A ten year journey

Can we unify instructor approaches and learner reactions to eportfolios in higher education?

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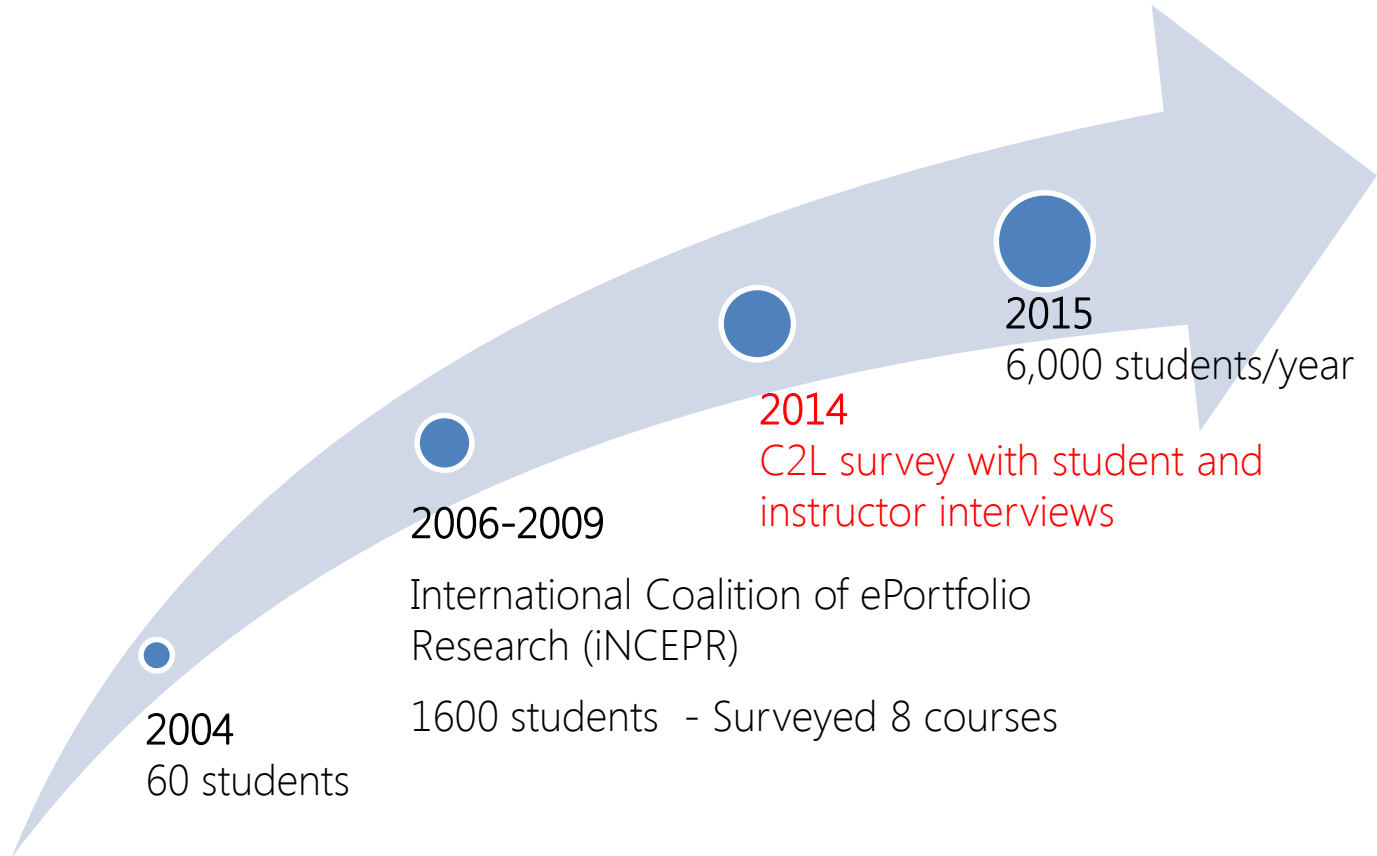Centre for Teaching Excellence

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Our Study

We pose the following questions:

- To what extent do students and instructors agree on the goals and the rationale behind using eportfolios?
- What might be done to ensure a better alignment between instructor and student expectations and leverage the power of eportfolios?
- How does the communication of expectations influence the success of eportfolios as a form of assessment?

