Pushing ePortfolios in higher education through policy making

Roundtable at CRA/AAEEBL
Seminar, Dublin May 24th, 2018
Gerd Bräuer (Freiburg/Germany)
Why this roundtable?

• Get introduced to PREPARE and consider collaboration in a new EU proposal ;-)  
• Identify unique strengths of the project  
• Discuss major challenges for ePortfolio work in higher education (teacher training)  
• Brainstorm solutions (for your own institution) →  

*Ideas for an educational policy wanted!*
The PREPARE concept

Promoting reflective practice through portfolios in the training of teachers

• When: 2016-2018
• Where: Austria, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg
• Who: students, faculty, mentors in different types of internships in primary and secondary schools
• How: see your handout and next slide
Combining two Approaches / Systems

Video Analysis  edubreak®CAMPUS  ePortfolio Work

[Images of web interfaces and text about PREPARE, a project funded by Erasmus+]

Pädagogische Hochschule Freiburg (D)  Pädagogische Hochschule Wien (A)  Institut de Formation de l’Education Nationale (LUX)  Deutsches Bildungsressort Bozen (I)  Verein Offenes Lernen (A)  Ghostthinker GmbH (D)
The Three-Layer Model of PREPARE’s Web-based Learning Environment
(Video analysis on *prepareCAMPUS*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Observation assignment</th>
<th>Writing task (Blog)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem, issue</td>
<td>Identifying and verbalizing expectations with regard to the observation</td>
<td>Writing task (Blog)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution</td>
<td>Video recording the performance</td>
<td>Recording a video sequence (or using a third-party video)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forces</td>
<td>Identifying and verbalizing strengths and weaknesses</td>
<td>Video annotation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consequences</td>
<td>Planning future action</td>
<td>Writing task (Blog)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### The Three-Layer Model of PREPARE’s Web-based Learning Environment

**ePortfolio work on prepareCAMPUS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meta Pattern</th>
<th>Process Pattern</th>
<th>Task Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Selecting artifacts (edubreak®CAMPUS)</td>
<td>Writing task (E-Portfolio on Mahara)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem, issue</td>
<td>Analyzing and interpreting selected artifacts in the light of research literature</td>
<td>Reading/writing/speaking task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solution</td>
<td>Drawing conclusions, shaping knowledge</td>
<td>Writing task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forces</td>
<td>Identifying and verbalizing strengths and weaknesses (personal SWOT analysis, peer comments)</td>
<td>Self-directed and peer feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences</td>
<td>Planning future action</td>
<td>Explaining to an audience</td>
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</tbody>
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**Secondary reflection**

**Synthesis**
The PREPARE Learning Cycle

1. Assignment setting (with observation criteria)
2. Social Video Learning (individual work & work in groups)
3. Feedback & discussion (peers, instructors, mentors)
4. ePortfolio composition
Pedagogical functions of the ePortfolio in PREPARE

- Make authentic contexts of learning (internships) visible
  - Trigger contextualized learning
- Integrate disparate contextualized learning (internship, seminar)
- Construct longitudinal dimension to learning by continuing the ePF for all internships leading to graduation and beyond
- “See patterns and find meaning” (Batson 2011): Who am I? Who do I want to become? What do I need for it?
- Construct collaborative assignments
  - unfold learning as social activity
  - Establish community of practice / learners
Research approach

• Mixed methods approach:
  – Learning analytics (all on-line activities)
  – Document analysis (depth of reflection)
  – Questionnaire (faculty, intern, mentor)
  – Interview (randomly selected):
  – Focus group (randomly selected)
  – Card-sorting (task design)
  – Discussion of findings among project partners (selecting local SWOT aspects)
Summary of findings

• More detailed perception of teaching practice (self and peers)
• Higher quality of reflections:
  – Specified observations
  – In-depth reflective writing (incl. all levels of reflection, Bräuer 2016)
  – Stronger theory-practice connection
  – More concrete consequences for future action in the profession
  – Competence-based presentation of internship results in the ePortfolio
• Intensified collaboration among peers and internship facilitators
  → Social video learning (Vohle/Reinmann 2012), s. handout
Time to reflect for yourself or with partner (3’)

