The Use of ePortfolios to Facilitate Students’ Understanding of Cultural Diversity

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- How do students learn about cultural diversity?
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What is an eportfolio?

An eportfolio is a purposeful aggregation of digital items – ideas, evidence, reflections, feedback etc., which “presents” a selected audience with evidence of a person’s learning and/or ability.

Sutherland and Powell, 2007

Ideas of what an e-portfolio 'is' are complex and to an extent the definition and purpose will vary depending on the perspective from which a particular person is approaching the concept.

(JISC Infonet)
Examples of types of ePortfolios
Technical Aspects

- www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/e-portfolios
- www.eportfoliopractice.qut.edu.au
AASW Accreditation Standards

- “Culture refers to a constantly changing phenomenon of individuals and society”
- “Cross-cultural practice refers to practice where there is a diversity of traditions and intergenerational issues; ideologies, beliefs and religions; and race and ethnicities”
- “Cross-cultural practice can refer also to work acknowledging other diverse identities, such as sexual, political, professional and organisational.......All of these dimensions impact on us as culturally diverse social workers and clients alike, and therefore should be acknowledged as core to good practice in whatever context
Learning Cultural Competence in Social Work

Reynolds (1942) considered learning social work practice as moving backwards and forwards between stages. Workers don’t learn in a linear fashion but rather oscillate through stages frequently and at different times in their professional journey.

“Culturally competent social work practice is, in most respects, simply good practice, thus teaching and learning about cultural competence goes hand in hand with teaching and learning about good practice. A social worker who is not culturally competent would have an effective professional practice.
External Challenges

"Good news, men, when we give money to the poor now, it will qualify for federal matching funds."

Protesters to rally against funding cut for Tenant Advice and Advocacy Services

PROTESTERS will today rally outside Premier Campbell Newman’s northwest Brisbane electorate office, demanding funding for a key tenancy advice service used by 80,000 Queenslanders each year be reinstated.

The Government has argued the Tenant Advice and Advocacy Services funding, which topped $20 million over four years, is better directed to new public housing properties.
Internal Challenges for SCU

Student demographics

Survey results

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97-year-old Uni graduate sets world benchmark - 04/05/2012

In a world of almost seven billion people, 97-year-old Southern Cross University graduate Allan Stewart stands alone.

Not only does Allan already hold the Guinness World Records title for being the ‘World’s Oldest Graduate’ – a title he earned after graduating with a law degree aged 91 – but today (Friday May 4) he will surpass it.

Allan will graduate with a Master of Clinical Science (Complementary Medicine) at Southern Cross University’s Lismore campus – gaining his fourth university degree.
Use of Self
Cross-Cultural Competence

Hendricks, 2003 adapted Reynolds (1942) model to try to explore cultural diversity. In many ways the stages parallel the frameworks described by Saari (1989) and Kolb (1984).

The Five Stages of Learning and Teaching Cultural Competence in the Practice of Social Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cultural Competence</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>“I am so embarrassed. I am afraid of saying the wrong thing.”</td>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
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<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>“I jump in for better or worse, and hope for the best.”</td>
<td>Cultural Sensitivity</td>
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<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>“Somehow, what I do works. I handle diversity encounters quite well, but I cannot explain why.”</td>
<td>Beginning Cultural Competence</td>
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<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>“I understand what I am doing and use a range of culturally competent knowledge, skills and values.”</td>
<td>Relative Mastery of Cultural Competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>“I can teach others to be culturally competent practitioners or supervisors.”</td>
<td>Teacher/Learner of Cultural Competence</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Learning in Practice
Perceived threats to existing ways of being
The need for ongoing reflection
How do we become culturally competent?

Reflection
Frameworks
Non Linear Processes
Supervision
Multidimensional Learning
Skills
Lifelong Learning
Exposure
Knowledge
ePortfolio
How can ePortfolios help?

- A one stop shop
- Holistic overview
- Enhance understanding
- Flexible learning environment
- Collate evidence
- Process of reflection
- Process of self-expression
- Creative process
Caution

- Institutionally driven
- Technology – good or bad?
- Need a shared vision of purpose
- Which ePortfolio tool to use?
- Longevity/Portability of ePortfolio
- Functionality
- Interactive/Reflective ability
- Privacy
- Confidentiality
- Confusion with social media sites
- Training and support
The use of ePortfolios offers a great means of ensuring good quality learning in the face of the current academic climate

- ePortfolios enhance reflexivity and accountability
- Demonstrate attainment of Professional standards
- Can help plan personal and professional development
- Articulate learning
- Showcase skills and experiences for job applications
- Life long portfolio for further education, employment progression and professional development
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