Data collection over the years

2004
60 students

2006-2009

International Coalition of ePortfolio
Research (iNCEPR)

1600 students - Surveyed 8 courses

2014
C2L survey with student and
instructor interviews

2015
6,000 students/year

Effectively Integrating ePortfolios: A Model for Student Success

Introduce the ePortfolio Early/Communicate Expectations

Give 'em Grades

Provide feedback early and often (instructor or peer)

Respect Disciplinary Context

Provide time and space for meaning making and making connections

Threshold for using ePortfolio

Goal of ePortfolio	Survey item
Learner Identity	Helping students develop their identities as learners
Reflective Learner	Helping students become more reflective learners
Outside School	Helping students see connections between their coursework and their lived experiences
Education	Helping students develop their own educational goals and plans
Career	Supporting students' career preparation
Synthesize Ideas	Synthesize and organize ideas, information, or experiences in new ways
Writing	Contribute to students' knowledge, skills, and personal development in writing clearly and effectively
Understand Selves	Contribute to students' knowledge, skills, and personal development in understanding themselves
Teamwork	Contribute to students' knowledge, skills, and personal development in working effectively with others

30 courses
N = 863 students
Average response rate = 29%

	Sample survey items
Feedback (α = .75)	My peers/classmates provided useful feedback on my ePortfolio.
Reflection (α = .92)	Building my ePortfolio helped me to think more deeply about the content of my course. Using ePortfolio has allowed me to be more aware of my growth and development as a learner.
Showcasing the ePortfolio (r = .70)	I'd like to use my ePortfolio to show what I've learned and what I can do to others, such as potential employers or professors at another university.
Positive Attitude (α = .85)	I enjoyed building my ePortfolio. The ePortfolio was an important part of this course.
Going Beyond (α = .86)	I went beyond what was required for the course (e.g., creating extra pages or posting my own links, text, or photos).
Integrative Learning (α = .86)	How often have you combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments? How often have you examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue?
Future use (α = .89)	How likely are you to voluntarily continue to use your ePortfolio in other courses?

	Feedback	Reflection	Showcasing the ePortfolio	Positive Attitude	Going Beyond	Integrative Learning	Future Use
Learner Identity	-.34**	.42*	-.29*	-.41*	-.21	-.30*	-.16
Reflective Learner	-.30*	-.33*	-.11	-.13	-.14	-.36**	-.09
Outside School	-.30*	-.46**	-.18	-.44**	-.26†	-.30*	-.19
Community	-.27*	-.21*	-.09	-.27*	-.27*	-.46**	-.10
Education	-.23†	-.51**	-.36**	-.40**	-.28*	-.37**	-.33*
Career	-.22†	-.48**	-.39**	-.37**	-.29**	-.40**	-.43*
Synthesize Ideas	-.40**	-.58**	-.33*	-.61**	-.44**	-.48**	-.58**
Writing	-.44*	-.57**	-.42*	-.38**	-.54**	-.67**	-.46**
Understand Selves	-.24†	-.56**	-.43*	-.47**	-.37**	-.50**	-.48**
Teamwork	-.30*	-.47**	-.30*	-.33*	-.35**	-.53**	-.49**

*$p < .05$ **$p < .001$ †$p < .10$
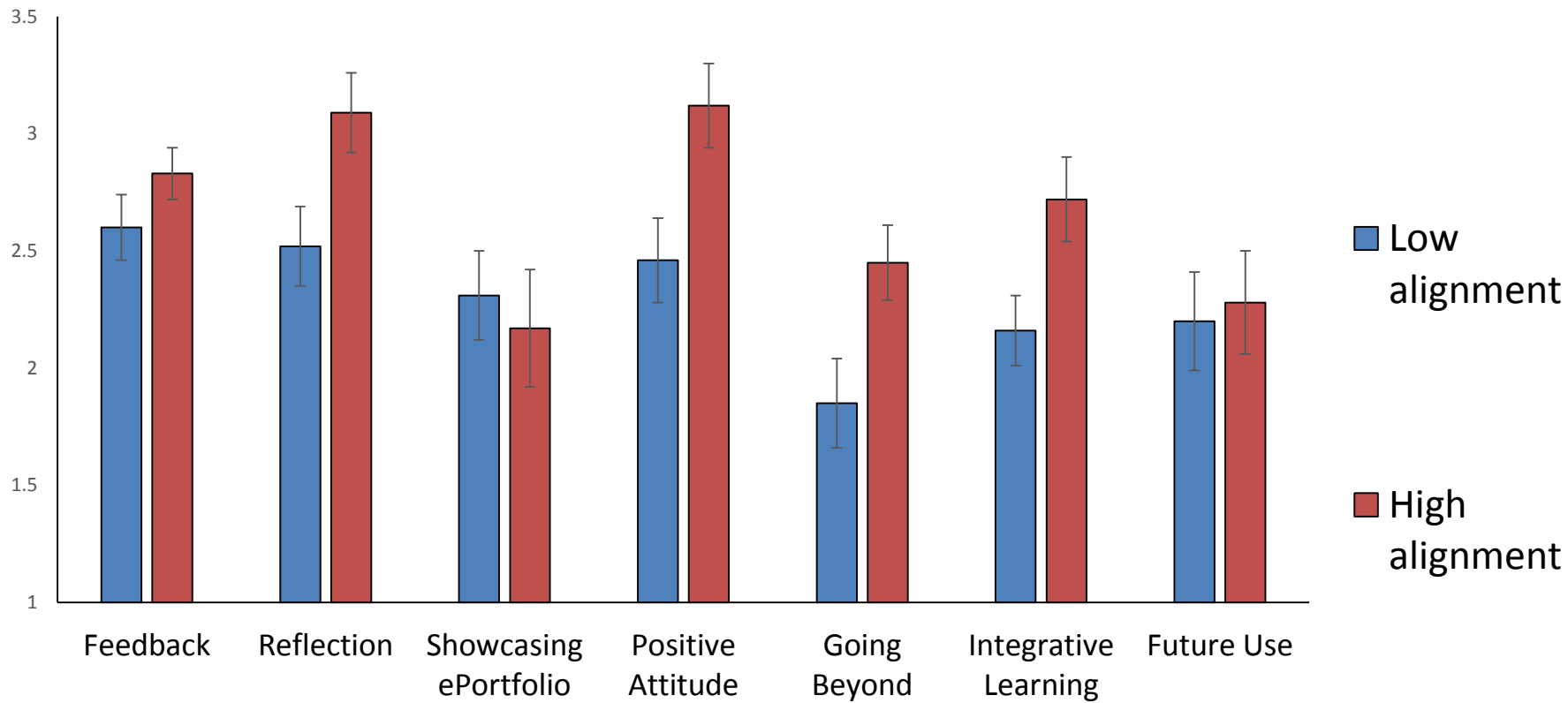
Scale from 1-4

