

The Learning Landscape, Assessment, and ePortfolios

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October 21, 2018



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Today's Overview

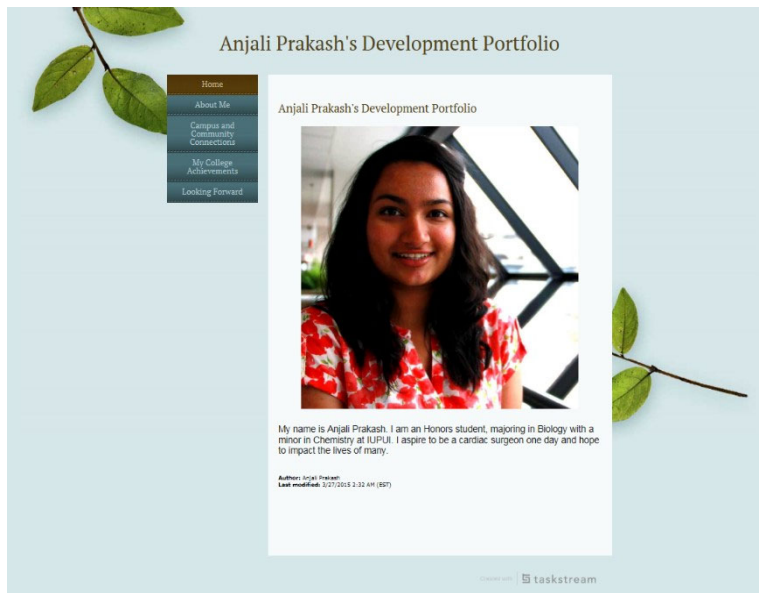
1. Icebreaker – Goals for Today
2. Assessment and ePortfolios in the Context of Today's Learning Landscape
 - Student Perspectives
 - Analysis of Trends in Assessment
3. Activity – ePortfolios and Assessment in Your Context
4. What is ePortfolio assessment?
5. Wrap-Up – Your Thoughts



One student's perspective

“So you get here and they start asking you, ‘What do you...want to major in? ...what courses [do] you want to take?’ and you get the impression that’s what it’s all about – courses and majors. So, you take the courses. You get your card punched. You try a little this and a little that. Then comes GRADUATION. And you wake up and you look at this bunch of courses and then it hits you: They don’t add up to anything. It’s just a bunch of courses. It doesn’t mean a thing.”

A different perspective



"Building an ePortfolio has allowed me to go back and think about my experiences at IUPUI. This has led me to find purpose in everything I have done or am still doing. Listing these skills along with interesting thoughts and life-lessons has helped me build something that displays who I am and allows me to express myself with no word-limits."

-- Anjali Prakash, 2015

Questions about current assessment trends in higher education

1. How are we approaching the assessment of learning today?
2. What has changed since the late 1980s and early 1990s?
3. What educational values are reflected in current assessment practices and trends?
4. What do these values imply for curriculum design? Pedagogy? Higher education broadly?



NILOA study of assessment trends

1. Increasing reliance on authentic, embedded assessment methods
2. Emphasis on culturally responsive assessment that accounts for growing diversity of students
3. Shift from focus on engaging faculty in assessment to supporting their use of findings to improve teaching and learning
4. Growing involvement of campus teaching and learning centers in supporting assessment



Major trends from our analysis

1. Increasing focus on assessing development of the whole student (interpersonal and intrapersonal growth, self-awareness, social intelligence, professionalism)
2. Growing interest in assessing students' ability to integrate and apply learning to complex problems that transcend disciplinary boundaries
3. Continuing shift from standardized instruments to authentic, embedded assessment based on authentic learning experiences



Major trends (continued)

4. Shifting emphasis from external accountability to internal improvements (to courses, programs, co-curricular experiences, advising, etc.) based on assessment findings
5. Emphasis on alignment among learning outcomes at different levels (course, program, institution)
6. Equitable assessment approaches that account for student diversity and seek to ensure that all students have learning opportunities responsive to their needs



Major trends from our analysis

- Outcomes
 - Focus on development of whole person
 - Assessment of ability to integrate and apply learning to real, complex problems
- Methods
 - Growing emphasis on authentic assessment based on authentic learning experiences
- Values
 - Improvement over accountability
 - Guided learning pathways/alignment of outcomes across levels (course, program, institution) to support integrative teaching and learning
 - Equity and culturally responsive assessment



Analysis: Trends reflect:

- Growing diversity of students (first generation; underserved; returning/nontraditional; transfer)
- Need to prepare them to persist and graduate and to function effectively in a complex, globalizing world:
 - Self-awareness and –confidence as students and future professionals
 - Effective study habits; understanding of when to seek help
 - Selection of degrees and careers aligned with interests and strengths
 - Ability to transfer learning from one experience to the next
 - Ability to apply learning to real problems that don't fit one discipline

