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# E-PORTFOLIO AS A FINAL ASSESSMENT FOR A GRADUATE ONLINE COURSE IN PANDEMIC

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**ABSTRACT:**The e-portfolio assessments become a meaningful reflection tool in education. In this study, e-portfolio was utilized as final-assessments to students for an online graduate course during the COVID-19 pandemic of a normal university in Mainland China. Students created E-portfolios according to learning goals with different aspects of the course. The purpose of this study was to assess and analyze student's reflections on those aspects. Despite the original design of e-portfolio for final assessments to students, they were, in return, final assessments for the course and the teacher.

*Keywords –e-portfolio, online course, reflection, English learning, technology*

## I.          INTRODUCTION

In a graduate course, students are encouraged to study independently and actively. However, to motivate students' learning, instruction, and assessment methods could differ between undergraduate students and graduate students. For graduate students, flexible and reflective assessment of their learning attainments in their summative assessment is more meaningful to their learning toward future career development as a pre-service teacher's education. (Buzzetto-More, 2010)For designing alternative assessments for flexible learning, students can decide their tasks and demonstrate their achievement or attainment by utilizing mediational tools. For instance, digital media such as hypermedia, social media, and other internet technologies can be integrated into a graduate course's summative assessment. (Beetham, 2007)According to Beetham (2007), e-portfolios "allow learners to collate evidence of their achievements in a way that is highly personal." (p. 33) However, certain technology proficiency is required for producing online contains by using internet technologies. Considering the mediation tool to be chosen, students' reflection can be more meaningful for the foundation of reflective narration (Babaee, 2020) and the final-evaluating evaluation course.(Hay & Hongying, 2019; Lorenzo & Ittelson, 2005; Mason, Pegler, & Weller, 2004; Park & Lim, 2007) In this study, we integrated electronic presentation software for student's learning reflection in e-portfolio as the final assessment for a graduate course for investigating graduate students' reflective thinking through final e-portfolio assessment for an online course during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## II.          LITERATURE REVIEW

An E-portfolio is defined as "a digitized collection of artifacts including demonstrations, resources, and accomplishments that represent an individual, group, or institution." (Reese & Levy, 2009, p. 2) It also capable of empowering students to "enhance teaching, learning, and assessment practices." (Lorenzo & Ittelson, 2005, p. 2)In other words, an e-portfolio can be used as a learning and assessment tool with considerations of time, method, and evaluator.(SFSU, n/a)E-profile can be serviced for different purposes, such as developing instruction, recording acquisition, monitoring a program, seeking a job, assessing a course, and tracking and estimating performance. Furthermore, to be utilized to "showcase accomplishments" (Lorenzo & Ittelson, 2005, p. 2) and can be used "with learning objects for end of course assessment." (Mason et al., 2004, p. 720) For a teacher to assess student's learning achievement reflected through e-portfolio, it can be used for a student to reflect their learning and thoughts with an approach of course objectives; therefore, course learning objectives become the standard and tool at the same time for understanding a student's mastery of learning content.

E-portfolio is for students' reflections. E-portfolio can provide students opportunities for improving their academic skills and reflective actions and pedagogical exercise, reflective mean. (Babaee, 2020) Steps for creating an e-portfolio are depicted as collect, select, reflect, and connect; besides, all of them are meant for reflection. (Parkes, Dredger, & Hicks, 2013) In the sept of reflect, students manipulate with concepts of what they learned. Students compose their stories for the representation of their experiences and learning

transformation. Students tell their constructed understandings into concrete artifacts with digital technologies. It is a process of transformation from knowing to showing and teaching. (Babaee, 2020; Parkes et al., 2013)

Working with the concepts of critical incidents or well-remembered events, students begin to construct slices of evidence-based narrative reflections that describe how their experiences have influenced their transformation from content specialist to the content teacher. Especially it happened during the difficult time that the pandemic that brings students and teachers in the distance. Because of that, communication between each other became very important.

## III.        METHODOLOGY

The design of this research is based on a discourse analysis qualitative research design with Cultural-historical perspectives.

The study was done during the pandemic from February through July in 2020 with an online graduate course with a normal university in Mainland China. The course is Curriculum and Instruction (Learning Design and Technology). Due to the pandemic, the university is closed for prevention. Students were asked to stay home and took a course online. The instructor designed this course with multiple online technologies such as video conferencing for synchronized course instruction, social communication, and asynchronized learning management system with all 59 graduate students. This course also invited scholars from Taiwan, the United States, and Thailand for joint lectures.

