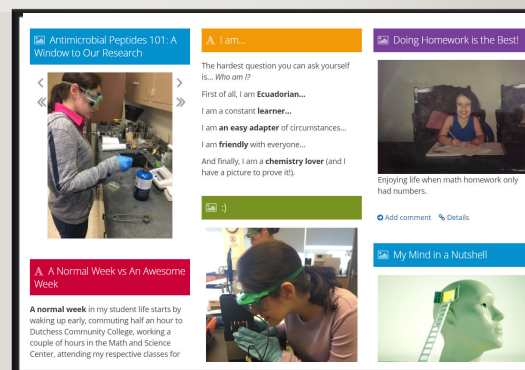
- Clear instructions
- Scaffolding
- Inclusive content
- Brief psychological interventions
- High utility value (Eccles, 2010)
  - Work has worth beyond the academic context

### ASSESSMENTS

- Aligned with teaching
- Explicit criteria
- Limited to concepts being assessed
- Avoid stereotype threat
- Disaggregate outcomes

## THE PROMISE OF ePORTFOLIOS

- High impact practice (HIP)
- Curate academic work
- Increase utility value
- Enhance social pedagogy
- Support for personal change



## THE PROMISE OF SELF-RELEVANT WRITING

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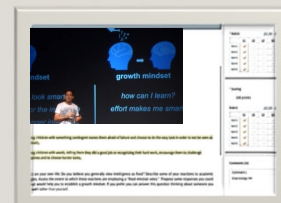
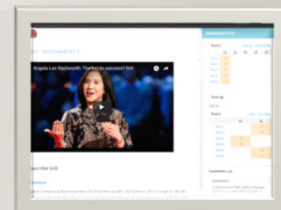
- Measures deep learning
  - Encourages integration across cognitive, intrapersonal, interpersonal domains
- Can be culturally responsive
  - Invites material from student heritage groups
  - Describes students' lived experiences
  - Increases students' investment
- Promotes recursive cycle of knowledge between students and faculty

## THE PROMISE OF BRIEF PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS

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Brief activities that change world view

- Sense of Belonging
  - Increased persistence and improved grades
- Values Affirmation
  - Improved grades
- Growth Mindset
  - Increased persistence and improved grades
  - Associated with grit



## CHILD DEVELOPMENT



- 60 -100 students in traditional format and 35 online
- Primarily first-year
- Large numbers from groups at risk academically
- In 2017
  - 36% URM
  - 31% first-generation
- Results from 4 semesters offered 2015- 2018

## CLASS REDESIGN

- Replaced high-stakes tests with ePortfolios or papers
  - High utility value self-relevant writing
  - Brief psychological interventions
  - Consistent rubrics
- Examined
  - Grades
  - Persistence
  - Attitudes



## SELF-RELEVANT WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

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- 11-14 Assignments
  - Summarize content
  - Apply autobiographically or to issue
  - Plan for future
  - Select important take-aways
- Written either as papers or ePortfolio entries
- Weighed heavily in final grade

## MINDSET INSTRUCTIONS

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- Watch Eduardo Briceño TED talk <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pN34FNbOKXc>
- Describe differences in how individuals with fixed and growth mindsets approach learning (**conceptual information**)
- Do you view intelligence as fixed? (**reflection**)
  - Describe your reactions to an academic struggle
  - Propose responses that would establish a growth mindset
- Propose ways to help foster growth mindsets (**planning**)

## ENHANCED SOCIAL PEDAGOGY

- Students describe their lives, include images, and write letters to themselves
  - Future self and family are authentic audiences
- The professor provides supportive comments and shares common themes
  - Creates a sense of community in the class
- ePortfolios or curation
  - Encourage sharing and saving

## RESPONSIVE ASSESSMENT

- Each rubric includes similar learning outcomes
  - Conceptual mastery
  - Integration
  - Application
- Similar rubrics used across assignments
  - Encourage performance-approach behaviors
- Individual feedback
  - Areas in which learning outcomes were not met
  - Confidence in student's ability to show future mastery

