Practice Article

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ePortfolio Pedagogy: Leveraging Affordances in Digital Spaces by Students and Educators

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Abstract

This paper recognizes the many purposes of electronic portfolios (ePortfolios) – as technological tools, as instructional strategy, and as digital pedagogy. As technology, ePortfolios are a resource where students can showcase their achievements, instructors can assess their students, and both learners and educators can engage in interaction, a deeper level of learning, and critical reflection. ePortfolios are an innovative instructional strategy as they enable students to learn to use the technology while learning about its affordances in their online learning community. As digital pedagogy, ePortfolios include instructional practices that help students with their learning and educators with course content facilitating, as demonstrated in a capstone project at the end of a course or program of studies. These practices align with 21st-century thinking and encourage students to rely on their online environment to learn and co-construct knowledge. ePortfolios, as part of a growing movement of digital instructional practices, are a digital pedagogy since they rely on digital technologies to facilitate learning and instruction. They are an effective form of professional self-development that aims to help educators leverage what they have to offer in their practice as they learn to embrace a value-based approach to teaching. The ePortfolio as a technological tool, instructional strategy, and digital pedagogy is prominently positioned as an innovative way for educators to relearn their craft, design learning, and facilitate online instruction by leveraging affordances in digital spaces.

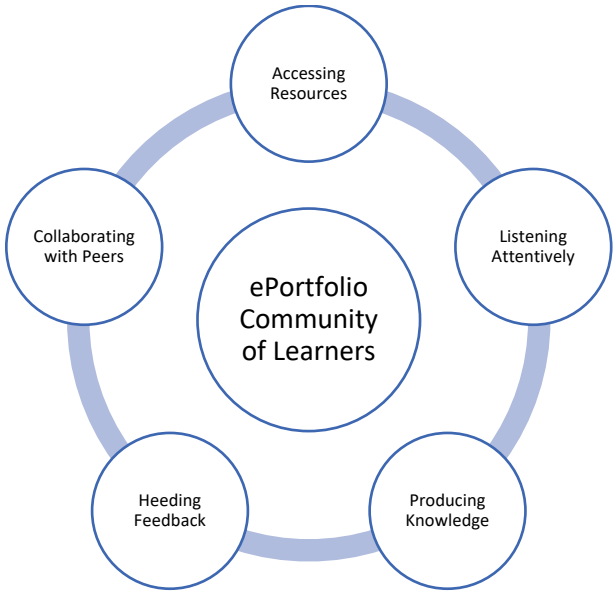
Keywords: ePortfolio pedagogy, leveraging affordances, professional self-development, value-based approach

Introduction

Electronic portfolios (ePortfolios) have emerged as multipurpose instructional tools in blended and online educational spaces. They are used in higher education to help facilitate student engagement and self-reflection as well as a deeper level of learning (Watty & McKay, 2015). Literature shows that ePortfolio projects foster student agency (Peet et al., 2011; Vincent & Hynes, 2016; Zhang & Tur, 2024) regarding their choice of a platform to showcase their achievements (technology); facilitate instructor assessment of student learning (pedagogy); assist with learner and educator engagement in feedback giving and receiving (interaction); and promote deeper recognition of self-awareness and the process of learning (reflection) (Zuba Prokopetz, 2022a). Similar to the various research approaches outlined by Creswell (2013, p. 42), ePortfolio projects offer a place for students to come together as "different individuals with different perspectives … on [their individual] looms." As a result, these students tend to focus on ideas derived from interactions in their community as evidence of their human skills: accessing resources, producing knowledge, listening attentively, heeding feedback, articulating learning to date, and collaborating with peers toward a common goal (Figure 1). The concepts in the diagram below were borne from the observable communications between students in the course and their communicated struggles with the capstone eportfolio project (Zuba Prokopetz, 2019a).

