

## **Exploring the learner experience of ePortfolios for formative and summative feedback in the health sciences**

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This presentation reports on a qualitative study, which through case studies and focus groups, is investigating whether, and in what ways, undergraduate and postgraduate health science learners engage with formative and summative feedback delivered through ePortfolios. We are exploring how such experiences for radiography, nursing and physiotherapy learners compare with previous experiences of receiving feedback and any benefits and barriers encountered when using an ePortfolio.

Whilst detailed, appropriate and timely feedback is considered important for all learners (Hounsell, McCure, Hounsell, & Litjens, 2008), students in the health sciences routinely undertake activities in clinical environments which are less structured and predictable than the academic setting; for these learners feedback on such activities is critical for knowledge acquisition and skills development. Feedback is also reported to promote deep learning, improve motivation, increase reflective skills and help learners prepare for future learning events (Nicol, & MacFarlane-Dick, 2006; Nicol, & Milligan, 2006).

ePortfolios, unlike other tools for online feedback have the potential to support learners to capture, collate and reflect on feedback, assisting the development, over time, of a more informed sense of their skills and achievements, and potentially linking to professional development. Possible barriers to learner engagement with ePortfolios and feedback could include computer anxiety, lack of access, usability issues or inappropriate use of the application by tutors.

At this session we intend to:

- Provide an overview of the study, including methods of data collection;
- Present early findings;
- Outline initial guidelines for educators when providing feedback through ePortfolios.

### **References**

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