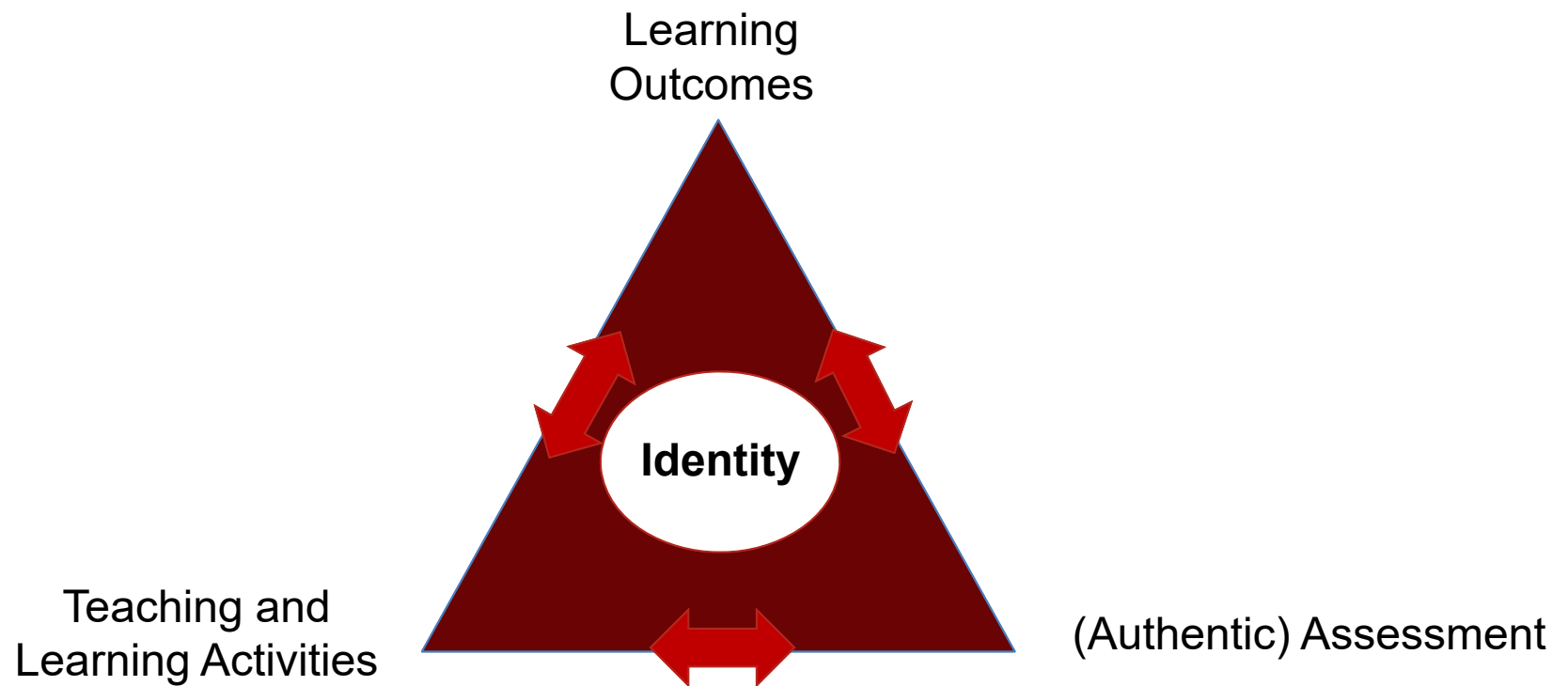


Analysis (cont'd): Trends reflect:

- Ongoing shift from “instruction paradigm” to “learning paradigm”
 - New understandings of learning reflected in curricula, pedagogies, assessment strategies
- Many institutions meet minimum accountability standards; can turn attention to using assessment to improve learning experiences and outcomes
 - Thus, are adopting assessment strategies that offer more insight into needed improvements



Integrative Learning



BACKPACKS AND ARTEFACTS

[HOME](#)

[OUTDOOR ADVENTURE PROGRAM](#)

[INTERDISCIPLINARY THESIS](#)

[WORK EXPERIENCE](#)

[CERTIFICATIONS](#)

[PHOTO GALLERY](#)



Maris Fraser

What is an ePortfolio?

1. “Collections of work selected from a larger archive of work, upon which the student has reflected.” (Yancey, 2001)
2. “A selected body of plural performances narrated by the writer in a reflective text” (Yancey, 2004)
3. “Web-based, student-generated collections of learning artifacts...[and] reflections, focused on learning and growth” (Eynon & Gambino, 2017)



What is an ePortfolio?

“An ePortfolio is a student-generated website that presents a coherent, reflective representation of the student and her learning, using hyperlinked digital media and narrative as context for a set of authentic performances.” (Kahn, 2019)



Why do we use ePortfolios?