• Any questions?
• Anything new?
• Anything to take home?
Obstacles

• Throughout the project: Subtle reluctance of the institutions to collaborate with *PREPARE*
• Some reluctance also among the interns to invest time and effort into the technical features of *PREPARE-Campus*
• (Ditto): internship facilitators
• Little to no effort by the institution to keep *PREPARE* beyond 2018 despite overall positive feedback
Interpreting the obstacles (1)

- Reluctance of the institutions to collaborate in PREPARE:
  - “messing up existing institutional practice”
- Reluctance of the interns to invest time and effort into the use of PREPARE-Campus:
  - “no additional credit points for more work to do”
- (ditto) internship facilitators:
  - “no compensation for more work”
Interpreting the obstacles (2)

• Little to no effort of the institutions to keep PREPARE beyond 2018:
  – “messing up existing institutional practice”
  – Little or no ePortfolio (ePF) practice in other parts of teacher education beyond the internships
  – “additional costs”
  – “technical obstacles” (hardware, connection speed)
  – “difficulty in protecting data privacy” (May 25th!)
  – Political party turnover in all partner countries: open agenda on educational policy (“We don’t know what will happen.”)
What to do next?

• Select major aspects of findings that need top-down support
• Draft *educational policy (ep)* for strengthening reflective practice through ePF in teacher education
• Support each point of the ep with findings/data of the project and beyond → e.g. your expertise
Aspects of an educational policy (1)

- Analyze the need for reflective practice
- Define the role of the ePF
- Need analysis of all people involved to handle reflective practice and ePFs
- (Re-)Design of digital learning with ePF in the center
Aspects of an educational policy (2)

- Support reflective task design for authentic learning
- Provide technical training and support for all people involved
- ePFs need hand-held devices and high-speed internet
- In-depth reflective practice needs feedback (which needs time, money, and ECTS)
Aspects of an educational policy (3)

• ePF work needs to be across the curriculum and across the educational pyramid
• Develop shared criteria for successful ePF work
• Authentic personal reflection needs SPACE of intellectual, physical, and digital kind
• Present, discuss, celebrate best practice
Aspects of an educational policy (4)

• Learning analytics needs the attention and resources as an important tool for research and development

• Institutions and individuals need support for a useful application of the new data protection law
FIELD GUIDE TO EPORTFOLIO

Why It Matters for Learning

The Promise of Eportfolios
Redesigning Learning for Reflective Growth
Authentic Learning: Across the Divide
Promoting Student Cognitive Development
Learners and the Digital Era
On the Right Track
New Ways to Demonstrate Achievements
Transition to Careers & Career Development
Learning Analytics and the Learner
Faculty Eportfolios
Eportfolios and Internationalization
How Important Is the Technology?
Questions for discussion (1)

The *Field Guide* presents a number of case studies with regard to institutionalizing ePortfolios in higher education (e.g. LaGuardia, Salt Lake City CC). In these cases, do you see influence on the policy level, especially through AAEEBL in collaboration with AAC&U?
Questions for discussion (2)

What role played collaboration between EPAC, a more grass-roots organization and AAEEL, a large international organization with strong ties to AAC&U which has about 500 colleges and universities under its roof?
How do you respond to institutions that see “documenting learning with authentic evidence” (Light et al. 2017) not as a motivation for portfolio work but, instead, strive for more exams? This seems to be the case at least in Germany’s higher education since the so-called Bologna Process that provided a BA/MA structure including a large number of written exams.
Questions for discussion (4)

How do you respond to institutions which don’t seem to see a need for **aligning institutional priorities** based on information from pedagogical practice (as it can be gained by students’ ePortfolios)? At least at the teacher colleges in Germany, it seems the main institutional priority is to deliver the necessary number of graduates to the professional field, a goal that is easy to reach based on a large number of students.
Questions for discussion (5)

Based on what we discussed so far: Where do you see cultural differences between higher education in the Anglo-Saxon world vs. the one in the German-speaking countries that somewhat seems to prevent a broad institutional adaptation of ePortfolio concepts?
Questions for discussion (6)

In your opinion: What needs to be done in the case of PREPARE to channel its conceptual resources into policy-making, institutional development and, finally, into the facilitation of faculty and students trying their best with ePortfolio work?
Thanks to all of you for an insightful conversation!

If you want to stay in touch or are interested in collaborating on a proposal for EU funding:

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