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**TITLE:- THE ROLE OF E-PORTFOLIOS AS A  
REFLECTIVE TOOL FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

# Introduction

- ▶ Given the shift from teacher centred instruction to student centred in education, multiple stakeholders are looking for documentation for the entire process of learning (Villano 2005).

# What is an e-portfolio (electronic portfolio)?

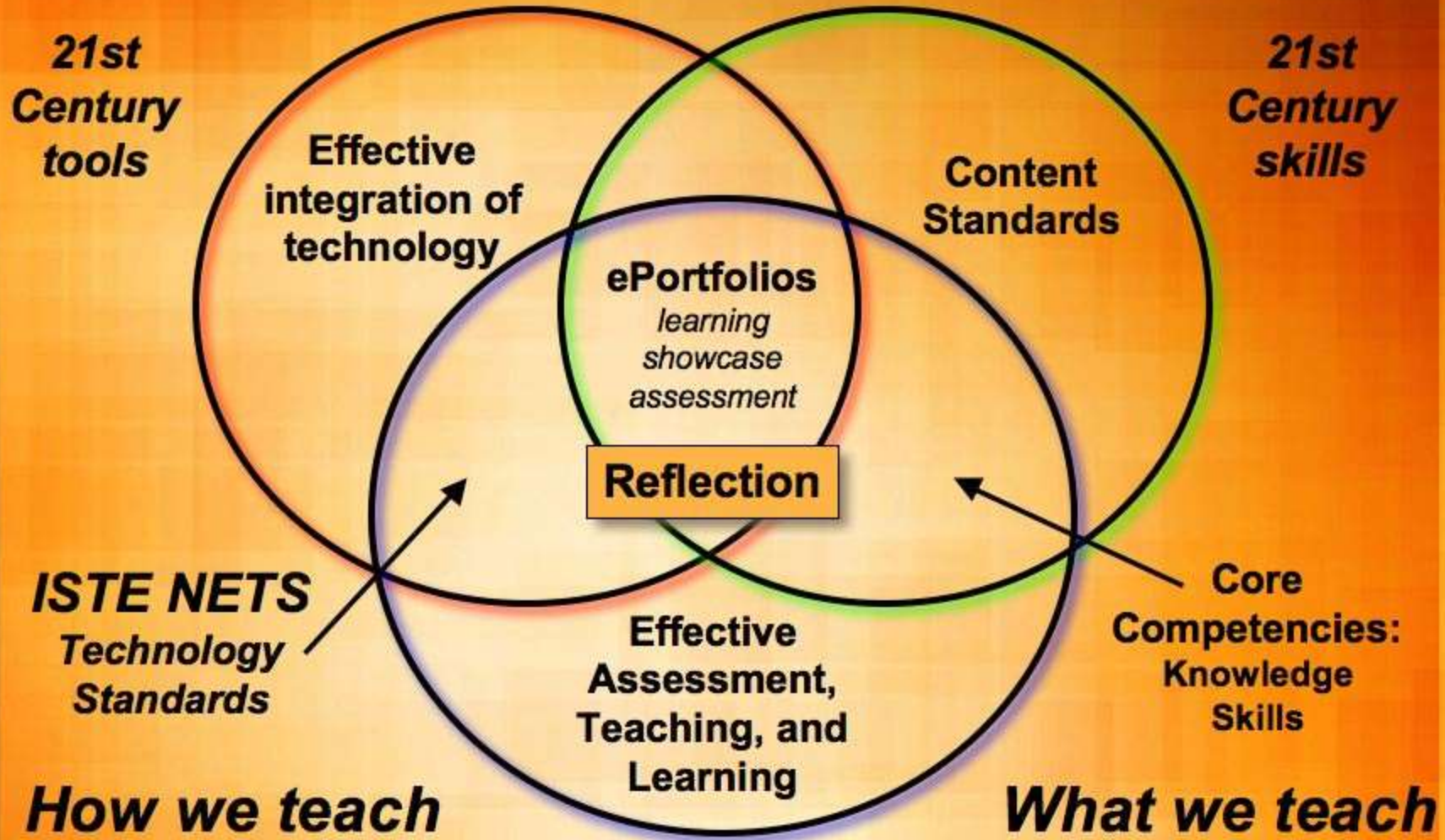
- ▶ Digital electronic platform to support learning
- ▶ Can demonstrate competencies to colleagues, professionals or prospective employers
- ▶ Five basic functions of e-portfolio on diagram opposite