Figure 1

ePortfolio Evidence of Human Skills



Multipurpose Technological Tool

ePortfolios have been deployed to serve many purposes due to their ability to store student performance over a period of time. I have had the opportunity to work with various ePortfolio technologies both as a learner and educator – LiveBinders, Weebly, and GoogleSites among other platforms. During my ePortfolio research with graduate students, the course participants relied on Mahara, a thoughtful technology with affordances for feedback interaction, deep

learning (and meaningful teaching), and reflection on learning to date. I view ePortfolio technologies as interdisciplinary educational tools with the potential to be directed at various types of audience. Research studies show the multipurpose application of ePortfolios in different sectors and disciplines (Donaldson, 2022; Jafari & Kaufman, 2006) apprenticehips (Doherty & McLaughin, 2021), business disciplines (Slepcevic-Zach & Stock, 2018; Donnely, 2021), culinary and gastronomy (Gilsenan & English, 2021), engineering (Sepp et al., 2015), music (Whitney et. al, 2021), nursing and midwifery (Driscoll, 2007; Harrington & O'Neil, 2021), teacher education (Vaughan et al., 2017; Ziegelbauer & D'Errico, 2021) and language learning (Zuba Prokopetz, 2021a; 2021b). Students in an undergraduate program, for example, may need to complete an ePortfolio project for specific courses or for an entire program of study in the form of a capstone project (Kohler & Zile-Tamsen, 2020; Morreale et. al, 2017; Zuba Prokopetz, 2021c). The Strada Institute for the Future of Work (2019) argued that "college transcripts in their current format, do little to inform employers of a candidate's abilities; they serve as a rough sketch of a candidate's potential and merely list the subjects to which a person has been exposed not necessarily mastered" (p. 14). As such, these ePortfolio projects can subsequently be included in applications to gain admission to a graduate program. Job seekers, or individuals considering a promotion, may modify some of the pages of their academic ePortfolios and present them to prospective employers to showcase job-related achievements, awards, and micro-credentials.

ePortfolio Constructs

As a research site, ePortfolios house meaningful information and enable creators not only to store data but also to story experiences (Winter, 1988) in their chosen platform. A 2018 study of graduate students in a capstone ePortfolio project course in a fully online institution in western Canada shares stories of graduate student perception of self-reflection and peer-to-peer reflection during the ePortfolio development process (Zuba Prokopetz, 2019a). Ongoing online ethnographic observations revealed that as students began to develop their projects, they became curious, more adventurous, and subsequently learned to leverage the affordances in their online environment to continue unleashing their creativity. There was an observable student reliance on ePortfolio presentations and exemplars of colleagues in previous cohorts which served as a form of modeling, guidance, and reassurance of what could be done (a website with artefacts); how the doing would take place (a pensive state during artefact selection); and why it would be of benefit to self and others in a community of learners now and beyond. Results of this study showed the importance of including exemplars from participants in subsequent course iterations (Zuba Prokopetz, 2019a).

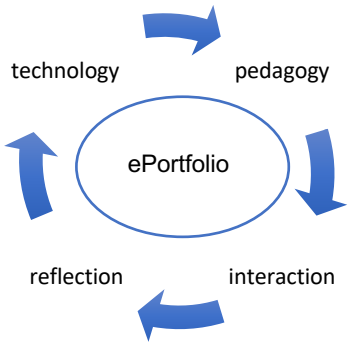
This carefully orchestrated knowledge production necessitated that instructional technology tools afforded by the Web work in tandem with (what initially may seem to be) disruptive pedagogy embodied by ePortfolios. Having undergone the ePortfolio process through various lenses (as a learner, educator, and researcher) for more than a decade (Zuba Prokopetz, 2019b) enabled me to comprehend how proper planning and organization of online learning episodes foster purposeful and efficacious use of technology by educators and learners alike. I noticed that when students in online spaces interacted with both course resources and each other, their initial level of discomfort using the technology seemed to lessen. Moments of perturbation, albeit temporary, were significant enough to bring forth some form of initial reflection, "a process [that] … can occur before, during or after the event … [and] is triggered by some kind of unsettled feeling, or lack of peace" (Bulpitt & Martin, 2005, p. 211). As described in Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance, these feelings of perturbation (which tend to

trigger bouts of reflection, as I have observed) seem to precede the actions geared toward dissonance reduction (completion of the ePortfolio projects, as an example).