Mindset Rubric	Absent	Missing Element	Fully Present
<b>Concepts</b> - Describes 3 ways individuals with fixed and growth mindsets approach learning			
<b>Concepts</b> - Explains how praise influences responses to challenges			
<b>Integration</b> - Describes reaction to academic struggle, assesses use of "fixed mindset voice," and proposes alternate responses			
<b>Application</b> - Describes plans to foster growth mindset in college students and children			
<b>Application</b> - Describes 3 applications			



## RESPONSES TO SELF-RELEVANT WRITING

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- Over 75% of students reported that assignments
  - Enhanced learning
  - Provided an accurate assessment of learning
  - Encouraged reflection
  - Should be used in future classes
- Mentioned personal change as a result of the interventions
- Adopted language indicative of effect
  - I'm gritty
  - I can't do this...YET

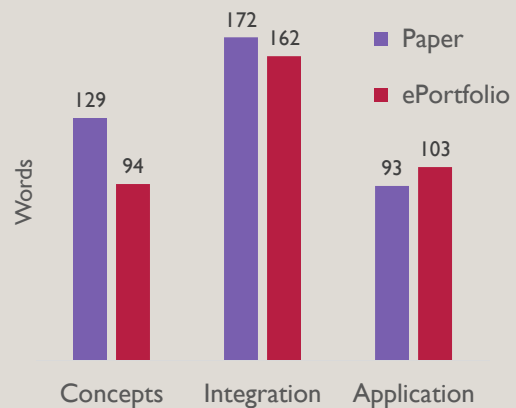
## IN THEIR OWN WORDS

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- Integrating learning with lived experiences
  - *My mother decided to stop speaking to me in Spanish to force me to speak English because she was concerned about me falling behind in school. I eventually regained fluency in English but lost it almost entirely in Spanish... Ideally, I would love to create a balanced bilingual environment for my children. Not just for the cognitive or social benefits of being bilingual, but also to embrace our cultural background.*
- Sharing personal struggle
  - *Since I was very little I struggled with mathematics. I found that no matter how hard I worked I would end up reading the problem wrong... I remember my parents trying to make me instill a growth mindset... After I found out that I had dyscalculia I really began to have a fixed mindset. My math struggles are a diagnosable condition so how can I change?*

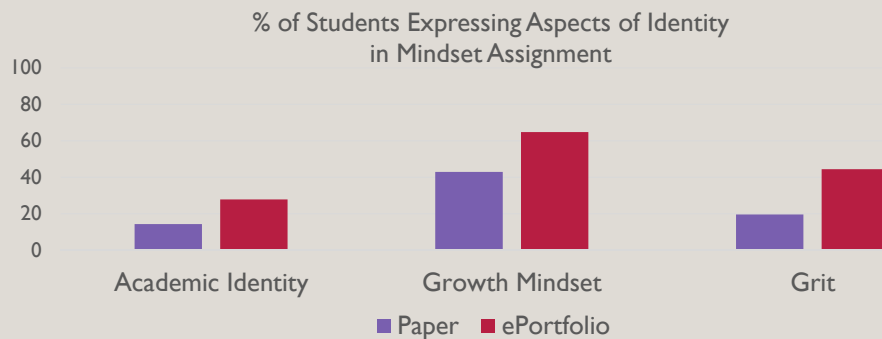
## RESULTS – WORD COUNTS

- Lots of writing!
  - 592 words per week in traditional class
  - 712 words per week in online class
- Most content in integration
- More conceptual content in papers
- Equivalent rates of complete answers
  - 91% Papers
  - 95% ePortfolios

