USING E-PORTFOLIOS TO ENHANCE STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC WRITING PERFORMANCE

TEG TALK
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OUTLINE:

• Purpose of study
• Literature on e-portfolio
• Research objectives
• Methodology
• Results
• Conclusion
• Q & A

Use of e-Portfolio and feedback to follow in the next TEG Talk
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

2014-16: ES1102
-For students in (QET \(\rightarrow\) compulsory non-credit-bearing Academic Writing course)
-700-800 students in each cohort; divided into 18-20 students per tutorial

Multi-drafting writing process = allow students opportunity to explore learning

Process of writing

English for Academic Purposes Writing Course:

- **DRAFT 1**
  - Draft 1-Peer Reviews: Give and receive feedback
  - Tutor comments on peer Reviews
  - Students respond to tutor comments
  - Students revise Draft 1

- **DRAFT 2**
  - Submit Draft 2 for tutor’s feedback
  - Students revise based on feedback
  - Tutor returns draft to students

- **DRAFT 3**
  - Revise based on feedback
  - Use feedback for conferencing

- **FINAL DRAFT**
  - Assessed

Scaffolding on writing requirements:
- Tutor’s instructions on giving peer feedback
- Students to give peer feedback/ask questions
- Tutor to comment on feedback
- Tutor’s feedback

Platform for students to practise the core academic skills such as development of content, organisation of information in texts, and the use of academic language conventions.
Student-centric teaching approach

Student-centric approach

Instructors

- Low-risk = Explore learning
- Guide students throughout learning journey

Students

- Practise their skills and knowledge
- Monitor own progress. Identify strengths and overcome their weaknesses.

Motivation Improvement
WHY use ict's?

Outside Classroom

e-portfolio

Inside Classroom

Student-student
Instructor-student

Student-student
Instructor-student

Outsider Classroom

Encourage students to commit to self-regulated/independent learning.
Purpose of the study

Multi-drafting writing process = allow students opportunity to explore learning

A learning portfolio requires students to purposefully collect and maintain own work that exhibits their efforts, progress and achievements (Smith & Tillema, 1998; Büyükdumana & Şirina, 2010).
Use of e-portfolios

Benefits of using (e-)portfolios:

- Facilitate learners to become better writers and support learners receiving & giving feedback (e.g. Meyer, Abrami, Wade, Aslan, & Deault, 2010)

- Lead to students’ personal development, and help them to plan for continuing education, based on an evaluation of their competences and gain learner autonomy (Fernandez & Rodriguez-Illera, 2009)
Benefits of using e-portfolios:

E-portfolio = students can maintain, document, store and share their work electronically

- **Portable**
  - Not embedded into a rigid virtual learning environment

- **Personal**
  - ‘Owned’ by the user and is customised to the user

- **Lifelong**
  - Ownership must be maintained as a ‘continuity’

- **Life-wide**
  - Capable of being used by all ages and abilities

- **Accessible**
  - Both outputs and inputs must be easy

(Wyatt & Looper, 1999; Tolley, 2008; Baris & Tosun, 2013; Baris & Tosun, 2013)

++++ Instructor must use and guide students through the e-portfolio through the learning journey.
Research questions

Previous research: students’ positive perceptions, attitudes and behaviour when using an e-portfolio to support their learning and assessment, and students’ perceptions of improvement. (Lopez-Fernandez & Rodriguez-Illera, 2009)

Data: quantitative

Not...on the actual changes in performances or what was done to make the use of e-portfolio EFFECTIVE.

1. What are the psychological, pedagogical and technological benefits of using e-portfolio? Quantitative and qualitative analyses

2. Does e-portfolio enhance students' academic writing performances through giving, receiving and responding to student and tutor feedback? If so, how and what aspects of students’ academic writing skills change?
Methodology (only for this aspect of study)

1. Surveys and students’ work
Students completed a pre- and post- surveys on their attitudinal, behavioural and technological aspects of using learning portfolio/e-portfolio. Quantitative analyses were conducted.

2. Sample groups
EAP students at NUS: weak in language/content/organisation in academic writing.


80 students (from my Sem 1 and 2 classes).
Example of how I use Dropbox/Google

I shared teaching materials with students.
Sharing DROPBOX/GOOGLE with students

I create an individual folder for every student in the class.