As an innovative instructional strategy, ePortfolios in a capstone project enable students to learn with the technology while learning about its affordances as they conceptualize the process of project development and final product (Zuba Prokopetz, 2018a; 2018b). These experiences mediated by the ePortfolio technology are supported by critical reflection and self-awareness. Careful selection of the ePortfolio software technology is one important aspect when including ePortfolio projects in a course or program of studies. Other equally important constructs are pedagogy, peer-to-peer feedback interaction, and critical reflection (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Four Constructs in ePortfolio Implementation



Note: Adapted from Zuba Prokopetz (2021c, p. 31).

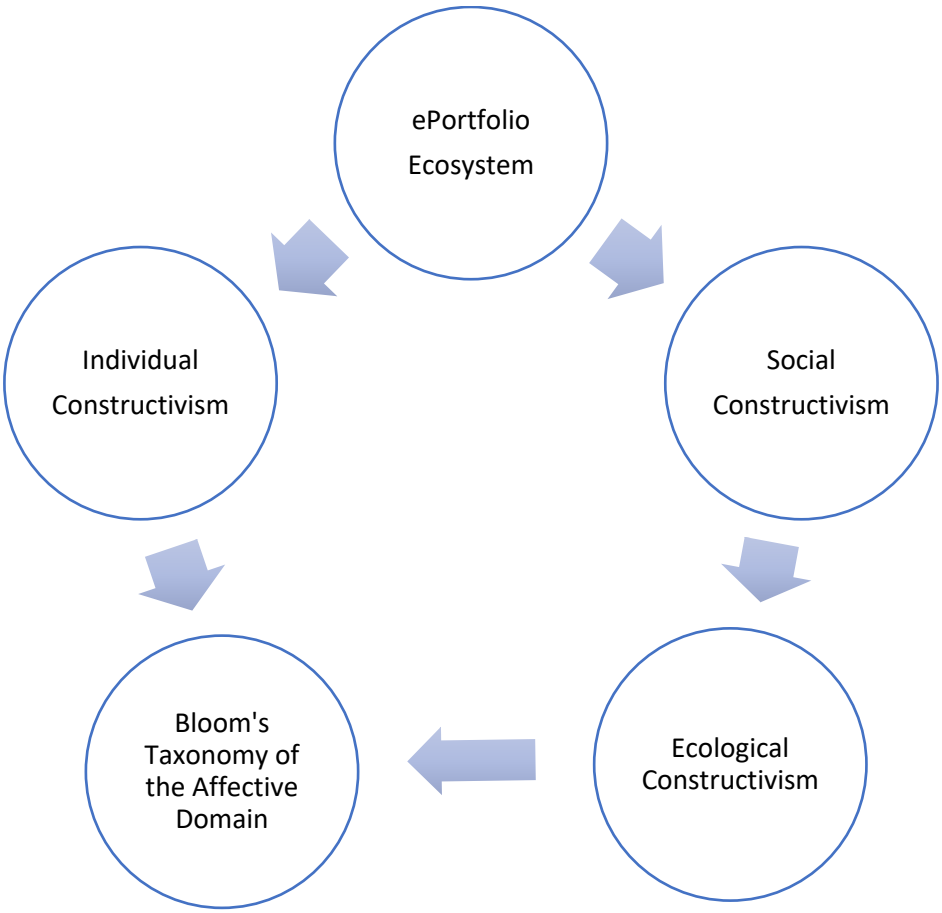
It is noteworthy that within the past decade, ePortfolio proponents have focused less on the technology aspect of this digital instructional tool and more on the pedagogy itself (Farrell, 2020). When equating technology to a vehicle, “pedagogy is the driver” and the overall focus is on student learning (Fullan, 2013, p. 51). As multipurpose technological instructional tools, ePortfolios make it possible for students to choose a platform to showcase their achievements (technology); instructors to use the content and product to assess their students (pedagogy); and leaners and educators alike to engage in feedback giving and receiving (interaction), self-awareness and a deeper level of learning (reflection).