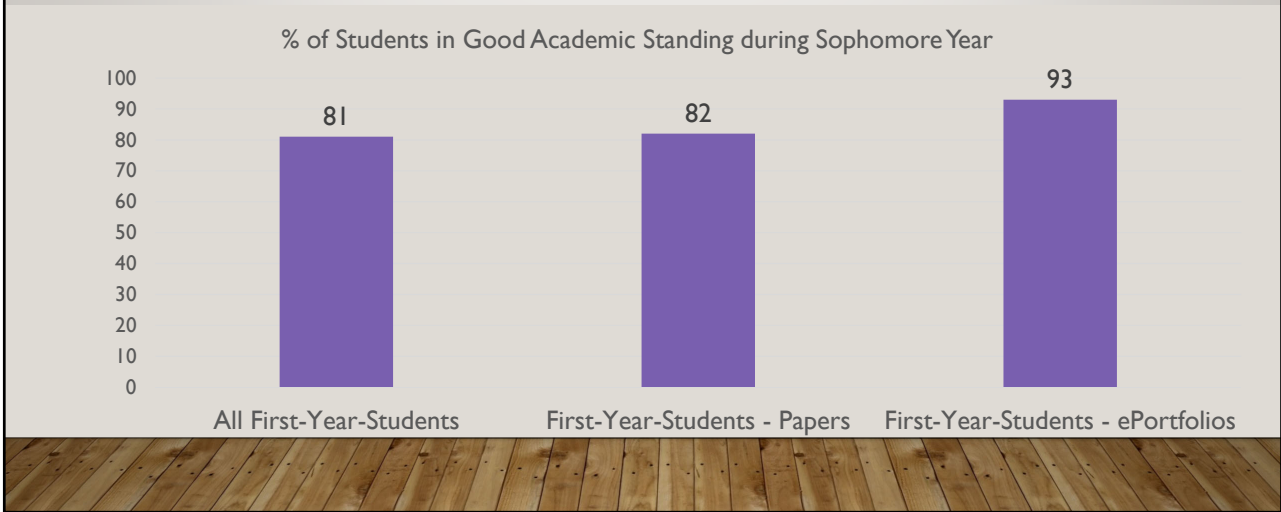


## ADDED VALUE OF ePORTFOLIO PRACTICE

- ePortfolios evoked more identity statements than papers

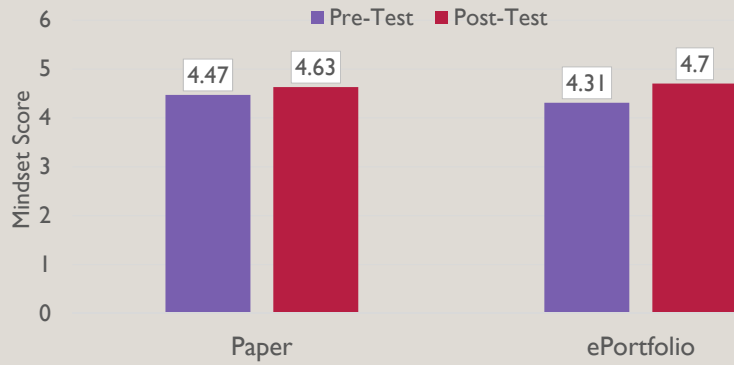


## ADDED VALUE OF ePORTFOLIO WORK



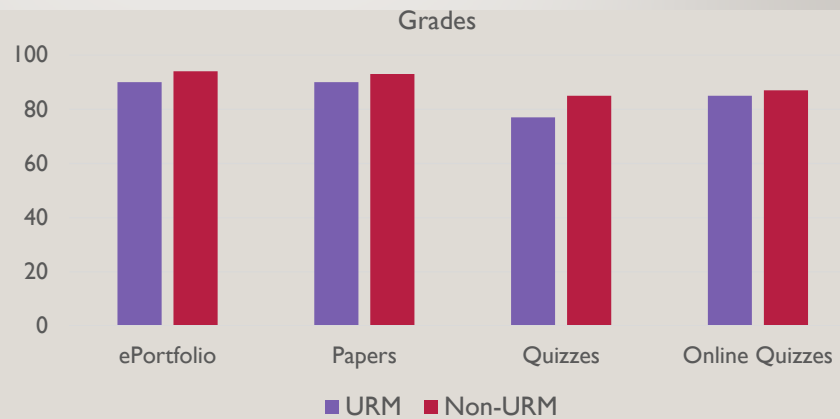
## ADDED VALUE OF INTERVENTION

- Intervention increased endorsements of growth mindset in both formats



## ADDED VALUE OF SELF-RELEVANT WRITING

- URM students receive similar writing grades to non-URM students
- Achievement gap present for quiz grades in traditional class
  - Online setting may reduce stereotype threat



## CONCLUSIONS

- ePortfolios are better than or equal to other formats
  - Reflection and application of concepts to the self
  - Complete answers
    - Papers evoked more words but not more complete answers
- Intervention efficacy was present in all formats
- Next Steps
  - Determine whether ePortfolio delivery leads to sustained intervention effects