

## **ePortfolios for assessment and learning: student perceptions, opportunities and challenges arising from Curtin University's iPortfolio use in diverse disciplines**

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ePortfolios are playing an increasingly important role in both university and employment contexts. This paper provides background on iPortfolio, Curtin's bespoke ePortfolio system and a discussion of three case studies chosen to illustrate the diverse uses of iPortfolio across different disciplines. The implications for assessment and learning are also presented. ePortfolios have the potential to be a valuable learning and teaching tool in a variety of settings including use with large student cohorts, particularly in first year when they are introduced, facilitating subsequent learning and professional development within the university context. iPortfolio illustrates the use of a new technology to encourage course-wide learning and reflection with links to developing and substantiating graduate attributes, all of which contribute to student engagement.

The paper explores student perceptions of using iPortfolio within the student-learning environment. This includes linking to assessable tasks, opportunities for reflection on work-integrated learning and the student experience. Case studies drawn from geology and health sciences illustrate the diversity of iPortfolio usage within a student-focused learning environment. The case studies discuss the implications and considerations of iPortfolio implementation for formative assessment and feedback, summative assessment with large first year cohorts as well as opportunities for final year students to reflect upon and record their professional practice experience.

Curtin's iPortfolio provides a dynamic environment for students to assess their achievement of graduate attributes and engage in self and peer evaluation. In a world increasingly dependent on Web 2.0 technologies, graduates of the future need to be able to reflect on their learning and present themselves in digital as well as face-to-face contexts. Using iPortfolio can assist students in developing graduate attributes throughout a degree and building greater employability. As with any new learning environment, authentic assessment is evolving. The paper concludes with a discussion on the limitations, lessons learnt so far and the potential future use and rewards from adopting ePortfolios within university teaching environments.

**Keywords:** eportfolios, student engagement, reflective practice

**Conference Themes:**  Practical solutions  Student Engagement

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## Introduction

The Australian higher education sector, like its counterparts in the United States and the United Kingdom, is entering a period of increased accountability (Coates, 2010a; Ewell, 2010; Harris & Webb, 2010). The forthcoming establishment of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) will mean increasing emphasis on assuring standards of achievement in generic and discipline capabilities (Hawke, 2011; Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, 2011). This regulatory environment builds on a tradition of quality assurance and course accreditation by professional bodies in many disciplines. While degree programs have different and unique learning outcomes, universities in Australia generally focus on encouraging their graduates to achieve common attributes that generally fall into seven main clusters (Oliver, 2011). These common attributes, which include communication skills, learning and working independently and collaboratively, and ethical engagement with communities, cultures and nations, are frequently embedded in discipline and professional learning outcomes.

While it is commonly acknowledged that assessment drives learning, assessment of large cohorts and focus on generic graduate attributes is contentious and challenging (Coates, 2010a, 2010b; James, McInnis, & Devlin, 2002; Knight & Page, 2007). Excessive use of summative assessment through traditional testing and measurement techniques has the potential to encourage surface approaches to learning (Ramsden, 2003). Yorke (2008) claims, furthermore, that traditional summative assessment practices need urgent attention and that measuring student learning, particularly of 'wicked' generic attributes, is flawed and should give way to judgements based on evidence. Shifting the emphasis from teacher-led summative approaches to student-led evidence approaches, according to Yorke (2008), is a key to fixing assessment and better preparing students for employability. The student should be challenged to present a mixture of evidence, which 'would require the collation of a portfolio of achievements' (Yorke, 2008, p. 189).

