How much is enough?

Communicating expectations in eportfolio usage

The study

- to what extent students and instructors are agreeing 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, and;
- how does the communication of expectations influence the success of eportfolios as a form of assessment?

- intensive focus groups and interviews with three classes at University of Waterloo using eportfolios
- end of term survey distributed to all classes using eportfolios (N = 16)
- research situated within the Connect to Learning project, analyzing ePortfolio efficacy internationally

Katherine   **Crystal**   **Kyle**

Why eportfolios?

- What benefits do we see when incorporating ePortfolio activities?

- Documenting evidence of learning
- Making learning visible – supporting the process of learning (meta-cognition)
- Help students integrate learning from curricular, co-curricular, extra-curricular environments (academic, workplace, social environments)
- Growth and development
- Deep learning
- Engaged learning
- Reflection on content and making connections

The quest for alignment

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Creativity
Professionalism
Determination
Passion
Innovation
Entrepreneur

Anson Chan

Biography

My name is Anson Chan. I was born in Toronto, Canada but raised in Hong Kong. Growing up as the oldest amongst my sibling and cousins, I was expected to be adept at any tasks that were given to me. I was also enrolled in many different extracurricular activities on top of my studies. As a result, piano, painting, swimming, table tennis, basketball, and soccer were all part of my life while growing up. During my life in Hong Kong, I went to school in the Canadian International School of Hong Kong (CDNIS), a private school that is operated under the standards of the International Baccalaureate and also the Ontario Secondary School Diploma. After graduating from middle school, my family decided to move back to Toronto for a new start. After three years of high school in A.Y. Jackson, I was successfully accepted to the University of Waterloo. I am about to graduate with a degree majoring in Economics specializing in Finance within the Arts and Business discipline.

Although Hong Kong was a big part of my life, Canada has become the second home to me. After living in Canada for eight years, I learned to embrace the weather, culture and pace. As a person that enjoys eating, the diversity of Canada has allowed me to enjoy a variety of authentic delicacies. As a big fan of films such as Star Wars, The Matrix and CGI films from Pixar since my adolescence, my curiosity sparked my hobby of playing with post-processing tools such as Final Cut, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe After Effects and Autodesk Maya 3D. Besides fidgeting around with media programs, I also enjoy playing video games, reading books and hanging out with my buddies in a bar. Basketball is also a big part of my life as I occasionally play intramurals and pick-up games with my team weekly. As a citizen of Canada that enjoys basketball, it is an obligation for me to cheer for the Toronto Raptors, as they are the only Canadian basketball team in the NBA. Though their continual

Welcome to my ePortfolio. I want to take this opportunity to share some of my growth, experiences, and thoughts through my undergraduate years in the University of Waterloo. This will be an improvement and upgrade to my previous ePortfolio from ARBUS 300.

Anson Chan

Hometown
Toronto, Ontario

Contact Information

Email
a67chan@uwaterloo.ca

HELLO I'M VICTORIA
I LOVE ART & THERAPEUTIC RECREATION

ABOUT

Download My Resume

ABOUT ME

I grew up in Alliston, Ontario and have one sibling; my sister

WHAT I'VE DONE

I volunteered for four years with Candlelighters Simcoe when I

WHAT I DO

I am currently the manager of the Recreation and Leisure Wellness

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The quest for alignment

- connection between student expectations and instructor expectations
  - need for alignment to ensure students and instructor envision similar goals, instructions, and learning benefits
- challenge is to encourage students to concentrate on growth and development, making connections
  - students often focus on content
  - misalignment often occurs
- need to value the innovative instructional method

Those who don't see the value

- "Don't tell me how to use the tools... just tell me what they do... easily the most consistently frustrating experience of my academic life... I don't need a Rube Goldberg obstacle course to hand in my assignment... this devalues the work that I've actually done" (Survey Response - 1st year course)

Those who "do" see the value

- "I was able to reflect and make connections to the modules through my learning and personal experiences... it is a good source for reflections and making good connections to the work you are learning" (Survey Response - 1st year course)

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Examples of alignment
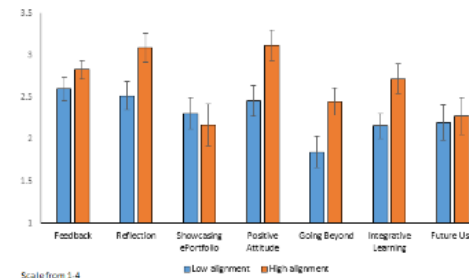
Goals and Perceptions of the ePortfolio activity