One folder for each piece of assignment. Students upload work and I download work. I give feedback and upload work.
Example of how I interact with student-student and instructor-student interactions

One of the problems social media has is many companies which use social media have no idea about the five "W" questions (Lee, 2010). They are who, what, where, when, and why. Hence, it leads to companies branding without having a target audience. It is important that company using social media (SUBJECT) be focused on matters that interest audience. This is because of the saturation of businesses using social media, hence, social media users become very tired of marketing interactions online (Hercheu, 2013). The problem of having so many social media users led to scarcity of time on social media as there are so many things to be seen and read, thus, people become selective about the conversations they engage in (Hercheu, 2013).

The other problem of social media to businesses is the lack of person-to-person business relationship. With marketing done through social media, many times consumers would have to write in emails or express their interest in the product they saw online. Eventually, the whole transaction does not involve any face to face contact between the buyers and sellers. This may lead to lack of customer community among the buyers (Hercheu, 2013).

Although the use of social media for businesses to innovate their business model is handy, it is important that businesses are aware of the potential treat which social media may pose. It is therefore important to look at the potential solutions to these problems.

Solutions to challenges

In order to use social media effectively, it is important that business focus their attention on spaces which serve the right audience (Hercheu, 2013). Since there are so many social media users, the only way to engage people is by catching their interests. It is necessary that the information provided through social media are high quality and relevant content which are in the audience’s interest (Hercheu, 2013). For instance, company can investigate there its current and potential customers are...
Students’ reflection of progress throughout the semester (even in an oral comm course)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback on impromptu speeches_1:</th>
<th>Misty’s feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content &amp; organization</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Good that I managed to link the item with my own personal experiences</td>
<td>• Intro self: Stated name and gave a good brief introduction about your hall and CCA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Content that I used was relevant to the item</td>
<td>• Structure and content: Speech was brief, but fairly well organised. You stated the main point before you described the plastic fork, and very briefly mentioned how it is used by referring to your personal experience (i.e. eating fried rice). You could extend this speech by describing it further by discussing its functions/evaluating whether it is useful or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Could have more content to talk about</td>
<td>• Missing conclusion: Conclude your speech by saying, for example, this is the end of my speech and thank the audience for listening/offer a recommendation/suggestion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Flow of speech could have been slightly better</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Misty’s comment:</strong> I agree: organisation is reasonably good. Just focus on content.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nonverbal communication</strong></td>
<td><strong>Strategic adjustments</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Smiled when I was giving the speech</td>
<td>• At around 0:30 sec, you made a mistake by saying spoon instead of a fork. You apologised. The audience laughed, but you did not notice. Make sure you speak sincerely with your audience—e.g. look at the audience when you say sorry, and when you describe the object.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Maintained Eye Contact with the audience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Had a positive body language — did not slouch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Could have used more hand gestures to emphasise areas of my speech that needed emphasis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic adjustments</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Could have walked around slightly while giving the speech to help keep the audience engaged to you Misty’s comment: sure, but make sure you don’t sway from left to right</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voice and diction</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tone of speech was appropriate</td>
<td>• You spoke clearly, but lacked enthusiasm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Try to vary your intonation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stress important words.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Volume was audible from the back of the room.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pace was good, but should vary between fast and slow to signal meaning and your evaluation of the object.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Nonverbal communication**
Results

Number of times students use E-Portfolio

![Histogram showing frequency of use of Google Drive/DropBox for uploading/downloading information. The mean is 3.98 with a standard deviation of 2.882. The sample size is 57.](image-url)
Do you believe it is more effective to get course materials/feedback from your tutors and peers through Google Drive/Dropbox than you IVLE/email?
Would you continue to use Google Drive to monitor your writing progress in other modules?
Organisation: average student (60% in Draft 2)

Today, the rise of the Internet has allowed for the dissemination of information and this alleviates the hindrance on speech freedom. Although the issue of widening of income gap in America is not reported by the American media, much information can be found in foreign online reports and news. For example, the Economist, a London-based press, had reported about America's rising income inequality in 2013, and with the internet, the Americans could access this report through the Economist webpage. As such, online publications have enabled people to be better informed, thus allowing them to gain more perspectives and voice their opinions. However, certain limitations have diminished the effectiveness of the Internet in providing information to the public. Although studies can be done by foreign organisations on such social issues, some information will not be disclosed by the country of interest and hence not accessible to the foreign press. As such, the hindrance caused by self-censored media on speech freedom is not completely alleviated.