Yorke's promotion of the concept of portfolio approaches to assessment of achievement is not new to practitioners in Australia and worldwide who are adopting electronic portfolios, or ePortfolios (Chen & Light, 2010; Hallam, Harper, McAllister, Hauville, & Creagh, 2010; Joyes, Gray, & Hartnell-Young, 2009). These are generally commercial products, aspects of existing learning management systems or tailored systems (Hallam et al., 2008). Curtin University developed an electronic portfolio, called iPortfolio, for use by students and staff in 2009 (Oliver, von Konsky, Jones, Ferns, & Tucker, 2009). Following pilot testing, it was implemented in February 2010, with student uptake predominantly driven by use in formal assessment. iPortfolio is in use in all four faculties of the university. A particular feature of this bespoke system is its focus on graduate attributes for employability and lifelong learning (Oliver et al., 2009). iPortfolio's tab structure enables aggregation of reflections and corresponding evidence.

iPortfolio is a tool that affords teaching staff new ways to design and shape the curriculum focus through assessment practices. It is particularly advantageous for managing known challenges such as large classes, first year and capstone transition pedagogies, and student engagement. Longitudinal studies of the first year experience in Australian higher education (James, Krause, & Jennings, 2010; Krause, Hartley, James, & McInnis, 2005), have long pointed to the need to reform assessment practices to facilitate successful engagement with commencing students. Kift's *First year curriculum principles: Articulating a transition pedagogy* makes reference to engagement and assessment, particularly the importance of enabling active and collaborative learning, promoting learning communities through active and interactive learning opportunities and providing other opportunities for peer-to-peer collaboration and teacher-student interaction (Kift, 2009). It is also seen as critical, especially in the first year curriculum, that 'students should receive regular, formative evaluations of their work early in their program of study to aid their learning and to provide feedback to both students and staff on student progress and achievement' (Kift, 2009).

Portfolio systems that enable collaboration, feedback and self and peer assessment have a role to play in catalysing these principles. Such self-managing learning spaces build on several principles of good feedback practice, including: clarifying what is good performance; facilitating the development of self-assessment (reflection) in learning; delivering high quality information to students about their learning; and providing opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Portfolio approaches also have the potential to enact the assessment propositions of Boud: in best assessment practice, 'students and teachers become responsible partners in learning and assessment ... students progressively

take responsibility for assessment and feedback processes ...students develop and demonstrate the ability to judge the quality of their own work and the work of others against agreed standards' (Boud, 2010).

ePortfolios, as one of the newer technologies within the university teaching and learning environment, have the potential to provide practical solutions to the above learning and assessment challenges. ePortfolios have demonstrated potential to promote student engagement through reflective practice as well as the opportunity for peer and tutor feedback. We present three case studies that examine current uses of iPortfolio to engage students, enhance their learning, and provide a unique assessment environment.

### **iPortfolio assessment and fostering employability in a final-year Health Promotion unit**

Professional Practice in Public Health 383 was one of the first units to adopt the iPortfolio as a tool for assessing work integrated learning (WIL), a combination of conventional campus based learning and workplace experience with course relevance (Gronewald, 2004). This unit was a core unit for students undertaking a health promotion degree. Students used iPortfolio in their third year to collect evidence of learning against Curtin's graduate attributes and to reflect on their professional placement. They then shared this work with peers and submitted it to their fieldwork coordinator as an assessment task.

This unit requires completion of a 100-hour placement with an external agency and focuses on the transition to the workforce, with content directed at developing and demonstrating employability. iPortfolio was introduced to enhance this WIL experience by integrating knowledge and skills from the academic and workplace settings (Coll et al., 2009). It also facilitated assessment tasks involving self-reflection and evidence collection against graduate attributes in an environment that allows peer and lecturer feedback. In addition to completing their professional placement, students are required to solicit feedback from their agency supervisor. While iPortfolio use was not required for these assessments, students had the option to include them in their portfolios.

This unit used iPortfolio extensively:

1. Develop a professional portfolio, including a résumé and completion of the "About Me" page;
2. Upload evidence of achieving Curtin's graduate attributes;
3. Upload reflection on the placement experience.

