Building communities of practice: A case study at Institutional Level

Margaret Faulkner 1.) and Garry Allan 2.)

1.) University of South Australia
2.) RMIT
Overview

• As participants at AeP2 we are helping to build communities of practice in ePortfolios
  – What happens in between AePs?

• Activity to explore potential areas for collaborating with other institutions

• RMIT University and UniSA are developing communities of practice both within and between their organisations, as well as, across the Higher Education sector.

• We will present our experiences to date, our 2009 roadmap and anticipated benefits of collaboration.
Rationale for collaborating on the institutional implementation of ePortfolios

- Many dimensions of change to be addressed
- Rapidly changing landscape of ePortfolio technologies
- Increased recognition that collaboration is a cornerstone in improving the experience of the learner with ePortfolios
- Potential for collaboration that does not impinge on inter-University competitive practice
ACTIVITY: Identifying and positioning collaborations

Divide into three groups:

Group 1: Your role – Students
Group 2: Your role – Academic teaching staff
Group 3: Your role – University academic managers

From the perspective of your respective roles, as a group:

1.) Identify priority areas for collaboration
2.) Define actions to establish effective and enduring collaborations to support the advancement of ePortfolios
3.) Summarise and report back to the session.
Priority Areas & Actions suggested

Students

Academics

University

Views of industry and our communities are also important
Case Study: University of South Australia and RMIT collaborating on ePortfolio development

- ATN partner Universities
- Both institutions utilising the PebblePad ePortfolio product
- Collaboration initiated in August 2008

Collaborative direction:
- Building communities of practice within and between our institutions
- Accelerated implementation
- More informed development path
Presentation to the University community

Approach at RMIT:

Resources at:  **www.rmit.edu.au/eportfolio**

*Staff accounts available at this URL, Staff and student support resources*

- Career Track is a career development teaching and learning resource that compliments the student use of ePortfolios and focuses on independent student career development see:

  http://www.dlsweb.rmit.edu.au/lsu/content/5_LearningQuery/career_track/index.html
Career Track is a career development teaching and learning resource that can help you to use the evidence that you gather in your RMIT ePortfolio to:

- understand yourself better
- identify career options
- plan your career
- develop targeted job applications
- succeed in job selection.
Presentation to the University community

Approach at UniSA:

- Currently hidden from general community
- Internal site created to support staff
- 2009 larger pilot with greater support and university presence
  - UniSA support for students and staff
  - Online modules to develop reflective practice
    - Additional to content covered by teaching staff
Shared Curriculum priority areas

• Design
  – Pilot areas shaped by collaboration opportunities
  – Knowledge exchange between staff
  – Sharing of user support documentation

• Engagement
  – Embedding ePortfolios within curriculum
  – Career Development with ePortfolios

• Assessment
  – Evidence based approach to ePortfolios

• Evaluation
  – Inter-University benchmarking

• Monitoring, Transition and Diversity (potential areas)
  – ATN similar student profiles
What is required to make this happen?

1.) Executive Support - from DVC – Academic in both institutions (staffing and resources)

2.) Common goals in terms of ePortfolio use in T&L (ATN, professional competencies, graduate attributes)

3.) Professional collaborative commitment from linkage staff
Other common priority areas include:

• Building Communities of Practice
  – Extending collaboration beyond our institutions
  – Research projects to fill gaps in our knowledge
Questions and Discussion: Next steps
References

• ALTC ePortfolio Project
  http://www.eportfoliopractice.qut.edu.au/
  (Ongoing in 2009)

• Effective Practice with ePortfolios: - JISC 2008
  http://www.jisc.ac.uk/effectivepracticeepoportfolios

  Keynote address First Year Experience Curriculum
  Design Symposium, February 5-6, 2009, Brisbane