In view of the limitations of the current solution, the American government can intervene in the media sector to restrain self-censored media and encourage dialogue with the public. This...
Today, the rise of the Internet has allowed for the dissemination of information. Although the issue of widening of income gap in America is not reported by the American media, much information can be found in foreign online reports and news. For example, the *Economist*, a London based press, reported about America’s rising income inequality in 2013, and with the Internet, the Americans could access this report through the Economist webpage. As such, online publications have enabled people to be better informed, thus allowing them to gain more perspectives and voice their opinions. However, certain limitations have diminished the effectiveness of the Internet in providing information to the public. Although studies can be done by foreign organisations on such social issues, some information will not be disclosed by the country of interest and hence not accessible to the foreign press. As such, the hindrance on people’s rights to information is not completely alleviated.
Students found Google Drive much easier to navigate to find teaching materials, and to submit work and get feedback than IVLE.

Students liked keeping their e-portfolio because they could keep their work portfolio after the course ends and continue to retrieve information from our Google folders.

Encourage students to monitor their progress through purposefully collecting, evaluating feedback, and reflecting on their progress as they rewrite drafts made students aware of their own improvements.

Stanley, Sem1, 2015/16: Personally I feel that it is more effective to get feedback through Google Drive. Google Drive allows the work to be edited from any computer and comments can be read/input easily. Whereas for IVLE/paper, there is a need to download the file or bring it along. An advantage of GoogleDrive is that it allows one to conveniently make comments and is especially useful for groupwork. Therefore, the comment function can enables members within a group to give feedback and suggestions to each other on how improvements can be made. Besides, GoogleDrive allows all members within the shared folder to work on the document simultaneously. A chat function is also present and can be used for discussion purposes. On the other hand, GoogleDrive has its disadvantages as well. Internet connection is required for one to work on it. Therefore, if the connection is poor, one may have difficulties uploading, downloading or editing the documents.

Judy: 2015/16, Sem 2: A good thing about this is that everyone can learn from each other’s materials, and organise their respective portfolios the way they want to. However, it can be quite tedious to download so many documents from time to time just to read the comments that cannot be seen on the drive. I have downloaded numerous copies of the same document on several occasions. Nonetheless, this is just a very minor drawback, and I feel that it is overall a good platform to utilize. Though the differences are minimal in my opinion, I slightly prefer using Google Drive as it feels more personal – where it encourages students to upload non-ES1102 materials for the tutor’s review.
CONCLUSION:

1. E-portfolios are beneficial because students
   - can keep track of their own work and learned to monitor own work
   - can provide, receive and respond to feedback through the writing process on the e-portfolio
   - can revise and consolidate their understanding of academic writing
   - receive feedback (implicit and explicit) from peers and instructors. Thus, students were able to make evaluative judgement on how to correct their own work based on the feedback (TEG TALK PART 2)

2. Technology can be used to facilitate teaching/learning when designing tasks inside and outside the classroom.

3. Instructors play a big part in the use of technology.
References


Acknowledgements

NUS Teaching Enhancement Grants, Centre for Development of Teaching and Learning Grants, National University of Singapore.

1. An evaluation study on the impact of students' use of e-portfolios on their learning attitude and academic writing—a case study.

2. Validating the E-portfolio: Student Reflections on Learning and Social Growth Gleaned from Peer and Tutor Feedback on Writing Archived in an Online Archive.
PART 2: Your progress in learning (document uploaded in reflection folder):

1. **reading your peer’s work:**
   - clear flow of content by supporting his arguments with concrete evidence
   - overall structure
   - demonstrated some **nominalisation skills and usage of commas**
   - Know how to see the **funnel from my peer’s work** like finding the key words and its links to the next sentence

2. **giving peer comments:**
   - make the **evidence more convincing** by giving credible source and citations.
   - **organisation** can be improved within a paragraph by focusing **the topic for discussion using topic sentences**.
   - Incorrect sentence structures are spotted and I learnt not to use them on my own essay.

3. **providing feedback to your peer a good way to reinforce learning:**
   - It is indeed a good way to **reinforce what I have learnt**.
   - Peer review gives me an opportunity to read an essay that I had never read before, thus I can **compare and spot** the structure of the essay by using the rubrics provided in class.
   - learn what the writer **had done right or wrong in the essay**
   - Yes. My peer can give me **some suggestions and spot out my mistake**. Moreover, my peer has pointed out my **vague sentence** that can make me do improvement.

4. **clarifications from tutor comments:**
   - confirm weather my **peer reviewer’s suggestion or comments are applicable**...
   - Yes, especially during the times where I was not sure of my comments for my peer. Dr Misty’s clarification on my essay was a confirmation that **I might need to amend that certain portion of my essay**.