Theoretical Approach

During my studies and research on ePortfolios (Zuba Prokopetz, 2019a), I realized that my observations of how students perceived the affordances in their environment rested on aspects of ecological constructivism (EC). EC, as a contemporary approach to a theory of learning, helped me not only comprehend the interaction of systems within and external to the students but also explain their experiences. During my observations of students interacting and building a community of ePortfolio creators, I also noticed elements of the affective domain – the ability of the students to internalize their needs, make choices, and express feelings within an ePortfolio ecosystem (Figure 3).

Figure 3

ePortfolio Ecosystem and Theoretical Underpinnings



Note: Adapted from Zuba Prokopetz (2019a, p. 180).

This ecological constructivist approach is undergirded by an open system of beliefs, observations, and informed explanations (Hoven & Palalas, 2016; Palalas, 2015) that help identify affordances and guide instruction in digital spaces (Zuba Prokopetz, 2022a). Part of the process of being able to explicate what we observe and experience in online spaces is our ability to work effectively with digital pedagogies (e.g., ePortfolio) and frameworks (e.g. Community of Inquiry). The Community of Inquiry (CoI) model (Garrison et al., 2001; Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005; Vaughan et al., 2013) aligns with the social aspect of an ePortfolio project process (sense of community) and the teaching presence (peer-feedback interaction) that help create a more interactive space for production and co-construction of knowledge to help educators and students leverage the affordances in their online environment. The development of an ePortfolio, as I have observed, brings students together and engenders a sense of community. This process shares similar concepts associated with the Community of Inquiry method. CoI recognizes the key role of interaction to create and maintain a collaborative learning community (Vaughan et al., 2013) – observable elements in an ePortfolio community of learners.

Pedagogical Approach in Online and Digital Spaces

As a result of COVID-19, educators in traditional classrooms had to rethink their pedagogical approach. Practitioners who chose to chronicle their experiences in a portfolio (Burns, 2020) turned a challenge into an opportunity to gain digital competency, reflect on their learning and improve their teaching. As digital pedagogy, ePortfolios are an effective form of professional self-development since they provide a virtual location where creators can engage in development and communication of self-understanding; creation of learning goals; and application of strategies (Johnsen, 2012). Just before their establishment as a high-impact practice (Kuh, 2008; Watson et al., 2016), ePortfolios were deployed in a four-year education program in Alberta, Canada to facilitate the documentation and articulation of a learning plan for faculty and teacher candidates (Vaughan et al., 2017). During the final two years of the program, the teacher candidates (TCs) developed "program and professional learning communities" through field placements; experiences that were chronicled in a capstone ePortfolio project (Vaughan et al., 2017, p. 37). Such projects show connection between theory (course work) and practice (field work and internship) and help TCs leverage what they have to offer in their own practice as they learn to embrace a value-based approach to teaching. As evidenced in a conscientiously integrated values education, the enduring legacy of thoughtful practitioners strengthens and benefits future students at school, work, and community at large (Fahrenwald et al., 2005). Student teachers who underwent a teaching portfolio development process (even before the electronic version became prevalent) confirmed the impact of the experience on their teaching – they reported placing their focus more on student learning, gaining better insight into professional standards, and engaging in a more reflective practice (Anderson & DeMeulle, 1998). This affirmation aligns with the shift to a more student-centric learning paradigm in higher education from the instructional paradigm that viewed instructors as transferring knowledge (Babi et al., 2002) – instructional technology (innovative ways to improve and support learning), when properly applied, helps shift the paradigm – as is the case of an ePortfolio project. However, even as the pandemic entered its subsequent years, there were still members of the academy worldwide who continued to resist educational innovation in their practice. Ellis et al. (2020) question whether institutional changes accelerated as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic can be viewed as innovation They further state that the global events of 2020 helped stimulate innovative approaches which until then seemed to be deficient in the educational sector (Ellis et al., 2020). As suggested by Cain et al. (2024), at the present time, we are able to see how the innovative terrain has changed – from a process that was supported and well informed over time to an automatic response with uncertain outcomes. Regardless of how innovation was introduced – or forced upon – educators worldwide and the academy as a whole necessitate an innovative way for educators to: relearn their craft in online and digital spaces; design learning for tech-savvy students; and facilitate meaningful and interactive online instruction.

