

Exploring health science learner experiences of formative and summative feedback through ePortfolios



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Using a collective case study approach, we investigated learners' experiences of using an ePortfolio to receive feedback within three health science programmes.

Study aims

- Develop an understanding of the impact of using an ePortfolio for feedback on the learning experience;
- Build a rich picture of actual learner experiences of engagement with feedback through an ePortfolio;
- Develop guidelines and case studies for educators to improve learner engagement with feedback.

Methods

- Online forms gathered data regarding use of ePortfolio for feedback and assessment from Radiography, Physiotherapy and Nursing tutors;
- Focus groups facilitated access to learners' views, perceptions and experiences regarding feedback through an ePortfolio.

Case study	Focus groups
1. BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography forms, blogs, webfolio (PDP) Formative and summative	Group 1 (yr4): 4 females, 1 male, mean age 30.8 Group 2 (yr2): 3 males, mean age 42.6 Group 3 (yr3): 3 females, 1 male, mean age 28.7
2. MSc Physiotherapy (pre-registration) Webfolio summative	Group 4 (yr2): 4 females, 3 males, mean age: 30.3
3. BSc Nursing Webfolio Summative	Group 5 (yr4): 6 females, mean age 23.8 Group 6 (yr4): 6 females, mean age 22.5

Key findings

- Learner understanding and expectations of feedback concurred with emerging research;
- Initial experiences of ePortfolio for feedback were found to be similar to traditional methods.

Importantly – ePortfolio can be used to facilitate an **on-going assessment dialogue** between tutors and students, supporting learners to:

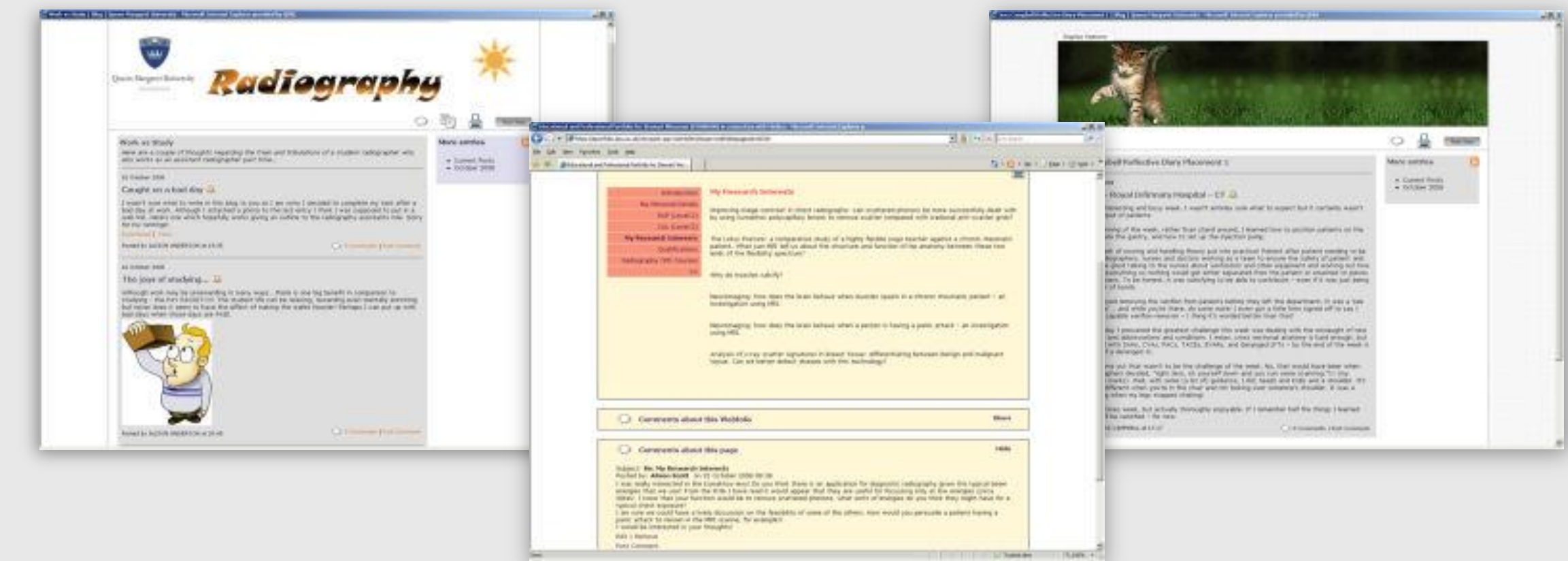
- Store, collect and collate feedback from across their programme of studies;
- Reflect regularly on this collated feedback to deepen learning and encourage self-regulation.

Benefits of ePortfolio for feedback

- Immediate and permanent;
- Accessible anywhere with internet connection;
- Digital notification;
- Single location for storage;
- Targeted and focused – enhanced contextualisation when linked to specific section;
- Transferability – technical and as part of CPD.

Potential barriers

- Preference for face-to-face contact;
- Technical issues;
- Inappropriate timing of introduction of tool;
- Inconsistency regarding alignment of marking criteria.



Recommendations

Development of an on-going assessment dialogue¹ requires tutors to clarify the:

- Link between the assessment and learning outcomes of the module;
- Link between the assessment, the assessment criteria and feedback;
- Purpose and role of feedback;
- Learner benefits of engaging with feedback throughout a programme of study.

Tutors should be cognisant of the:

- Emotional investment learners attach to their assessments;
- Importance of maintaining communication channels.

Essential considerations:

- Timeliness of student orientation with tool;
- Consistency and clarity of feedback location;
- Reminding learners to use feedback and of its role in their development.

References

[1] Carless, D. 2008. Differing perceptions in the feedback process. *Studies in Higher Education*, 31 (2) pp. 219-233.