Current best practices…
or is there more to the story?

1st year biology course – assignment weighted 5% ✅

1st year general Arts course – no sharing between students ✅

1st year intro Arts course – followed best practices ❌

What other factors influence eportfolio "success"?

Our 'Best Practices' and the C2L survey focus on ePortfolio design, not on factors which are secondary to the preparation and implementation of the activity
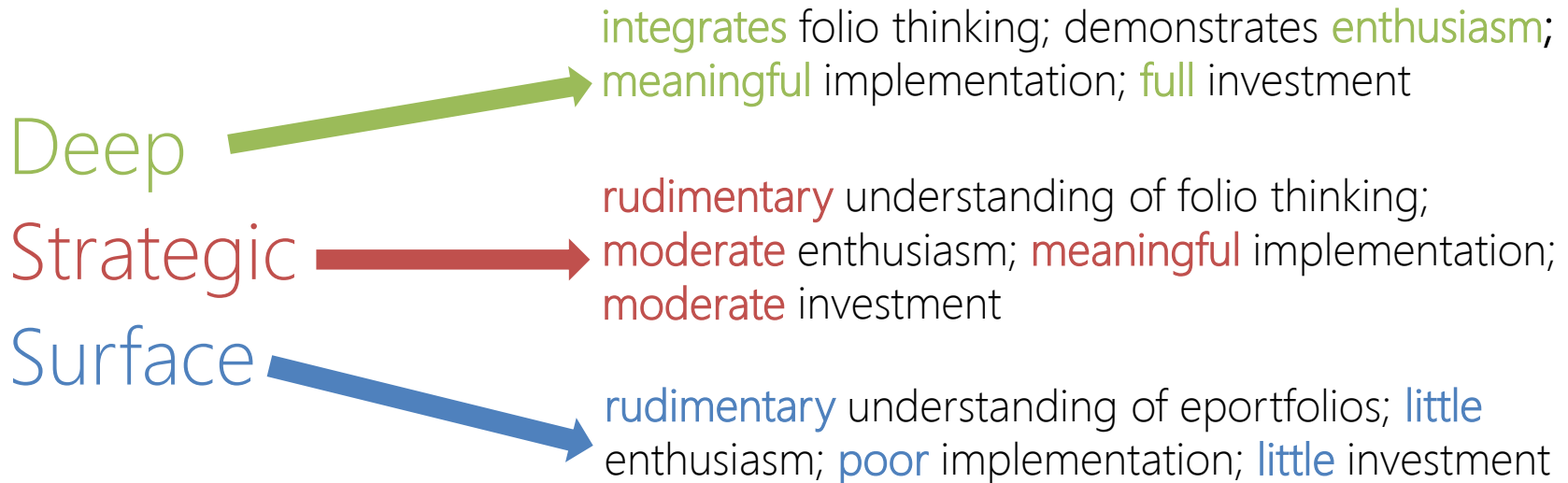
Problematizing eportfolio research

