

The Efficacy of E-portfolios for the Consolidation of Formal and Informal Learning ^[1]

The genesis of the Engineering Honors Program, its transformation into the Andrews Hall Residential College and the incorporation of the Goldshirt Program into the Andrews community placed a premium on the value of informal learning in the overall educational experience of these students. Learning in Andrews Hall takes multiple forms, starting in the classroom and extending beyond it. The cumulative value of this continuum is not only difficult to assess, but is also difficult to make apparent to students in a manner that enhances the quality of this experience. We are attempting to do this through the development of an e-portfolio requirement that enables students to reflect upon and demonstrate the integration of their formal and informal learning. This particular research proposal would evaluate the effectiveness of e-portfolios over the next year as we implement this requirement for approximately 300 students spread across all four years of the engineering curriculum.

The research would be concerned with the following:

- A review of relevant scholarly literature on the role of e-portfolios in consolidating and documenting both formal (classroom) and informal (outside of classroom) student learning (examples would include E-portfolios for Lifelong Learning and Assessment, D. Cambridge, Jossey-Bass, 2010; "The Reliability, Validity, and the Utility of Self-Assessment," J. A. Ross in *Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation*, 11(10), 1-13. 2006.

The Key Questions Being Asked:

- Can an e-portfolio adequately document outcomes from an informal learning experience?
- How does the production of an e-portfolio serve the formal (in-class) learning process? To what extent, if any, does the e-portfolio promote consolidation of formal learning over the educational trajectory of students?
- In what ways does the e-portfolio demonstrate value to faculty, peers and prospective employers in industry?

Principal study instruments:

- An IRB-approved qualitative analysis using ethnographic techniques, including blind, independent assessment of actual e-portfolios by groups of faculty, peers and representatives from industry.
- An IRB-approved qualitative survey instrument to assess the satisfaction of e-portfolio-producing students with the documentation affordances and learning experiences resulting from the process.
- An IRB-approved focus group series to gather deeper insights into the student experience at various stages of e-portfolio production in light of findings from (3a) and

(3b).

Broader Impacts:

- Contribute to the existing research literature on efficacy of e-portfolios.
- Inform the College of Engineering planning process for universal e-portfolios.

Groups audience:

President's Teaching Scholars Program

Source URL:<https://www.cu.edu/ptsp/efficacy-e-portfolios-consolidation-formal-and-informal-learning>

Links

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