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Electronic Portfolio in Counselling and Guidance

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the issue of portfolio evaluation, particularly on the specifics of the portfolio in an electronic form (e-portfolio) and its use in education, namely in counselling and guidance. The article is based on the premise that the electronic form of pupil's portfolio can be used effectively for evaluation in education and help to enhance its quality in terms of its processes and results. It provides an analysis of didactic possibilities and e-portfolio specifics and it briefly reports on the characteristics of individual tools for practical use of e-portfolio in the field of education.

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1. Introduction

Pupil's portfolio can be generally defined as a collection of achievements or data "*illustrating and maintaining a record of the pupil's work development*". It is a structured collection of pupil's work gathered over a certain period of learning providing various information about his or her experience and attainments" (Šteflová, 2006). Besides traditional ways of assessment such as marking or verbal evaluation, a pupil's portfolio offers another direction school assessment could take (Košťálová, Miková, Stang, 2008). Portfolios are used for evaluation purposes in lifelong learning, counselling and guidance (JISC, 2008). Besides a pupil's portfolio, there is also a teacher's professional portfolio or institutional portfolio (Campbell, 2011). In terms of the form, there is a pupil's portfolio consisting of written, drawn, printed, or generally paper-based items (a paper-based portfolio) and a portfolio containing electronic data, or documents (an electronic portfolio).

Pupil's portfolios have been long used in education, or counselling and guidance in their paper-based and also electronic form. They are also used, although less frequently than traditional methods, in school assessment both

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directly in class and in longitudinal assessment (Paulson, Paulson, Meyer, 1991). Conducted surveys generally lead to a conclusion that there is an upward trend in using electronic pupil's portfolios in class as well as in extra-curricular activities (Becta, 2009). This increase can be attributed to a wider use of the electronic form of a portfolio supported by better availability of information and communication technologies (ICT), high-speed Internet access and improving level of users' information literacy (Lorenzo, Ittelson, 2005).

2. Portfolio in counselling and guidance

Using pupil's portfolios to support school assessment is widespread in a number of countries and the issue of this type of evaluation is a focus of targeted research (Sjunnesson, 2002). This is not the case in the Czech Republic, though, where pupils' portfolios in their paper-based form, all the less so in their electronic form, are not widely used to support assessment (Santiago, 2012). While in the case of paper-based portfolios we may have recently seen attempts to integrate them into education and also into the field of counselling and guidance, the work with an electronic portfolio is still at its beginning and national academic literature mentions the use of electronic portfolios within school assessment only in passing (Košťálová, Miková, Stang, 2008).

A pupil's portfolio differs immensely from an ordinary folder with school work. While an ordinary folder is only a repository of pupil's work, portfolios have a clear study purpose and they enhance student's learning. Many portfolios are used to explore pupil's attitudes to learning, assessing what he or she has learned looking for different ways of further improvement of this process. With the help of a portfolio we can also choose best works from various areas and thus support pupil's self-evaluation and self-reflection by allowing them to select by themselves the content, due to which they have learned the most in the given field.

Unlike the traditional folders, the contents of a portfolio can be systematically evaluated according to the defined criteria. Based on their type, portfolios can consist of work built up at the beginning or during a certain activity and we may thus follow in detail the process of pupil's work development. Unlike the folders, they are updated more often; their current contents can be substituted for something else, more suitable, covering the issue better. The contents of portfolios are also reflective and each individual part is beneficial for pupils' learning. These way portfolios help pupils to develop their skills, synthesize what they have learned and develop their metacognitive abilities learning how to learn and to use this knowledge as a base for more effective cognitive and self-regulatory practices (Suskie, 2009).

As in other application areas, there is a clear prospect for the electronic form of a pupil's portfolio. Paper-based items are in some cases irreplaceable, however, we may expect an electronic portfolio to prevail over the paper-based portfolio. Due to the fact that working with electronic documents is generally more available and flexible compared to paper-based documents, evaluation based on an electronic pupil's portfolio has a good chance of supplementing suitably current forms of school assessment or even to become one of the primary school assessment types. Through a wider use of an electronic portfolio, we could capitalize on its potential in terms of its positive impact on the field of pupil's development, evaluation and self-reflection (Suskie, 2009).

The use of electronic portfolios is organically interwoven with a number of classic and innovative methods and ways of work, and various didactic means can thus be used in their application (Johnson, Mims-Cox, Doyle-Nichols, 2009). A natural link can be seen primarily in the extensive field of e-learning and other models of education supported by or based on information and communication technologies. Information and communication technologies are increasingly used also in traditionally taught lessons. We may see gradual supplementing (or substitution) of traditional methods of school work, assignments and other pupils' work management by digital or digitalized data storing and processing or submitted by pupils in an electronic form, e.g. through virtual learning environment. When working long-term with electronic portfolios, a number of electronic data suitable for evaluation can be obtained, as well as materials that can be used to encourage the interaction between the involved when achieving the set goals. We may also expect a positive response from pupils to this evaluation method of their attainment (Zubizarreta, 2009).

Available information technology is a presumed condition for the work with an electronic portfolio including usually a computer with one of the available operating systems, basic programming equipment and an Internet access. A web cam and a document scanner capable of digitalizing pupil's work in a printed form belong to the appropriate optional equipment. The equipment differs depending on the size and focus of the schools. In some schools, only administrative staff or teachers can use IT equipment; others provide classrooms equipped with

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