In addition to the specific assessable tasks listed above, iPortfolio use in this unit encouraged students to consider their learning across their entire university course together with skills attained in non-credited university activities (e.g. volunteering and part time employment). Using iPortfolio allowed students to consider their whole skill set and identify employability strengths as they collected, organised, displayed and shared with peers and lecturing staff evidence of their varied learning. This included using the "My Ratings" tab to rate their attainment of Curtin's graduate attributes. Figure 1 is a sample of a student "About Me" tab illustrating the organisation of iPortfolio under seven tabs.

**iPortfolio**  
Michelle Liddicoat

My Portfolio | Admin | Report a problem | Settings | Help | Logout | Close window

Curtin University

About Me

**About Me**

Hi my names Michelle Liddicoat

I am currently working towards a tertiary qualification in Public Health. I will be completing my Bachelor of Science in Health Promotion qualification in June 2011. I have always been and remain committed to my area of study. This is evident through my academic achievements but also the steps I have taken towards obtaining a range of volunteer experience in health promotion and on the job training throughout my degree. I feel that these experiences have been just as important as my time spent at university, and given me lifelong skills that I can apply to my practice of health promotion.

At the moment I am completing my 100 hour Professional Placement at Kidsafe WA. This has been a highlight of my university degree as I am gaining experience of how an agency works and how health promotion is put into practice in real life

This portfolio allows me to provide evidence and showcase my skills and knowledge that I have gained through my academic studies and my volunteer and paid work. Please have a look around my portfolio by clicking on the tabs above.

Created: 12/02/2010 at 10:15:22

**Biography**

**Where I came from.....**

After completing high school I wasn't sure what direction I wanted to take in my academic career. I applied for many different courses and universities including Environmental Health and Nursing but after completing orientation I felt this wasn't the right direction for me to go in. I then decided to take a year off to work full time and gain a better perspective. This year then turned into two and finally I made the decision to follow my instinct and enrol in an area of health that I was interested in.

I started my degree three years ago and at first I wasn't sure what I wanted to study or where I would be in three years' time. I chose Health Promotion because I had always been interested in physical activity and nutrition. At the time I didn't realise what exactly Health Promotion was or where it would lead me. Three years later and Health Promotion has opened up a so many different job possibilities that I had never thought of before. After completing my degree I have identified sexual health as the pathway I would like to pursue in my professional career.

**Goals**

**Where I'm going....**

**Immediate goals**

My immediate goal for the future is to finish my Bachelor of Science and to be able to say that I did the very best I could in terms of academic achievement.

My goal for the near future is to gain full time employment in a health promoting or community development role. I want to work for a non for profit organisation.

My goal for the next year is to be accepted into a Masters program for 2012. I will be applying this year to Curtin and other Australia universities and hopefully be accepted into a Masters of Speech program.

**5 year goals**

My long term goals involve me working as a Speech Pathologist, hopefully somewhere over seas that will give me the opportunity to travel and see the

Figure 1 Example of "About Me" page

Essential for integrating theory into practice in this WIL unit is the requirement for students to reflect during and after their experience (Coll et al., 2009). iPortfolio is a convenient tool to record and share this using the "My Journals" tab. Here, as an assessable task, students recorded a reflection on their professional practice and shared this with two peers and their fieldwork coordinator, all of whom could provide feedback through iPortfolio's comment tool.

## Results

In 2010, 114 students in public health, including 54 health promotion students, completed this unit. Feedback from the health promotion cohort was collected informally through facilitated classroom discussion and more formally through Curtin's online eVALUate system, which provides students an opportunity to rate unit aspects and comment on the teaching component (Oliver et al., 2008). eVALUate responses were received from 18 students (15.8% of the total student group). eVALUate allows for qualitative comments from students, which provided specific comments on iPortfolio use.

Additional evaluation of student and staff iPortfolio experiences is required, especially of its use for formal assessment. From the eVALUate responses, however, it is clear that students perceive significant gains from a final-year unit with a practical workplace component. Students also saw development of a professional portfolio as a valuable outcome.

