Australian ePortfolio Symposium 2009

Tuesday 10th February
Track Session:

Law and Education
Embedding ePortfolio into a virtual law placement unit to encourage and facilitate student reflection on the development of employability skills and to plan for ongoing career development: the QUT Law Faculty experience

Tina Cockburn and Associate Professor Melinda Shirley
Queensland University of Technology

Abstract:
This paper explores how ePortfolio has been embedded as a teaching and learning tool in an innovative model for work-integrated learning using a virtual paradigm – The Virtual Law Placement Unit in the Faculty of Law at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Australia.

The Virtual Placement Unit offers students the opportunity to complete an authentic workplace task under the guidance of a real-life workplace supervisor, where student-student communication and student-supervisor communication is all conducted virtually (and potentially asynchronously) to create an engaging but flexible learning environment using a combination of Blackboard and SharePoint technologies. This virtual experience is pioneering in the sense that it enables law students to access an unprecedented range of law graduate destination workplaces and projects, including international and social justice placements, absent the constraints traditionally associated with arranging physical placements.

Building on the integration of ePortfolio in a number of foundation and core undergraduate law units, ePortfolio has been embedded into this new work integrated learning unit, to encourage, guide and support students’ reflections on the development of their employability skills; facilitate the documentation of these reflections; encourage planning for future careers; and to promote student learning as an integral component of the assessment regime.

This paper will describe the conceptual model and provide an account of the lessons learned in relation to using ePortfolio as a teaching and learning tool in the pilot offering of the Virtual Law Placement unit, which was conducted and evaluated in 2008.

Tina Cockburn
Queensland University of Technology

Tina Cockburn is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Law at Queensland University of Technology. Tina researches and teaches in the areas of Torts, Equity and Trusts and has published extensively in these areas. She also researches in legal education, in particular the use of online technology in law teaching and virtual work integrated learning in law. Tina is coordinator of the Faculty’s first virtual work-integrated learning unit – The Virtual Law Placement - which was offered for the first time in semester 2, 2008.

Melinda Shirley
Queensland University of Technology

Melinda Shirley is the Assistant Dean for Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Law at Queensland University of Technology. She lectures in the areas of equity, trusts, alternative dispute resolution and mediation and has published extensively in those areas. As Assistant Dean for Teaching and Learning she is currently researching ways to increase work-integrated learning opportunities for undergraduate law students using e-learning tools and the virtual paradigm.
Embedding ePortfolio learning in a new undergraduate law program at the University of South Australia

Professor Vicki Waye
University of South Australia

Abstract:
Legal education has undergone a revolution in the last 10 years shifting in focus from what lawyers need to know to what lawyers need to do. However the identification and measurement of the process and outcomes of individual student learning remains problematic and so consequently the ideal of student centred learning has been difficult to fulfil. E-portfolios embedded across an entire program may help address the shortfall. This paper is a case study of an attempt to embed ePortfolio learning within a new law program. The paper outlines some of the lessons learned from first year of the project and how the project will further unfold as the next level of the program is rolled out. The main lesson learned is that student buy in is hard won.

Vicki Waye
University of South Australia

Vicki Waye is a Professor of Law at the Law School, UniSA currently engaged in a number of teaching and learning projects associated with the development and implementation of the new law program at UniSA including: embedding of e-portfolios and reflective learning across the law program; embedding of experiential learning across the law program and more particularly, the development of clinical legal education opportunities for all law students; developing literature review capabilities in legal research; and embedding of career development skills across the law program. Vicki is especially interested in harnessing Web2 technology to improve student engagement. In addition to her teaching interests Vicki’s research interests incorporate international and comparative elements spanning topics such as multilateral treaties affecting the wine trade, comparisons between criminal procedure systems in Australia and the United States, the legal regulation of carbon foot printing and issues affecting access to justice and the funding of access to justice. Much of Vicki’s research is concerned with the comparative efficacy of legal processes.
ePortfolios in the Bachelor of Education at QUT: Creating connections and enabling reflections

Dr Mary Ryan and Mr Peter O'Brien
Queensland University of Technology

Abstract:
This paper will outline the early stages of the utilisation of an ePortfolio to create connections across a re-accredited Bachelor of Education degree at QUT. The ePortfolio repository will be used by students to reflect more deeply on the links between theory and practice and the connections between the units that make up their course. In previous years, Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) and unit evaluation data have indicated that whilst students were generally satisfied with individual units within the Bachelor of Education, they were less likely to regard the course as cohesive or even explicitly linked to their professional learning in the field.

