

# BEYOND ACADEMIC EVIDENCE: INNOVATIVE USES OF TECHNOLOGY WITHIN E-PORTFOLIOS IN A DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE PROGRAM



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Portfolios have been used in higher education for the past several years for assessment of student learning and growth and serve as the basis for summative and formative evaluations. While there is some information in the literature on how undergraduate and graduate medical, nursing, and allied health students might use portfolios to showcase acquired knowledge and skills, there is a dearth of information on the use of e-Portfolios with students in doctor of nursing practice programs. There are also limited findings regarding the creative use of technology (that includes infographics and other multimedia tools) to enhance learning outcomes (Stephens & Parr, 2013). This article presents engaging and meaningful ways technology can be used within e-Portfolios. Thus, e-Portfolios become more than a repository for academic evidence; they become unique stories that reflect the breadth and depth of students' learner-centered outcomes. (Index words; Technology; e-Portfolios; DNP; Data visualization; Infographics) *J Prof Nurs* 31:284–289, 2015. © 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

**N**URSE EDUCATORS ARE in an era of “classrooms without walls” (Weimer, 2013; Center for Excellence in Teaching, n.d.). As methods to teach and learn evolve, the academic paradigm has shifted from teacher-centered to learner-centered environments that include technology-enhanced pedagogy and methodologies (Wickersham & Chambers, 2006). “Digital natives”—that is students who take digital resources for granted think differently, tending to learn visually and socially because they use technology to organize and integrate knowledge (Barone, 2003).

Specifically, electronic portfolios or e-Portfolios provide a constructivist pedagogical approach to learning that allows students to link developed digital content to a framework that illustrates achieved competencies but, more importantly, reflects a contextual understanding of their learning (Ehiyazaryan-White, 2012). This implies a “deep” learning versus a more superficial learning through

the integration of new information into prior existing knowledge (Dalal, Hakel, Sliter, & Kirkendall, 2012).

## Background

Portfolios have been used in higher education for the past several years for assessment of student learning and growth and are the basis for summative and formative evaluations (Buckley et al., 2009; Oermann, 2002; Smolowitz & Honig, 2008; Wassef, Riza, Maciag, Worden, & Delaney, 2012). Portfolios have also been used at the undergraduate level to help motivate and structure nursing program curricular changes through examination of group assessments in order to promote a culture of change (Rossetti et al., 2012). Portfolios usually include a set of artifacts submitted to demonstrate achievement of competencies and have used a variety of formats including paper and pencil, electronic, and mobile (Anderson, Gardner, Ramsbotham, & Tones, 2009; Garrett & Jackson, 2006; Lewis & Baker, 2007). In addition, portfolios are more than just resumes and repositories to store academic work because they portray professionals' identity and learning (Green, Wyllie, & Jackson, 2013).

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**Table I.** Examples of Course Assignments within e-Portfolios

| Essentials   | Program outcomes  | Course  | Assignment   |
|--|---|---|--|
| I. Scientific underpinnings for practice   | Integrate nursing science with knowledge from the natural and social sciences as a basis for the highest level of nursing practice  | Evidence-based practice<br>Knowledge building | PICOT question paper<br>Conceptual framework paper |
| II. Organizational and systems leadership for quality improvement and systems thinking                               | Provide organizational and systems leadership in APN roles to improve patient and health care outcomes, through advocacy and implementation of management and quality improvement strategies  | Leadership<br>Quality practice                | Quality improvement paper                          |
| III. Clinical scholarship and analytical methods for evidence-based practice   | Provide leadership for evidence-based practice, through translation of research for practice, dissemination of research findings, application of research findings, implementation of quality improvement methodologies, evaluation of practice outcomes, and participation in collaborative research | Clinical project                              | Scholarly project poster                           |
| IV. Information systems/technology and patient care technology for the improvement and transformation of health care | Demonstrate proficiency in the utilization and evaluation of information systems technology resources for knowledge application, management of individual and aggregate data, and quality improvement   | Informatics                                   | Development of data analysis plan                  |
| V. Health care policy for advocacy in health care  | Provide leadership in the analysis, development, implementation, and evaluation of health care policies, congruent with advocacy for social justice, equity, and ethics in global health care   | Health care policy                            | Legislative project                                |
| VI. Interprofessional collaboration for improving patient and population health outcomes                             | Employ effective communication collaboration and leadership skills with individual groups and teams to facilitate problem solving   | Clinical seminar                              | Project immersion log                              |
| VII. Clinical prevention and population health for improving the nation's health                                     | Analyze epidemiological, biostatistical, environmental, and other appropriate data for developing, implementing, and evaluating clinical prevention and population health interventions   | Epidemiology/<br>Biostats                     | Case studies                                       |
| VIII Advanced nursing practice   | Demonstrate advanced levels of clinical judgment in designing, implementing, and evaluating therapeutic interventions to improve patient and/or health care outcomes  | Clinical immersion                            | Scholarly project presentation                     |
| VIII Advanced nursing practice   | Analyze the legal, political, ethical, economic, and professional functions of the APN  | Clinical immersion                            | Scholarly project presentation                     |
| VIII Advanced nursing practice   | Integrate caring behaviors and patterns including cultural competency and attention to underserved regional and global individuals and groups into APN roles  | Clinical immersion                            |  |

PICOT, Population/Intervention or variable of interest/Comparison/Outcome/Time; APN, Advanced Practice Nurse.

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