Innovation in Education

In the mid-1990s, the availability of web tools made it possible for innovative technology such as portfolios in electronic versions to be implemented in education. In the early 2000s, Australia, Canada, Europe, and the United States (US) accounted for hundreds of thousands of ePortfolio users with prediction of many more to come (Ravet, 2005). In 2010, the number of institutions adopting ePortfolios in the US had grown tenfold according to a campus computing survey (Batson, 2010). During this time, ePortfolios were viewed as emerging pedagogy in the digital

revolution movement (Eynon & Gambino, 2017). Since then, they have been successfully utilized in education and business establishments (Bond, 2019) due to their multipurpose capability and are regarded among the great innovations in education (Gathercoal et al., 2007). In Internet culture, learning is diverse, messy, ongoing, co-created, and integrated (Siemens, 2006), thus stimulating discourse about pedagogy that embraces information communication technology (ICT). As an ICT, ePortfolios incorporate a suite of tools for storage, management, communication, and dissemination of information. As a key component of value-based education, ePortfolio tools can be used both to enhance the quality of education (Kale, 2015) and enable educators to gain understanding of how students are learning (Finger & Jamieson-Proctor, 2009). Although ePortfolios have been part of educational innovation for two decades (Campbell, 1996; Yancey, 2019) and were included as the eleventh high-impact practice in education (Kuh, 2008; Watson et al., 2016), educators in many disciplines worldwide are still reluctant to include ePortfolio pedagogy in their practice. There is a certain hesitancy about teaching students to create their first ePortfolio; therefore, support structure needs to be implemented to address the issue (Yancey, 2019). Creating an ePortfolio for the first time "can be a daunting task" as it involves the "exploration of the concept" (technology, pedagogy) and the "process of creating" in a digital environment (Blevins, 2021, p. 14). As Fullan (2013) suggested, "things that turn out to be good for us often daunt us at the beginning" (p. 66). A digital project such as an ePortfolio can be a positive endeavour. It does, however, require proper integration of technology and pedagogy to prevent negative outcomes "due to superficial or poor implementation" (Fullan, 2013, p. 65) leading to uneasiness.

ePortfolio Creation: Professional Self-Development

Similar uneasy and unsettling sentiments were shared globally when the institution of education was thrust overnight into an online environment as a result of the onset of the COVID-19 global pandemic in March 2020. Academics were reluctant to face a sudden need to learn how to teach and create activities online. The world experienced a rude awakening about the vulnerability and delicate state of learning and teaching once institutions realized they lacked sufficient knowledge for proper application of technology. During the initial months of the pandemic, educators who were already including online or electronic learning opportunities such as the implementation of ePortfolios in their face-to-face or blended classrooms found it less unnerving to pivot to a fully online and at-a-distance instructional modality. Schools worldwide experienced closure and/or relied on alternative methods to resume operation due to the COVID-19 crisis that brought forth challenges (as well as opportunities) and exposed the "fragility of our educational systems" (Deslandes-Martineau et al., 2020, para. 3). In order to maintain continuity in Canada, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO – responsible for sustainable development – devised a contingency plan to address curriculum priorities to ensure students continued to receive adequate skills and knowledge during the sudden disruption to their learning; digital tools were deployed to help facilitate instruction in online spaces. It became evident that educators "need[ed] to be trained in the basic principles of how to effectively use these tools for student engagement and learning" (Deslandes-Martineau et al., 2020, para. 23). Although educational actors – administrators, teachers, students – new to an online environment faced many challenges during the pandemic, some embraced the new learning opportunity and even chronicled their experiences (Burns, 2020) in an effort to improve instruction in a time of change. This journaling of experiences demonstrates how an ePortfolio creation experience as a form of professional self-development may serve as a substrate for educators to reflect on their learning and improve their teaching. As evidenced in multiple research studies (Eynon & Gambino, 2017; Galvan & Rodriguez Illera, 2017; Penny Light et al., 2012; Vaughan et al., 2017), after embracing this digital tool, those who chose to implement

ePortfolios in their practice were able to create a more interactive learning environment where students take ownership of their learning. As a result, these educators help students "choose strategies deemed to be most effective [for them] based on the requirements in the environment" (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005, p. 137) as per pedagogical approach adopted in their course.