# What is the value of the e-portfolio as a learning tool?

- ▶ Ease of storage and accessibility
- ▶ Ability to demonstrate and provide support of learning growth over time (Wickersham and Chambers (2006)
- ▶ Recognition of transferable skills for future employment
- ▶ Platform for students to identify opportunities in which they have practiced said skills and to consciously reflect on the experience (Davis and Reynolds 2009).
- ▶ Reflective practitioner bridges gap between learning and working environment (Simatele 2014)
- ▶ Direct thinking and motivation towards valuable goals (Huang et al 2012)

# 21st Century Portfolios



A focus on both **PROCESS** and **PRODUCT**

# Current research

- ▶ **Aim:-** one aim of this research sought to ascertain what value the student places on PDP, particularly in relation to the use of e-portfolios as an aid to reflect on transferable skills.
- ▶ The degree title was also reflected on as a factor in assessing the uptake and perceived value of e-portfolios
- ▶ **Methodology:-** N=195 level three and four psychology and social science students from the University of the West of Scotland completed a questionnaire on skills development, learning and knowledge transfer.

# Questionnaire - Section on PDP

- ▶ Self completion questionnaire – questions posed to both Social Science and Psychology students
- ▶ **Q.** Have you undertaken a skills audit as part of your personal development planning?
- ▶ **Q.** If you have used this skills audit – have you continued to build on this personal development plan by updating your skills e.g. using linkin or/and expanding your e-portfolio?
- ▶ **Q.** If yes, how effective has this been in developing a recognition of transferable skills?

# Results

- ▶ The **relationship between degree undertaken and the uptake of a skills audit** was significant  $X^2(1, N=195) = 14.97$   $p < .0005$ . The association was of weak strength .277. Within the psychology degree programme uptake of a skills audit was 23.8% compared to the social science programme where uptake was 76.2%.
- ▶ The relationship between degree undertaken and the use of e-portfolios or **similar** was significant  $X^2(1, N=195) = 24.10$   $p < .0005$ . The association was of moderate strength .352. Within the psychology degree programme continued use of e-portfolios or similar was 29.5% compared to the social science programme where update was 70.5%
- ▶ No difference between groups noted in assessing the **effectiveness of this method to develop a recognition of transferable skills**. Social science mean of 8.52 and a psychology mean of 8.60. The mean difference between conditions was 0.08 and the 95% confidence interval for the extended population mean is between 0.500 and 0.327. An independent t-test showed that the difference between conditions was not significant ( $t=1.658$ ,  $df=193$ ,  $p=0.89$ ) on tailed



# Discussion

- ▶ Wickersham and Chambers (2006) – e-portfolios may be seen as external to the curriculum
- ▶ Cottrell (2003) – what happens if students don't perceive any benefit from this activity?
- ▶ Dunne (1995) – staff perceptions – what role do they have in the process?

# Discussion

- ▶ As a tool PDP, if used effectively and with relevant guidance, can be valuable in the recognition of a skills set which will enable the student to enter the employment market prepared.
- ▶ The ability to demonstrate the learning process which supported the development of said skills and evidence this through the production of an e-portfolio may also provide an edge for potential employees entering the career market.
- ▶ However the risk according to Hinchliffe and Jolly (2011), is educators may not guide the student in what they should reflect on, therefore PDP may only be used as tool by the student to list attributes and tick these off as achieved.

# Conclusions

- ▶ A possible link exists between perceptions of the degree name and value of e-portfolios.
- ▶ Implications of staff and students
- ▶ Dearing (1997) “learn how to learn”

# Limitations and future research

- ▶ Ecological validity
- ▶ Over representative female cohort given choice of disciplines
- ▶ Further research into this area could focus explicitly on the discipline specific assumptions held surrounding the value of e-portfolios as a learning tool

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