This course was taught in whole English with video conferencing for three credit hours every session. Students were required to attend this course online by using ZOOM. Other learning management systems and social communication software were used, as well. For class, material distribution and asynchronized discussions were done with Rain Classroom. Social communication was done through QQ Messenger as a course group or between individuals.

Fifty-nine participants were from the Graduate Institute of College of Education Science with two majors: Primary Education and Curriculum and Instruction. Most of them were recent graduates, and two of them were in-service teachers. Participants were coded and presented in this study for deification protection.

E-portfolio were produced as final assessments for this course by using PowerPoint or other presentation software packages. PowerPoint or other presentation software was chosen for the e-portfolio because of the following reasons:

1.  There were no online e-portfolio systems for students to construct or maintain. Unlike most online systems used in other higher education institutions, this participating university has no such system available to be utilized. There was no institutional learning management system, such as Moodle or Blackboard available for students and teachers to collaborate online. As described earlier, all the teaching and learning activities were done through different online systems available, such as QQ Messenger, Rain Classroom, and ZOOM.

2. PowerPoint and other presentation software provide sufficient functionality for creating an interactive multimedia e-portfolio similar to what we have online. PowerPoint and other presentation software provide functions such as text editing, multimedia insertion, hyperlink creation, and animation. Those functions are sufficient for creating a content-rich e-portfolio to materialize their concepts and ideas generated throughout the course.

3.  Easy access and economy were in consideration. Because students commonly used PowerPoint and other presentation software for various courses. Students did not need to spend extra money and time for getting access and familiar with. Thus, students can be more focused on the idea and content; therefore, the reflection was revealed with less effort.

Before the end of the semester, students were given a suggested guideline for the e-portfolio content. The purpose of the content was not to limit students' imagination and creativity but to be used as a reflection tool. The student was asked to provide the following information:

1. Who are you?
2. What are your learning goals for this course?
3. What have you done for this course?
4. How did you learn what you want to learn?
5. What is your favorite subject in this course?
6. Others. (anything else you want to show me your learning achievements).
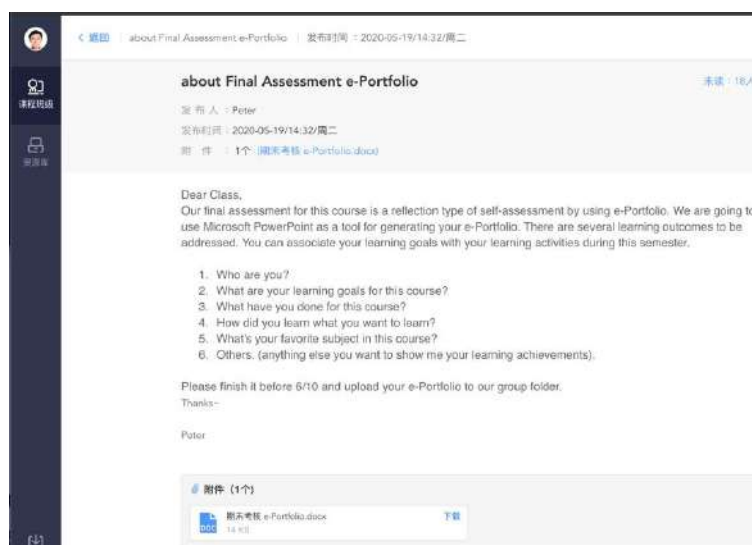
In this study, students' reflections on the learning objective were analyzed and other social-cultural issues. According to the learning objective for an outcome:

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:
1. Use instructional technology to promote and stimulate learners' creativity and creativity.
2. Learn and develop advanced learning experiences and intelligent assessment.
3. Courses and teaching of modern workplace work and learning models.
4. Promote and shape the identities and responsibilities of digital technology citizens.
5. Recognize continuing education and continuous professional growth and maintain expertise in applying educational technology in curriculum and teaching.

Reflections from student's e-portfolio were analyzed with the artifacts embedded within each of those e-portfolios. Media integration was not restricted; therefore, students were encouraged to use text, hyperlinks, pictures, sound, and video to demonstrate their ideas.

Data were collected upon students' submission as their final assessment for this course. E-portfolio files were sent by email to the instructor using email due to the lack of homework submission functionality from Rain Course.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The reflections from students' e-portfolios were done through themes from guidelines. With answers for each guideline, students reveal their feelings and thoughts by using functions as artifacts through PowerPoint and other presentation software.