Affordances in Digital Spaces

As students develop their projects, they learn to leverage the affordances in their online environment – whether the ePortfolio course relies on a content management system (CMS) like Weebly or a learning management system (LMS) like Brightspace by D2L. These student affordances in digital spaces are evidenced in the form of attending presentations and viewing projects from previous course participants; interacting with peers and instructors in the Discussion Forum of the chosen LMS; accessing course resources; and heeding feedback from their instructor and peers. When relying on the Mahara ePortfolio technology, instructors and peers are able to provide feedback on each page of the student ePortfolio projects (by using the individualized comment box). For educators implementing ePortfolio projects in their practice, this digital pedagogy is an effective form of professional self-development. The ePortfolio development process aims to help educators leverage what they have to offer in their own practice in order to not only embrace a value-based approach to course instruction but also recognize the worth of student interaction. When educators experience the challenges and rewards of an ePortfolio development from beginning to completion (including feedback from peers on each page), they begin to realize how ePortfolios may help them organize instruction and facilitate teaching. This ePortfolio development process, as a form of professional self-development, "encourages both analytical thinking and the questioning of assumptions related to the process of learning [and teaching] in online spaces" (Zuba Prokopetz, 2022b).

Barriers to ePortfolio Implementation

As a form of "non-traditional learning" (Wedemeyer, 1981, p. 219), ePortfolios have emerged as an innovative tool that has the capacity to extend and build upon "learnings required in the traditional ways" (Wedemeyer, 1981, p. xix). The transition process from on-site to on-line pedagogy, however, necessitates a certain level of comfort among all actors as it relates to the application of technology. A 2021 study conducted in western Canada reveals that many college students not only lack "confidence using digital tools" but also fear using technology whereas many teachers simply lack digital skills; therefore, those who teach with technology "must first be given these skills themselves" (Borthwick, 2021, pp. 26-27) to enable them to instill confidence in their students during the creation of a digital project. Among the barriers to the integration of this learning pedagogy into instructional and educational practice is educator and student familiarity and experience with ePortfolio software applications.

Impact on Practice

Students engaged in projects like ePortfolios necessitate guidance throughout the development process related to specifications in terms of platform, layout, content, and composition. Since the ePortfolio software tool may be applied in various settings for various reasons, its purpose needs to be clearly articulated from the very beginning. By sharing equal responsibility, students and facilitators may prevent a possible "tension due to misalignments in goals and lived experiences of the ePortfolio even for the students [and instructors] who find ePortfolios useful" (Wakimoto et al., 2019, Abstract). Intentionality and forethought of creators and implementers of ePortfolios help ensure that actors regulate their actions toward a positive outcome (Bandura,

1986) regardless of purpose or platform. The peer modeling and connecting through feedback interaction and online discussion bring forth in ePortfolio creators a certain need to learn through observation and modeling, as outlined in the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). As we continue to shift to innovative learning environments, we need to question "the new role of the teacher" in our attempt to have "students assume more of the agency for their own learning" (Batson, 2011, p. 112). In consequence, instructors and students who embark on a digital learning journey underpinned by ePortfolio pedagogy learn not only to share equal responsibilities and rights but also to engage in ongoing dialogue in their pedagogical approach as learners and educators. This dialogic form of knowledge sharing embraces a divergence of ideas before a possible convergence of thoughts during which actors disclose their current knowledge and expectations related to the end product – a creative production of ideas (Cropley, 2006).