Some students clearly understood the necessity of collating skill evidence for employability by using iPortfolio beyond the areas of assessment and that this provided a place to organise and display evidence of lifelong and life-wide achievement. By inviting one another to see their iPortfolios and providing peer feedback, these students also demonstrated enhanced engagement with the unit. iPortfolio provided a valuable preparation tool for transitioning into the professional work world. Several students found technological challenges detracted from iPortfolio use.

The assessment required students to address graduate attributes, through inserting evidence into the “My Ratings” section. While all students inserted evidence to address attributes, there was wide variation in linkage and understanding of specific attributes.

Future student cohorts in this unit will be introduced to iPortfolio in first year (see subsequent case studies). Thus, they will be able to draw on years of collected evidence to demonstrate graduate attributes development. It is anticipated that future final year students will have more experience using and, hence, understanding the philosophy behind iPortfolios, allowing them to more fully engaged with it as a tool to enhance employability.

### Assessment and interprofessional collaboration using iPortfolio in Health Sciences common foundation year unit

iPortfolios were introduced into Faculty of Health Sciences common first year at Curtin in Foundations for Professional Health Practice (FPHP) 100 during semester 1, 2011. FPHP 100 is a large generic core unit undertaken by all students in health sciences in their first semester of study, with an enrolment of 1,700 students. The learning outcomes required students to demonstrate: academic integrity and credible information search strategies; professional oral, written and interpersonal communication skills; an understanding of Australian and international health care systems; ethical decision making within an interprofessional health context; and knowledge of quality and safety in client centred health care.

The aims for using iPortfolios within this unit to meet the learning outcomes included:

1. Engaging students early in their university career to consider their professional goals and mechanisms for realising their aspirations;
2. Providing an online forum for students to showcase their achievements to other students and tutors;
3. Providing a forum for students to reflect on their work and learning process;
4. Promoting Curtin's graduate attributes, particularly *technology skills, communication skills, lifelong learning and professional skills*;
5. Creating an environment for formative assessment and feedback, which allowed the use of self, peer and tutor feedback;
6. Providing a forum to enhance the student’s interprofessional experience by inviting peers to review work and reflect on others work.

To facilitate these aims, two weeks of classes were dedicated to creating iPortfolios and teaching skills required to share personal information and upload assessments. Students were assigned to interprofessional groups and these groups shared their iPortfolios with each other and their tutor. Students were provided further assistance through the iPortfolio support team and a sample iPortfolio created for FPHP 100. This sample iPortfolio, named Howard Healthy, showcased exemplar pages, including his skills, goals and plans for the future. The Howard Healthy iPortfolio also demonstrated appropriate folder structure, modelled reflective comments from tutors and peers, and provided templates and assessment exemplars. Table 1 lists the uses of iPortfolio for FPHP 100 assessments throughout the semester.

Table 1 FPHP iPortfolio assessment

Activity	Due	% of unit assessment
1a. Create an iPortfolio, complete the “About Me”, and upload class work (activity sheet)	Week 3	Pass / fail
1b. Access and provide feedback to 2 peers on their iPortfolio		
2. Upload to iPortfolio Assessment #3. A summary and reflection from the oral presentation, including a reflection on the group and individual feedback	Week 8	10%
3. Assessment #5. Course Reflection. Topic: Working as a health professional in an interprofessional team working ethically within client centred care.	Week 12	20%

## Results

Students were surveyed at the end of the semester regarding the use of elearning strategies in FPHP 100. Students were asked two questions regarding iPortfolios: first, did they have iPortfolio skills and how confident were they using iPortfolios before commencing the unit and upon completion; second, students were asked how the use of two particular iPortfolio tasks (completing the “About Me” page, and inviting peers to form a collaborate network) assisted them to meet the course learning outcomes of:

1. Developing academic writing and presentation skills;
2. Understanding the meaning of interprofessional education;
3. Working within a student interprofessional team.