**4.1 Who are you?**
As a graduate course for graduate-level teacher's preparation program, students were expected to put them into a curriculum and instruction context that could be meaningful for their career development.

Names, identification numbers, major, and English names were commonly reported, as well as age, hobbies, favorite movies, future occupations, opinions, experiences, and philosophies about education. Some of the students included their profile photos as identifications. In general, this section reflected their learning experiences with the course.

"My undergraduate major is finance, which is not very relevant to education. However, in my study last semester, I have already studied relevant courses about the Curriculum and Instruction. I also have my understanding and thinking on this aspect." (ST 9025, p.4)

"I think education should pay attention to people and pay attention to people's success. The purpose of low-level education is to enable children to base themselves on society and, more importantly, to make people perfect as independent individuals while paying attention to external rules and regulations and guiding students' inner self-care. No longer regard education as a means to achieve a certain utilitarian purpose, but as a lifelong journey of practice." (ST 9024, p.3)

"If the student is to be completed the book, the teacher is the book's editor, responsible for typography, so that the book is orderly and perfect." (ST 9022, p.4)

"I am gentle, careful and methodical, with some obsessive-compulsive disorder and cleanliness." (ST 9041, p.5)

"I come from Yan Cheng, majoring in computer science technology in my undergraduate. But i don't like something about data, I love things relative to human beings." (ST 9057, p.3)

Students also reflected on their life goals. Although it sounded not very academic, that is the fundamental beliefs of themselves.

"Another goal of my life is to be a cool man! Like other girls, I like taking pictures. This photo only shows my cleverness. Just like the writing on the wall, I believe that our future must be bright, and our dreams will be realized at that time. I hope my students want me to be a teacher and be a friend because of the common ground. Therefore, I need to learn more about young people from now on." (ST 9038, p.5)

"I like being (to be) with my family best, no matter what." (ST 9067, p.4)

Self-awareness of deficit can be a meaningful reflection when reflecting on the student's self-evaluation.

"I do not have much experience in internships and education, but I like children and education." (ST 9076, p.3)

"There was no good answer for a while. I am just a mediocre female student. Although I am studying pedagogy, I still have a dream of becoming a garden designer. I like animals, but I do not have pets. Occasionally negative, but I still love life." (ST 9071, p.4)

Forms of representation were different in three categories, photographic, column, and narrative. Students used photography to demonstrate themselves and some thoughts associated with those photos and themselves.



Overall, the reflection on themselves was limited from e-portfolios, with a majority of facts reports. Also, there were thirteen of them who did not even have this section depicted in their e-portfolios.

## 4.2 What are your learning goals for this course?
Learning goals are broader concepts, and they are used as a meta-cognitive tool for self-learning regulations.

### 4.2.1 English language learning
Because this course was taught in whole English, students had difficulty following the instructor's instruction; therefore, most students reflect goals of understanding course content in English and communicating in English.

### 4.2.2 Applying learning theories
The content of this course was curriculum and instruction with a focus on learning design and technology. Practices driven by theories were reflected as a goal for students. "Put theory into practice" was often mentioned by students.

### 4.2.3Applying tools and applications in education
For students, educational technologies were one of the cores of this course. Some students were eager to used technologies more meaningfully in their future teaching careers.

However, all students had goals of "learning," "understanding," "reviewing," and "knowing" as their action verbs. It is vivid that they wanted to learn but had no concrete idea of why and where to apply. The verb "applying" was also used often, but it was usually not followed by a specific task.

### 4.3 What have you done for this course?
Students listed out the tasks and assignments they had done for this course; however, some students reflected on language deficiencies in English communication.

"Although I often gave up the opportunity to communicate with the teacher due to my poor oral expression ability, I still needed to make more efforts in this aspect. In the process of group discussion, I also try to use English for discussion, although sometimes I use translation software." (ST 9033, p.5)

"Practice my English. When learning theoretical knowledge, combine what I have learned before with the knowledge in class." (ST 9035, p.9)

"Although I often cannot understand the course content, I tried my best to comprehend. My English level is a little poor; when I speak English, I cannot remember lots of words. I do not want to make a fool of myself; therefore, I did not open the microphone and express my thought. Although I don't feel guilty, it reminds me that it is time to improve my English indeed." (ST 9039, p.8)