With the introduction of new professional standards for teachers and pre-service teacher education in Queensland, an opportunity arose to renew aspects of the course and to find new and sustainable ways for students to reflect on the links across their course and in relation to the ten professional standards initiated by the Queensland College of Teachers. Students will submit their portfolios in various forms within each of their Field Studies units.

The key element of the portfolio submission will be the reflection component, whereby students can draw upon knowledge from a range of academic units, their field experience and other life-world experiences, illustrated through hyperlinked evidence, to address the focus standards for each submission. In this paper we describe the process thus far, and discuss implications for the implementation of the ePortfolio, along with possibilities for its use in enabling ongoing professionalism.

Mary Ryan
Queensland University of Technology

Dr Mary Ryan is currently a Senior Lecturer in the School of Cultural and Language Studies in Education, and the Program Co-ordinator of the Bachelor of Education (primary and double degrees) in the Faculty of Education at Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane. Recent internally funded work in the area of teaching and learning in higher education includes team projects related to authentic work-integrated learning; investigating the use of interview and portfolio assessment; and mapping assessment across the entire Bachelor of Education course. Interest in ePortfolios has been sparked by the recent re-accreditiation of the Bachelor of Education, whereby students’ attainment of professional standards and links made between theory and practice will be mapped across the course via the ePortfolio.

Peter O’Brien
Queensland University of Technology

Peter O’Brien is a Lecturer in the School of Cultural and Language Studies in Education and Coordinator of Field Studies Units in both the Graduate Diploma of Education and Bachelor of Education in the Faculty of Education at Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane. The recent re-accreditation of the Bachelor of Education and use of professional standards to measure student achievement has opened opportunities for re-thinking assessment programs and practices. The e-Portfolio offers one such opportunity for students themselves to map their own performance against professional standards as both pre-service and graduate teachers.
ePortfolios @ School of Education: Curtin University of Technology

Dr Lina Pelliccione and Dr Kathryn Dixon
Curtin University of Technology

Abstract:
Many universities are currently undergoing curriculum reform and individual courses are also developing their own set of student attributes/outcomes in line with their wider organisational graduate attributes. However, in many cases universities and individual courses do not have a structure in place to map student progress against these outcomes.

Curtin University of Technology, which is the focus of this research, has implemented the use of student ePortfolios in its undergraduate Bachelor of Education Program. The School of Education envisages that the ongoing utilisation of ePortfolios will streamline and illuminate more transparent assessment and evaluation procedures at the institutional and course level as well as meeting the requirements of professional bodies. They provide a vehicle for:

- measuring the quality of courses
- the development of the individual student
- the effectiveness of individual teaching
- the appropriateness and value of the attributes and outcomes themselves.

The major advantage of an ePortfolio approach in a systematic manner throughout the duration of an undergraduate degree is that students’ achievements can be readily mapped against current employment requirements in a very practical, transportable and transparent sense.

This presentation will focus on the implementation process of ePortfolios by teacher education students at Curtin University of Technology in Western Australia. Student examples will be shown and reflective guidelines, as well as assessment tools will be shared with participants. Successes and challenges of the past five years will also be highlighted.

Lina Pelliccione
Curtin University of Technology

Dr Lina Pelliccione is a Senior Lecturer at Curtin University of Technology, Faculty of Education. In 2006 Lina was awarded a Carrick Australian Award for University Teaching: Citations for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning for her work into ePortfolios as part of the development of critical and reflective teachers. Lina has been instrumental in embedding ePortfolios in the four year Bachelor of Education program. Her teaching and research interests include: the adoption and implementation of ICT in teaching and learning; enhancing learning through the use of ICT with young children through to adults; electronic portfolios; online learning environments; innovation and change.

Kathryn Dixon
Curtin University of Technology

Dr Kathryn Dixon is a Senior Lecturer at Curtin University of Technology, Faculty of Education. She works in the field of adult education and training and currently coordinates the Postgraduate Program. She also coordinates a number of units at both undergraduate and postgraduate level that deal with teaching and learning, training and development, reflective and professional practice and organisational change. Her research interests include organisational development and online learning. Understanding the needs of adult learners and supporting their development is at the forefront of both her teaching, postgraduate supervision and research.