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

Student Attitudes towards ePortfolio activity

	Sample survey items
Feedback	My peers/classmates provided useful feedback on my ePortfolio.
Reflection	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	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	I enjoyed building my ePortfolio. The ePortfolio was an important part of this course.
Going Beyond	I went beyond what was required for the course (e.g., creating extra pages or posting my own links, text, or photos).
Integrative learning	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	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**	.41*	-.25*	-.41*	-.21	-.30*	-.18
Reflective Learner	-.30*	-.33*	-.11	-.33	-.14	-.38**	-.33
Outside School	-.40*	-.40**	-.18	-.44**	-.26*	-.33*	-.14
Community	-.23*	-.23*	-.03	-.23*	-.27	-.46**	-.13
Education	-.24*	-.51**	-.30**	-.44**	-.38*	-.27*	-.33*
Career	-.22	-.48**	-.29**	-.37**	-.29**	-.41*	-.41*
Synthesize Ideas	-.42**	-.58**	-.33*	-.61**	-.22**	-.48**	-.43**
Writing	.44*	.57**	.41*	.38**	.34**	.47**	.49**
Understand Selves	-.24*	-.56**	-.43*	-.47**	-.37**	-.50**	-.48**
Teamwork	-.30*	-.47**	-.30*	-.33*	-.35**	-.51**	-.41**

*p < .05   **p < .001   †p < .10

Scale from 1-4   ■ Low alignment   ■ High alignment

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Writing	-.44*	-.57**	-.42*	-.38**	-.54**	-.67**	-.46**
Understand Selves	-.24†	-.56**	-.43*	-.47**	-.37**	-.50**	-.48**
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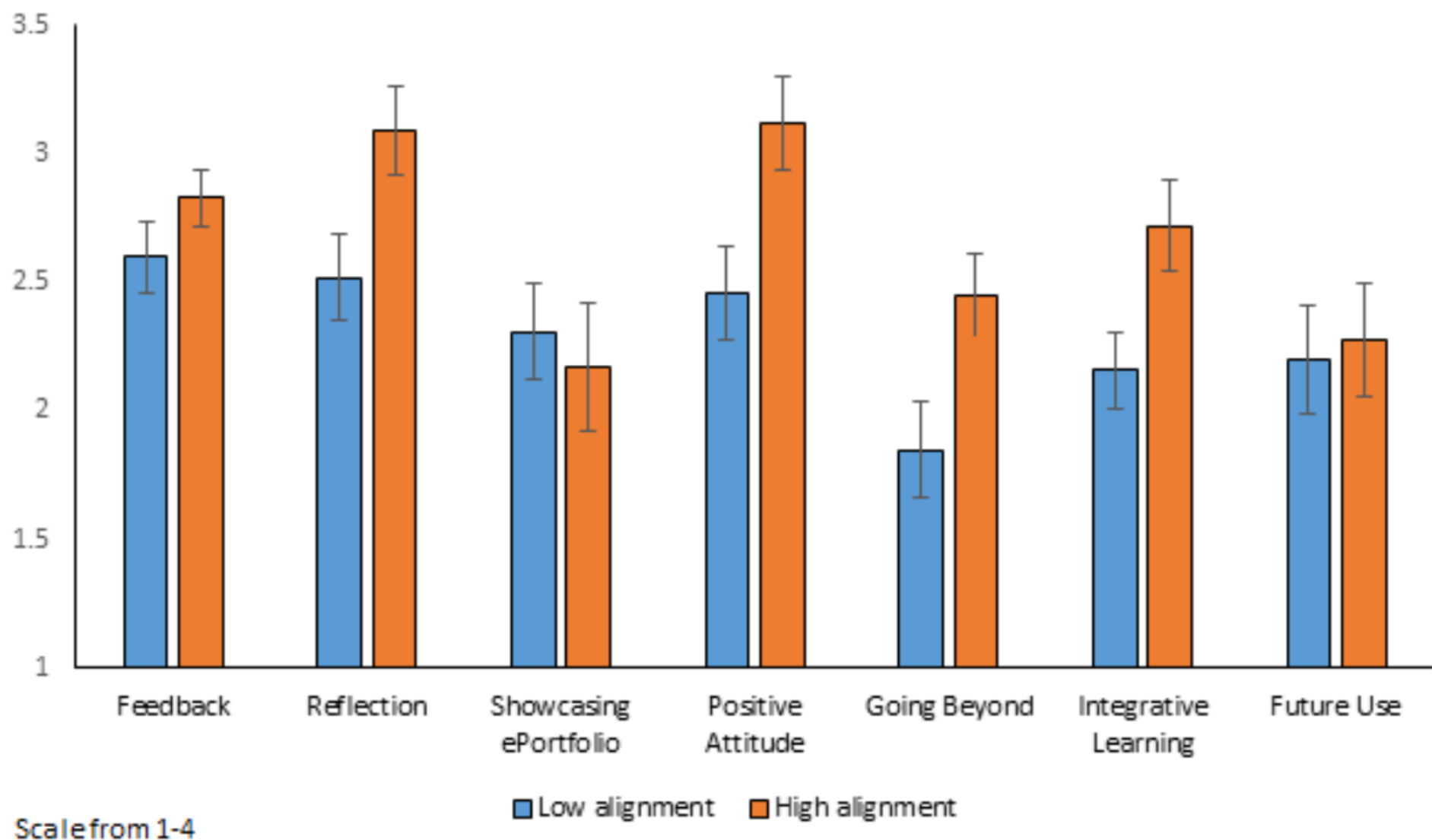
Making sense of alignment - High quality high impact practices

