

# THE PROCESS OF INTEGRATING STUDENT AGENCY INTO E-PORTFOLIO DESIGN

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## A MODELING PRESENTATION

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### EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Students often use electronic portfolios (ePortfolios) as a tool in job application and interview processes (Fitch, Peet, Reed, and Toman, 2008). Adding student agency to the design process of an ePortfolio may dramatically increase the effectiveness of the tool—both for the interviewees (students) in representing themselves to employers and to the interviewers in examining evidence of the students' competencies and ability to apply what they have learned to new situations. This modeling session demonstrated one research project in which students created ePortfolios using a specific process developed by Dr. Melissa Peet at the University of Michigan. The process encourages students to identify what they have learned (including their tacit knowledge), to understand why this knowledge is relevant to their lives, to discover their core strengths and capacities, and to demonstrate those in a portfolio.

The co-presenters supervised students in a semester-spanning project utilizing the *Integrative Knowledge Portfolio Process* (IKPP) to design ePortfolios (Peet & Fenton, 2011). Some of the students completed the process as an assignment in a 2000-level class. Others completed it as a project funded by one of the grants UCO has received to implement our Student Transformative Learning Record—STLR (King, Kilbourne, & Walvoord, 2015). Additionally, a number of those students then participated in mock job interviews (using their IKPP) with professionals *outside* of the university who rated the students on their job interviews. These professionals also participated in focus groups to discuss their opinions on the value of the ePortfolios. Finally, the students reflected on their use of the IKPP and its value in helping them develop a sense of personal agency, prepare for the interview, and demonstrate core competencies.

The focus of the Integrative Knowledge Portfolio Process is as much on the process as it is on the product. The method involves a series of learning modules, interactive exercises (including Generative Knowledge Interviewing, Peet & Walsch, 2010), and reflective writing prompts. The process is specifically designed to help students develop a “sense of personal agency and the capacity to respond to complex social issues” (Peet, Lonn, Gurin, et al., 2011, p. 14). Each of the four phases of the process has an *integrative learning* goal and a corresponding *portfolio* goal (Peet & Fenton, 2011).

	<b>Learning Goal</b>	<b>Portfolio Goal</b>
<b>Phase A</b>	Identify and Organize Key Learning Experiences	Create Table of Contents Using Knowledge/Skill Categories
<b>Phase B</b>	Retrieve and Document Different Types of Knowledge	Create Integrative “Knowledge Synthesis” Pages for Work Showcase
<b>Phase C</b>	Integrate Knowledge with Passions, Values, and Interests	Create a Philosophy Statement
<b>Phase D</b>	Synthesize and Apply Knowledge to New Areas	Complete Portfolio and Connect Knowledge/Skills to Outcomes

The IKPP produces a different kind of ePortfolio than the typical ePortfolio. The information is organized according to the student's core strengths and capacities identified through a systematic process

of dialogue and feedback with others. The UCO students who participated in the IKPP and in the mock interviews indicated that they found the process beneficial in helping them represent themselves to future employers.

The professionals who conducted the mock interviews with the students indicated that the ePortfolios provided an opportunity to gain a sense of the students' backgrounds and beyond-discipline experiences. They acknowledged that ePortfolios are not necessarily useful for all candidates; employers are most likely to view the ePortfolios of interview-level candidates. The employers reminded that an ePortfolio is only as valuable as a person's ability to draw on the information in an interview. Employers stated that in addition to the student's ability to apply their learning experiences to new areas, the student should be able to articulate specifically how their experiences will equip them for the work of the *position to which they are applying*.

NOTE: For more information on UCO's Student Transformative Learning Record (STLR) go to <http://www.uco.edu/central/tl/stlr/marketing/presentations-papers.asp>. For more information on UCO's STLR grant, <http://broncho2.uco.edu/press/prdetail.asp?NewsID=18041>.

### SELECT REFERENCES

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