Before commencing FPHP 100, 38 percent of respondents reported skills and being at least “reasonably confident” with using iPortfolios, whereas 98 percent of respondents reported skills and being at least “reasonably confident” using iPortfolio upon completion of FPHP 100.

Table 2 shows how respondents felt the use of iPortfolio assisted with meeting the FPHP 100 learning outcomes. Over 50 percent of respondents reported that developing their iPortfolio, including completion of the “About Me” personal information (summary page, including goals and plans) was useful in achieving the FPHP 100 learning outcomes. Additionally, over 60 percent of respondents felt inviting a collaborative network assisted with attaining an interprofessional understanding and experience.

**Table 2 Respondents' perceptions of how iPortfolio assisted in meeting FPHP 100 learning outcomes**

	N = 342	% of respondents				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree / disagree	Disagree	Strongly agree
1. Developing academic writing and presentation skills						
a) Completing the iPortfolio "About Me page"		21.3	34.8	22.0	14.5	5.7
b) Inviting an iPortfolio collaborative network		17.1	28.9	23.5	20.8	6.0
2. To understand the meaning of interprofessional education, as defined by CAIPE, (CAIPE, 2002)						
a) Completing the iPortfolio "About Me page"		15.5	37.2	25.2	14.5	7.6
b) Inviting an iPortfolio collaborative network		17.6	42.9	21.8	11.4	6.2
3. Working within an student interprofessional team						
a) Completing the iPortfolio "About Me page"		16.6	37.2	23.3	17.3	5.6
b) Inviting an iPortfolio collaborative network		18.6	40.9	20.3	15.3	5.0

These results demonstrated that using iPortfolios within a large first year unit context, supported student engagement. Using iPortfolio for formative assessment with self, peer and tutor feedback throughout the unit provided opportunities for students to engage by receiving and providing feedback. This also provided critical feedback for first year students' learning experience (Kift, 2009). The iPortfolio assessment requirements of self-reflective practice provided opportunities for students to engage with the curriculum. Additionally, inviting the collaborative iPortfolio network enhanced the student's learning community. Students reported that this assisted development of graduate attributes and provided experience working within an interprofessional team. The outcomes of this case study supported the continued use of iPortfolios in FPHP 100 into Semester 2, 2011, although some modifications were made to the frequency of use and number of assessments uploaded to the iPortfolio.

### **Reflective practice and formative assessment supplementing formal assessment using iPortfolio in Applied Geology foundation unit**

In Semester 1, 2011 iPortfolio was integrated into Geology 101 to enhance student engagement and feedback. The aims for iPortfolio use were four-fold:

1. Assist students to think about themselves as learners and reflect on their own learning processes;
2. Promote Curtin's graduate attributes, especially technology skills, communication skills, lifelong learning and professional skills;
3. Engage with students early in their university career about their professional goals and mechanisms for realising their aspirations;
4. Create an online environment for rapid formative assessment and feedback, which students could use for self and peer evaluation.

To facilitate these outcomes, students had access to a series of templates to use within their iPortfolios. The templates were designed to guide students through reflective processes, assist them with structuring their first and second writing assignments and collectively construct group contracts. Students were required to complete the reflective exercise in order to gain entry to a group for their final presentation, but all other components were supplementary.

The first template, a student attribute questionnaire, asked students to answer a series of short questions about themselves as students, their background in geology and the group work role in which they feel comfortable. The

questionnaire provided a series of prompting questions to guide them through a reflection on self-perceptions at the beginning of their academic career. Many students self-identified potential hurdles they would need to overcome during the semester (e.g. English proficiency, writing skills, organisation, time management, etc.) in this template.