- Intentionality
- Transparency
- Interaction
- Reflection (adopted from Felten, 2013)

  - when expectations and outcomes surrounding these practices are aligned, the ePortfolio activity is likely to be more successful

Intentionality

student experience with a high-impact practice needs to be coherent and educationally purposeful. It's not just 'time on task' but rather meaningful time on task

- "Connected strongly with course content, helped the learning process in this course along. Worked well for reflections and applied to the course content. It was good, but it would only work if it was the sort of course where reflections were relevant to the course material" (Survey Response - 1st year course)

- "It was a lot of work but in the end the final product is great. Glad I spent the time and effort" (Survey Response - 2nd year course)

- "They made use of teamwork and leadership skills by placing us as a team that needed to get this done. Creativity-wise, it helped me develop some of my skills and learn new things as well. I was pushed to critically think and discover results through doing my own research on things we hadn't ever learned in any class at UW." (Focus group - 4th year course)

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Transparency

goals and components of the practice need to be understood by students. Transparency enhances student motivation and helps students connect their learning to other experiences

- "I thought it was a great experience because I learned so much about myself and my goals in the future. It was more than just an assignment for [course] it was about who I am and who I hope to become in the future" (Survey response - 2nd year course)

- "I got to explore many aspects that were involved in the field that I wanted to, or could potentially, work in. I got more experience in article search, as well as improving my writing skills." (Survey response - 1st year course)

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Interaction

experience should support meaningful interaction not only between students and faculty, but also potentially with others including peers and community partners

- "the student mentioned that they exchanged Facebook information afterwards and now she has another friend on campus" (Focus group - 1st year course)

- "the comments from the instructor help see my weaknesses while learning the foreign Language. I have now a different perspective of what I should keep practicing or working on to improve myself in the courseware or for the future when I want to continue with the language" (Survey response - 2nd year course)

- "my peers were able to edit my work and i was able to edit there's. This enabled me to get ideas from my peer's work to improve my own" (Survey response - 1st year course)

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Reflection

structured reflection should occur throughout the duration of learning experience, not just at the end, to help students make sense of their developing knowledge, skills, and understandings

- "It helped me clarify my ideas of who I am as a person and organize them into a way that someone other than myself might understand them" (Survey response - 4th year course)

- "eportfolios should be updated regularly as I face new experiences in order to reflect on the life that I am currently living and give a more accurate response to different experiences" (Survey response - 2nd year course)

- "students would be able to... achieve a better understanding of who they are as a person as well as the goals they would like to aim for within their lives" (Survey response - 2nd year course)

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Revisiting best practices and final thoughts

- **Intentionality** - be explicit about student expectations and remind them throughout the term; make explicit connection between learning outcomes and the eportfolio activity

- **Transparency** - instructors need to be aware of why they are implementing the activity; students should perceive the value of the assignment

- **Interaction** - build in opportunities for interaction either within the ePortfolio, or about the ePortfolio between students

- **Reflection** - reward students who focus on growth and development & making connections between course concepts and skills learnt; provide students the space *throughout* the term/program to reflect

- **Valuing the experience** - students should engage in activities that members of the discipline would and that they deem important; if students do not see the relevance or the value of the experience, or lack autonomy to complete the assignment in the way that they choose, they may not be engaged or motivated

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