Community of Inquiry

Social Presence

Supporting Discourse

Cognitive Presence

Educational Experience

Setting Climate

Selecting Content

Teaching Presence

Communication Medium
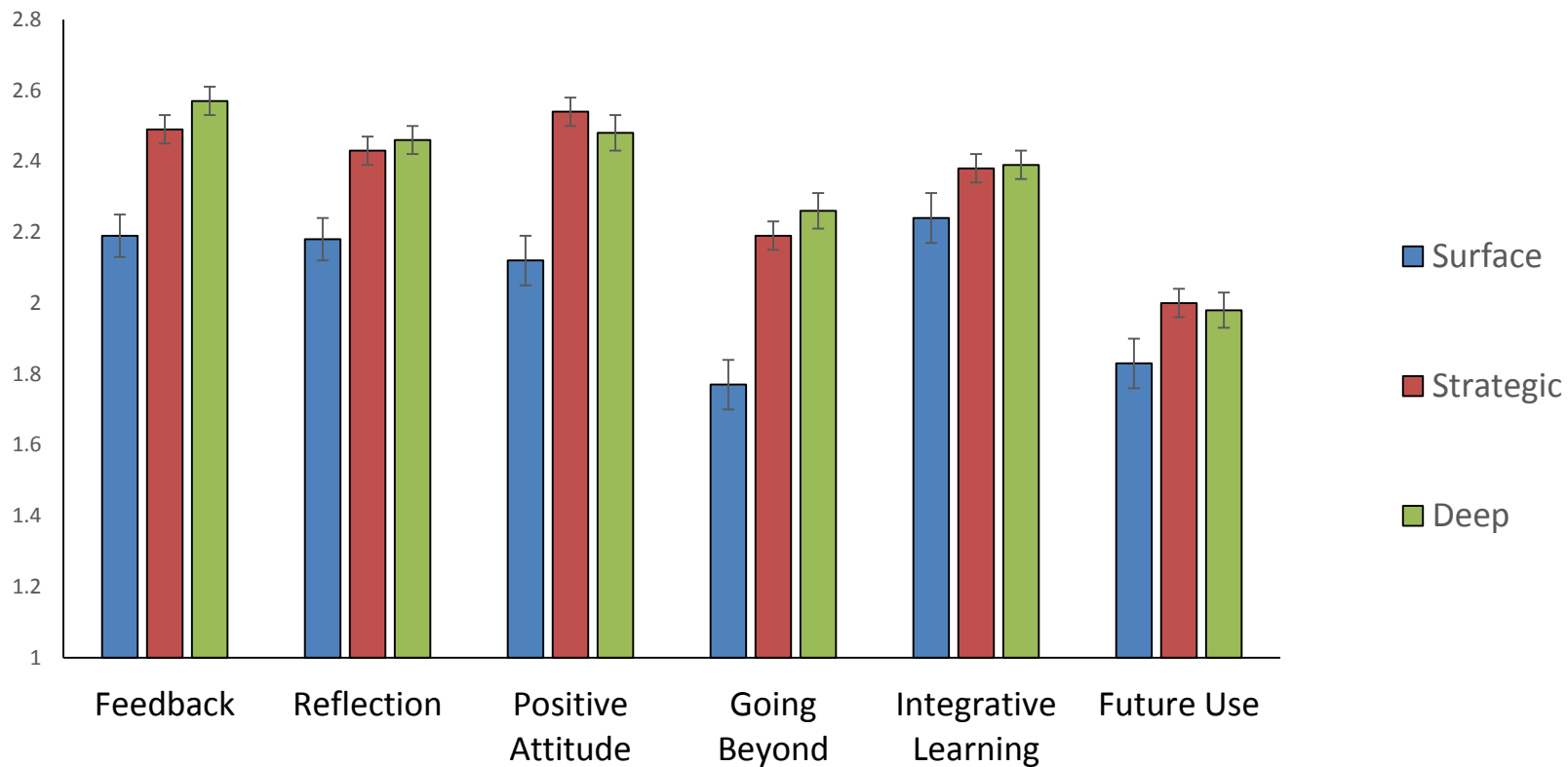
Teaching Presence - "interaction and discourse play a key role in higher-order learning but not without structure (design) and leadership (facilitation & direction)"

Focus on the instructor's role

Can we classify the instructor's own positioning towards the eportfolio implementation?

integrates folio thinking; demonstrates enthusiasm; meaningful implementation; full investment

Deep

rudimentary understanding of folio thinking; moderate enthusiasm; meaningful implementation; moderate investment

Strategic

Surface

rudimentary understanding of eportfolios; little enthusiasm; poor implementation; little investment

Scale from 1-4

Your thoughts?

While we firmly believe that eportfolios are more than a plug-and- play technology, we believe that effective implementation involves more than good pedagogical design.

Teaching presence/personal investment is critical.

What thoughts do you have on other factors that may play a role in successful eportfolio implementation?

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