The two guides for the progressive project gave students a series of prompts to help approach an unconventional assignment. For the first part of the assignment, students were asked to write a proposal for their project they would build on throughout the semester. The iPortfolio template started with general instructions on how to use the template to generate ideas, solicit and receive feedback and the specific instructions for the assignment. The instructions were followed by sections for brainstorming project topics, outlining the relevant unit topics, and an example showing the length and proper formatting for the proposal. Students were encouraged to replace the instructions and prompting questions in each section with their own ideas.

The second part of the assignment required students to think outside of the box and build their initial idea into a short research piece written as a letter to the journal *Science*. The template included explicit assignment instructions, followed by a series of prompting questions to help students address the criteria and plan their letter. Within the template, students were asked to consider their audience and provided with a link to directly access to real letters to *Science*.

Students had the opportunity to solicit early feedback from their demonstrators and peers, who were equipped with the marking rubrics and, hence, able to provide informed comments, throughout the semester. Early feedback from the lecturer on the second writing assignment was limited, therefore, students encouraged to engage in peer assessment as an alternative.

## Results

Two key issues in this unit, specifically formative feedback and guidance through an unconventional assessment, were addressed by incorporating iPortfolios. The first major improvement from previous years was a complete feedback loop. In Semester 1, 2011, formative feedback was provided to nearly 50 students via their iPortfolios before the first submission date, compared with 16 via email in Semester 1, 2010. Proactive students also benefited from demonstrator and peer feedback.

Two online surveys helped gauge student perceptions of this feedback mechanism. Half way through the semester and again at the end of the semester students were asked to anonymously rate the project itself and the use of iPortfolio to facilitate their project work (Table 3). Forty students responded to the mid-semester survey, with 35 percent responding that they liked giving / receiving feedback to / from their peers using iPortfolio, in contrast to 28 percent that did not. More than a third of the cohort was either ambivalent about this aspect or did not use their iPortfolio to give and receive feedback with their peers. The response rate at the end of the semester was lower (N = 25), but the impression of using iPortfolio for peer feedback had shifted to slightly more negative, 28 percent did not like this whereas only 24 percent did.

The two surveys also asked students to rate the usefulness of the iPortfolio templates for generating project ideas. Mid-semester, 55 percent agreed that the iPortfolio templates were helpful, whereas a mere 13 percent did not find them useful. A third of the students were either ambivalent about the templates or did not use them. By the end of the semester, more students developed an opinion about the usefulness of the templates, a strong majority (56%) considering them useful and a vocal minority (16%) viewing them as unhelpful. In the qualitative comments, only students who found the templates useful expounded.



**Table 2 Online survey results directly targeting student perceptions of iPortfolio**

Survey Question	N		Percent of respondents											
			Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		N/A	
Survey	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2
The templates in my iPortfolio were helpful for generating ideas	40	25	20	8	34	48	30	24	8	12	5	4	3	4
I did NOT like giving / receiving feedback to / from my peers in iPortfolio	40	25	3	4	25	24	30	40	30	12	5	12	8	8

Using iPortfolio for formative student assessment and feedback was not the only new initiative for Semester 1, 2011, but it was the most significant change from 2010. The broader impact is reflected in eVALUate (Oliver et al., 2008) quantitative item 5: 'feedback on my work in this unit helps me to achieve the learning outcomes.' In Semester 1, 2010, this item had 75 percent agreement, whereas 86 percent agreed in 2011. The kurtosis of the distribution also shifted significantly to 'strongly agree'.

## Discussion

The three cases illustrate the diversity of iPortfolio use at Curtin University and how this provides practical solutions to several challenges. Curtin has proactively addressed the emergent demand for students to have an ePortfolio experience. Integration of iPortfolio into units, for both assessment and non-assessment tasks, provides a tool to exhibit core graduate attributes. The most salient enhancements are seen in *information skills*, *communication skills* and *professional skills* developed through the assessment tasks.

iPortfolio use by final year health promotion students demonstrated the potential to capture life-long learning through holistic reflection on university studies, including a range of evidence (e.g., résumés, sample work, professional practice logs, reflective journals, etc.). While there was variation in how well students completed this, demonstrating the need for focused attention on student attributes early in their studies, this assessment did guide students to collect examples from across their university career. Students had the opportunity to present themselves to peers and lecturers through their structured portfolio, resulting in self perceptions of work readiness. Students indicated increased confidence in their preparedness for graduate careers.

