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Pre-Service Teachers Establishing Professional Identities in the 21st Century

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Pre-service Teachers Establishing Professional Identities in the 21st Century

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Introduction

An increasing number of programs utilize web-based portfolios to measure teachers' learning outcomes (Lynch & Purnawarman, 2004). This study emphasizes the notion of the e (Brown, Freeman, & Gallagher, 2015) and employs a multimodal approach to professional learning. The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate how pre-service teachers document their developing professional identities and learning outcomes in an electronic portfolio project.

Theoretical Framework

Electronic portfolio assessment. Three components are necessary for effective web-based portfolios: (1) appropriate content and design of multimodal compositions; (2) purposeful use of graphic devices offered by commercialized programs; (3) integration of Web 2.0 technologies.

Literacy as a social, multimodal practice. Meanings are constructed and communicated through multiple representations (Kress, 2010).

The notion of professional identities. Professional identity refers to "the relatively stable and enduring constellation of attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences in terms of which people define themselves in a professional role" (Schein, 1978, cited in Ibarra, 1999).

Methods

- The project was implemented in a combination of a flip classroom model and a studio format, which provided design consultation (Carpenter, Apostel, & Hyndman, 2012) with graphic designers over seven sessions.
- Data were collected from multiple sources: ePortfolios and other relevant assignments, work logs, participant observations, and semi-structured interviews.
- Data were analyzed through content and visual analysis.

Results

Symbolic Components

(1) Using quotes to convey teaching beliefs.

"Every child is one caring adult away from being a success story."
- Joel Migg

My love for teaching began at a young age. School was always a welcoming environment for me and I always had amazing teachers that looked up to. I learned early on that the more support and encouragement you have the more you are successful. Even though teaching has been a passion of mine since I was about four, I didn't really decide teaching was my purpose till I was a pre-service teacher at Western Michigan University. My passion for teaching grew when I began working at a local elementary school. It continued after I would return to a higher level education to pursue my master's and doctorate.

(2) Using Visual Features is another common symbolic component.

Strategic use of color: e.g. using blue background to illustrate a sense of professionalism.

Using Google Apps to create a slide show.

Demonstrating teaching materials.

Writing Process in a Digital Space

(1) Students demonstrated their knowledge and teaching practices in different manners.

- Taking it further...

On the following session, we reviewed this story by performing a puppet show for our tube. We prepared puppet props and used them to model retelling the story.

This student added contextual information, and provided further information via an external link.

(2) Different writing qualities bring forward issues and concerns regarding editing and revising processes in digital and public spaces.

Authenticity

The potential of using ePortfolios for future employment creates a sense of authenticity.

"I want it to reflect who I am and what my goals are....I want the employers to see that I care about kids and I care about this profession and that I have the experiences they are looking for."

Implications

1. Documentation of students' learning outcomes
2. Potential for future student use for employment
3. Supporting instruction-improvement cycle
4. Documentation of program effectiveness