As such, an additional barrier to learning about the technology, educators who implement ePortfolio projects also need to become comfortable with the pedagogy. As posited by Wakimoto et al. (2019), "there are challenges and issues to overcome" to enable ePortfolios to be used to their full potential; among these barriers is the alignment of "instructor hopes and goals" with student experiences of the process and product (p. 66). Awareness of personal bias and beliefs by both creators and implementers is of equal importance. Respectful – and inclusive – language for example, is covered under digital ethics and helps demonstrate community values associated with having an online presence (Denton & Wicks, 2012; Nuessler, 2012; Wilson et al., 2018). This online presence becomes visible in the community where ongoing learning is situated (Lave & Wenger, 1991). As the community develops, the learning becomes effective (MacDonald & Thompson, 2005; Rovai, 2002; Shea, 2019); as such, ePortfolio projects present themselves as catalysts that help make visible to stakeholders the learning in these communities. This visible learning can, for some learners and educators, become an additional barrier and concern, particularly when safety and security are at risk.

ePortfolio Pedagogy

Among the many ways ePortfolios have been used in education, their application as a pedagogic tool is less widely known (Lewis, 2015; 2017). The large body of literature pertains mostly to eportfolio types, applications, pedagogical benefits, and relationship with assessment and evaluation (Buzzetto-More, 2010). The many uses for eportfolios in higher education among educational institutions around the globe is also covered in the literature (Ravet, 2005; Scully et al., 2018; Watson et al., 2016). Although this innovation in pedagogy gained momentum in 1990s, it initially surprised many (Danielson & Abrutyn, 1997) since research was not yet available (Cambridge et al., 2009) on this technology-enabled form of instruction. In addition to enriching student learning, ePortfolio pedagogy helps connect practitioners with their daily practice of teaching students and facilitating their learning (Eynon & Gambino, 2017). During an ePortfolio project development process, members of an ePortfolio community rely on each other and seek ways to share what they have to offer, thus demonstrating the effectiveness of ePortfolio pedagogy – engagement of students as they learn to leverage the affordances of their online environment to complete their projects. As a thoughtful pedagogy (Cuzzolino, 2018; Dron, 2020), this innovative way for educators to design learning and facilitate instruction capacitates engagement in online ePortfolio learning communities. There is an observable level of comfort and commonality as community members empower each other to articulate their learning and demonstrate ways for knowledge and skill transfer from school to community and workplace (Deslandes-Martineau et al., 2020).

Recommendations for Future Practice: Educating the Educators

In early-2000s as we entered the current century, educational scholars and researchers began writing about the disparate between the level of skills with which students graduated and what they actually required in the workplace (Newell, 1999). Preparing students to be "flexible, adaptive and creative" require a curriculum with "opportunities to reflect on … and demonstrate" what they know and are able to do (Peet et al., 2011, p. 21). The argument was that in order to meet workplace demands in the 21st century, college education would need to include new knowledge aligned with emerging roles (Stuart & Dahm, 2006) to help graduates acquire capabilities to integrate their lifetime and lifewide learning (Huber & Hutchings, 2004; Newell, 1999; Peet et al., 2011) at all levels – personal, academic, and professional. What seems to be missing from the discourse is the fact that educators are among the learners who necessitate new knowledge (learning to learn online) before they are able to effectively implement educational technology in their practice. Skills valued in today's changing landscape of higher education include innovation, problem-solving, and communication since they are among the "abilities [that] are increasingly emphasized in institutions of higher education due to recognition that job-specific training is quickly outdated" (Andrade, 2019, p. 2). Therefore, to meet new workplace demands, teachers also need to learn about the thought process of minds in the 21st century to help inform their curriculum development and lesson planning. As educators, we are reminded to keep pace with new developments in technology to better understand how the new generation learns (Renard, 2005) in this digital era. Techonogy is pivotal in student learning (Renes & Strange, 2011); its proper application is of even more importance. As Barret (2010) suggests, ePortfolios are not about a specific software package; they are "more a combination of process (a series of activities) and product (the end result of the ePortfolio process)" (What Is an ePortfolio? Section, para. 2). It is the reflection on the product or chosen artefacts that enable viewers (peers, instructors) to understand why these items were chosen (Barrett & Richter, 2018; Barrett, 2004). The ePortfolio development process integrates learning the technology and applying the pedagogy during episodes of interaction and reflection. Therefore, it would be well advised for educators to engage in the development of an ePortfolio in order to properly guide their students as they apply technology to learn. In consequence, they will experience firsthand how this powerful pedagogy deepens learning, fosters reflection, and makes learning visible (Kuh et al., 2017). To illustrate, in my graduate studies (2011-2013), I learned to rely on innovative technology to improve my pedagogy when I developed my first ePortfolio. Nonetheless, I only became aware of my reliance on technology to improve my pedagogy when I implemented a similar project in my own teaching practice. This pivotal moment cemented the notion that students necessitate ongoing interaction and critical reflection to experience a deeper level of learning during the completion of their course work. Therefore, the push for educators to engage in additional learning to improve instruction is fundamental as the shift continues for courses to be fully online or to have a significant online component.