### 4.4 How did you learn what you want to learn?
This section was designed for students to reflect on their own learning strategies. Some students converted the question into "my learning methods" which was perfectly matching our original design and was discussed in before, during, after, and classmates' discussions "off-line." (ST 9041, p.11-12)
"Listen class to take notes, find out what you do not understand, understand the content of this course, and find information." (ST 9039, p.10)
"My English is not very good, so I will translate the content of the PPT into Chinese by software, and continue to study after class." (ST 9043, p.11)
"watch TV plays for improve English." (ST 9044, p.10)

Overall, most students had strategies of dealing with English deficiency alone with self-study; however, none of the students reflected a strategy of communicating with the teacher. In fact, during the semester, only two students frequently communicated with the teacher in English. In addition to the language issue, none of the student had clear idea of "what you want to learn."

### 4.5 What's your favorite subject in this course?
In this section, students reflected on their interest in learning subjects within the course. The reflected artifacts showed their depths of meaning assigned to certain subjects.

#### 4.5.1 Educational Games
"My favorite subject among this course is game. As you know, we students are over 20 years old mostly, so I believe the kids in primary school like games, too. So, I plan to set game-time in primary school teaching, as game could concentrate kids' attentions and make them focus on teachers' teaching." (ST 9044, p.12)
"Kahoot!! It was so much fun! I'm going to choose the blue ,did I get that right?" (ST 9053, p.22)

#### 4.5.2 ADDIE model
"My favorite subject in this course is the Instructional Design Models and Theories, especially the ADDIE model. I think it is very practical. I will also use the ADDIE model in the actual teaching design, or reflect on the rationality of my teaching design through this model." (ST 9045, p. 13)
"My favorite subject is the instructional design model, and ADDIE impressed me most. This theory has given me a deeper understanding of the systematic and coherent nature of curriculum design. There are four main reasons why I like it." (ST 9050, p.14)

#### 4.5.3 Topics from foreign scholars
In our course, we have several sessions of connecting to different scholars around the world to joint discussions. We have invited scholars from Taiwan, USA, and Thailand.
"Dr Donoghue's (from San Francisco State University) speech is not only very interesting, but also of great practical value. This will be of great help to new teachers who are about to enter the teaching post." (ST 9046, p.19)

#### 4.5.4 Learning theories
"I like the learning theories of the third week best, which can teach teachers to master students' learning through basic principles. Learning theory can give students a deep understanding of the basis of learning, according to the situation in the learning process, to find out the solution to the problem." (ST 9051, p.17)

**4.6 Others (anything else you want to show me your learning achievements)**

In our course, we have several sessions of connecting to different scholars worldwide to join discussions. We have invited scholars from Taiwan, the USA, and Thailand.

"First of all, I'd like to say thank you. What I learned in this course is not theoretical knowledge (because sometimes I didn't understand it). More is your optimistic attitude, with a smile to face the students, even if we cannot see the situation.Secondly, games can be used to narrow the distance between students and test the learning effect of students. Finally, thank you for inviting several foreign professors, so that we feel the different academic atmosphere. I'm honored to be your student." (ST 9052, p.7)

"Kahoot!! Thanks to the teacher for letting me know about this amazing website, I am learning how to use this website, I believe that with it my students are full of interest." (ST 9053, p.21)

"Relaxed. Your classroom is relaxing, so that people can learn theoretical knowledge in a very relaxed atmosphere without any pressure.

Joyful. You often bring us a lot of joy in class, so we often harvest happiness in your class!

Active. You often design various game links in class, so that we can have time to relax, we can feel the energy in your class!" (ST 9054, p.24)

"Despite the special situation this year and the online teaching method, I am still very grateful to teacher Peter. I have learned a lot from his class. Although I could not keep up with the teacher's pace in the first few classes, I could also keep up with the teacher after listening more, and I felt that my English level was gradually improving. The teacher will use games to test our learning situation and combine teaching with fun. I like Peter's class very much." (ST 9068, p.9)

# V.    CONCLUSION

During the pandemic, teaching online was different from other times. There was always a holdback for creating activities for students to explore and achieve, of course, content under the shadow of COVID-19. Students were restricted to be at home and could not go out freely for months in Mainland China. The reflections from students' e-portfolios had revealed their learning desire, process, and achievements, as well as their own opinions on the course itself. Despite the original design of e-portfolio for final assessments to students, they were, in return, final assessments for the course and the teacher.

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