- To support integrative, purposive learning
- To afford students formal opportunities to reflect on their learning and development, thus encouraging deeper, higher-impact learning
- To set the stage for lifelong learning
- To encourage the development of self-awareness
- To support development of identity and agency
- To document and demonstrate authentic learning, especially mastery of complex and “ineffable” outcomes (also for the benefit of students themselves)



Focuses of IUPUI ePortfolio Initiative Mission Statement

1. Empowering and developing students
2. Supporting student learning and success
3. Clarifying and supporting distinctive urban education experience at IUPUI
4. Connecting with campus strategic plan
5. Providing professional development to help faculty and staff make the most of ePortfolios' potential to advance the above

ePortfolios and current/new thinking about assessment and higher education

- ePortfolios are often explicitly designed to account for and respond to culture and equity concerns
- ePortfolios encourage and support alignment of learning outcomes and clear learning pathways
- ePortfolios are a recognized High-Impact Practice, and, when well-designed, can enhance the impact of other HIPs and provide insight into student learning in HIPs
- ePortfolios provide rich, actionable information for improving teaching and learning



Methods: Authentic assessment

“Documenting learning in this way places the focus on actual achievements that are viewed directly, rather than on proxies of achievement like cumulative GPAs or test scores that are only indirect indicators of learning. The focus is also on what students can *do* with their knowledge and skills and not simply on whether knowledge has been acquired.” (Huba & Freed, 2000)



Beyond authentic assessment

ePortfolios can:

- Include a diversity of elements (thus increasing the validity of assessment)
- Demonstrate learning and development over time
- Capture complex cognitive and affective outcomes
- Provide richer, more contextualized information to guide curriculum/program improvement

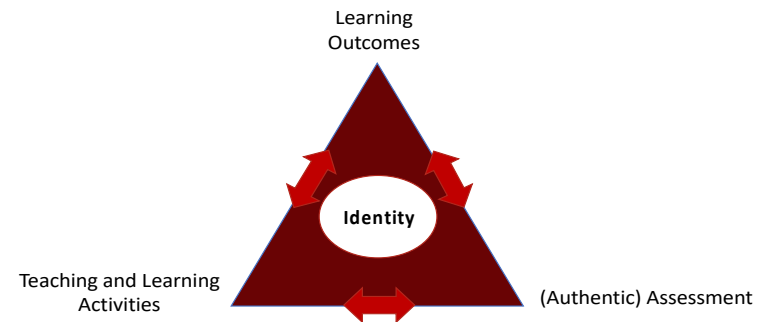


Using ePortfolios and Assessment

- Integrative, purposive learning
- Formal Reflection
- Lifelong learning
- Development of self-awareness
- Development of identity and agency
- Authentic learning (mastery of complex and “ineffable” outcomes)

ACTIVITY

Consider your own context design a learning activity that will result in an artifact that can be used to assess one of these goals.



What do we assess when we assess ePortfolios?

1. Individual artifacts vs. a body of work
2. ePortfolio as collection vs. ePortfolio as composition
3. ePortfolio as “container” for evidence of learning vs. ePortfolio as itself an artifact of a learning experience or learning trajectory
4. Granular competencies vs. more complex, developmental outcomes



“Assessment constructs that
which it purports to measure”
(K.B. Yancey, 2004)



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Discussion: What does it all mean?

- Are ePortfolios having a “moment” because they reflect current trends in assessment and higher education? Are they influencing these trends?
- What do the intersections between ePortfolio and current assessment trends mean for your program? Your institution? Higher education broadly?
- What future assessment trends do you foresee? Will ePortfolios continue to have a role in assessment?



Questions and Themes

1. How can ePortfolios help faculty and students develop integrated, coherent, guided pathways through programs?
2. What advantages does the “e” confer?
3. What can we learn from ePs about our students, programs, institution?

ePortfolio as HIP

When [ePortfolios are] done well, students who create and continue to add to their ePortfolio as intended benefit in ways similar to students who participate in one or more of the 10 HIPs on the AAC&U list....Compared with their counterparts who did not use ePortfolios, students...were generally more engaged in educationally purposeful activities, earned higher grades, and were more likely to complete courses and persist.”

George Kuh (2017)

What makes their impact high?

- High performance expectations
- Significant investment of effort over extended time
- Substantive interactions with faculty and peers
- Experience with diversity
- Frequent, timely, and constructive feedback
- Structured opportunities to reflect and integrate
- Discover relevance through application of learning
- Public demonstration of learning

Folio thinking

“*Folio thinking* is a reflective practice that situates and guides the effective use of learning portfolios....folio thinking aims to encourage students to integrate discrete learning experiences, enhance their self-understanding, promote taking responsibility for their own learning, and support them in developing an intellectual identity.” (Penny Light, Chen, & Ittelson, 2012)

ePortfolio Pedagogy

- Reflection and metacognition
- Constructivist approach to knowledge
- Integrative approach to learning and experience
- Identity representation and development
- Student ownership, engagement, agency, purpose
- Authentic audience
- Social pedagogy

A Continuum of Approaches to ePortfolios

ePortfolio
as
Wrapper

**Learning
Happens
Inside and
Is
Represented
In the
ePortfolio**

ePortfolio
as
Curriculum

**Learning Happens Inside
and Through the Practice,
Including Creating the
ePortfolio**

**Students/People Learn More When
They Understand the Theory of the
Practice**

Thinking like . . .