Conclusion

As multipurpose teaching and learning tools, ePortfolios are part of a movement that aims to reimagine teaching and learning in online and digital spaces. Programs being designed or adapted for online spaces would benefit from a pedagogy that enables students and educators to pause, think back, discern, and embrace the ability to reflect on and demonstrate learning as it happens. ePortfolio proponents argue that ePortfolio-based learning supports this belief (Peet et al., 2011) that students are in control of their learning (Tosh et al., 2005) and educators empower their learning. It is the ePortfolio technology that transports the students from one stage to the next; however, "pedagogy is the driver with student learning at the center" (Fullan,

2013, p. 51). ePortfolio pedagogy, undergirded by interaction and reflection, integrates authentic learning episodes in a digital project. ePortfolio instructional practices align with a 21st century line of thinking, support the creation of a safe learning place that embraces storytelling, and encourage students to rely on their environment and each other to co-construct knowledge in online spaces. This pedagogy helps students learn to leverage the affordances in their digital learning space by interacting with peers and instructors (in the discussion forum of an LMS or the feedback box of a chosen platform); accessing course resources including ePortfolio presentations; and heeding feedback from their instructor and peers. For educators, ePortfolios are an effective form of professional self-development (Zuba Prokopetz, 2018). ePortfolios can help educators leverage what they have to offer in their own practice, embrace a value-based approach to course instruction, and recognize the worth of student interaction. In an effort to graduate well-rounded students, universities and colleges are looking at alternatives to the pre-digital pedagogy previously adopted in the academy. Collaboration, social knowledge construction, introspective thinking, and a growth in mindset are among the pedagogical concepts embodied by ePortfolio pedagogy. Since the COVID-19 crisis, educators in traditional classrooms have had to rethink their pedagogical approach with some choosing to implement ePortfolios in their practice. As a result, educators embarked on an experiential learning journey that embraced technology (ePortfolio platform) in an organic way – learning by doing. In order for ePortfolio creators (students and educators) to fine-tune their craft (learning and teaching), there was a reliance on interaction and reflection (process) to facilitate a change in mindset (purpose) for the necessary unlearning, learning, and relearning during the pandemic and beyond. During this process, as I have observed, there was evidence of learners accessing resources, producing knowledge, listening attentively, heeding feedback, articulating learning to date, and collaborating with peers toward a common goal. The ePortfolio is positioned among the innovative ways for instructors to design learning and facilitate instruction in digital spaces as it enables the leveraging of affordances by both students and educators.

Author's Contributions

The author was informed by her analysis of observable communication among ePortfolio creators during the development of their projects before and during the pandemic.

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Conflict of Interest

The author of this practice paper does not declare any conflict of interest.

Data Availability Statement

This paper is based on notes from the field resulting from practical experiences and evidence-based observations of an instructor in her practice in blended and online leaning spaces. There was no collection of data. The author has taken necessary steps to protect the privacy of course participants.

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