The challenges of finding effective strategies for student engagement in large classes and for first year students are well documented (James, Krause, & Jennings, 2010; Kift, 2009; Krause, Hartley, James, & McInnis, 2005). Case study two, a large first year unit with an enrolment of 1700 students, demonstrated that shaping a unit curriculum to use eportfolios is an effective strategy. The majority of students reported the eportfolio activities assisted them to achieve the course learning outcomes, which illustrates the effectiveness of iPortfolio for meeting these challenges.

For the second and third case studies, we note that students' perceptions of value are strongly correlated with assessment. In the case of the geology students, their iPortfolio work was not directly assessed, therefore few students took the initiative to use the templates fully. Apparent student dissatisfaction with iPortfolio was also strongly correlated with the student's general sentiment toward the assignment, leading some students who did not engage with their iPortfolio to claim a strong dislike for it simply because they disliked the assignment as a whole.

iPortfolio is a useful tool to facilitate self and peer assessment and greater student engagement. In the second two cases, it supported an interprofessional learning environment, allowing students work together across disciplines, an area gaining interest across Australian universities. The last study highlighted iPortfolio's potential to generate creative ideas in a supportive pre-assessment environment and illustrated the usefulness of self reflection to

engage students in examining their perceived learning strengths and weaknesses, allowing feedback and support at a very early stage of their university study. The resulting assessment work showed marked student improvement over previous years.

### Limitations and conclusions

While iPortfolio has many advantages, there are also challenges for both students and staff. There was resistance from a minority of lecturing staff and students who likely felt intimidated by technology or failed to see the lifelong learning potential of the tool. Integrating iPortfolio across multiple units and providing greater support to users may help overcome this. Future assistance needs to cover both technical facets as well as best use practices. Especially important is demonstrating the unique capabilities of assessment tasks that advantageously use peer feedback. Staff also need to convey more clearly potential outcomes to their students.

Different levels of technology literacy and interest were demonstrated within all case studies. There is often an assumption that students, particularly younger cohorts, use other social media such as Facebook and would have a proclivity and affinity for iPortfolio. In practice, student technology competency was varied. One of the challenges in assessment tasks, then, becomes ensuring we are assessing discipline content not technological skills.

For many students, portraying skill attainment and reflective practice requires greater guidance from lecturers as does provision of peer feedback. Reflecting across a whole degree and beyond, rather than focusing on a single assessment task, requires a complete paradigm shift for most students.

This paper presents a snapshot of how Curtin's iPortfolio is used in three separate areas for assessment and feedback. The diversity of use highlights one strength of ePortfolios within a university context. The use of iPortfolio at Curtin is still in its infancy, however, it has the potential to address several pressing challenges in university education.

iPortfolio provides many advantages, chiefly it is a space controlled by the student. It facilitates learning and reflection at different points throughout a course and lecturers can use this to gain insight into student learning to arrive at authentic assessment. It is a unique learning and assessment environment that allows guided interactivity between peers, students and lecturers. iPortfolio can also be used to map graduate capabilities. With the increasing use of electronic portfolios in various settings, including the employment sector, iPortfolio provides Curtin students a tool to highlight their skill acquisition using an innovative technology.

While Curtin University is committed to promoting iPortfolio use across the university, offering resources and support to both students and staff, there is a need to respond to the assessment challenges described above and further evaluate iPortfolio use by different stakeholders to make this new tool successful. As staff become more familiar and confident using iPortfolio, exciting learning and assessment opportunities can flourish.

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