Reconnecting relationships through technology

E-portfolio practice for student wellbeing in higher education: A scoping review

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With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, technological transformation in higher education was promoted globally. While e-portfolios are not necessarily new as an educational approach, their significance as an alternative online assessment model increased during this rapid, compulsory shift from face-to-face learning into distance learning modes (Rodriguez et al., 2022). Meanwhile, amidst the unprecedented pedagogical and technological changes, mental health issues are an alarming concern. Students in higher education face stressors impairing not only academic performance and social life but also mental health and wellbeing (Davis & Hadwin, 2021; Hartl et al., 2022; Prasath et al., 2021; Stallman et al., 2022).

The significance of developing collaborative, safe and supportive digital environments has been increasingly emphasized by educators and researchers in higher education institutions and universities around the world. However, no previous study has mapped existing studies on the impact of e-portfolio practice on student wellbeing. In that context, the aim of the study was to map and assess published empirical studies on the contribution of e-portfolio practice to student wellbeing in higher education. Our leading research question was: What is known from the existing research literature about the contribution of e-portfolio practice to student psychological wellbeing?

A scoping review was conducted using the methodological framework of Arksey and O'Malley (2005). A systematic and comprehensive search of ProQuest, Scopus, Web of Science, Wiley Online Library and Google Scholar databases was performed for studies published between 2012 and 2022. Eligibility criteria were agreed upon among the writers before the review started. One of the authors assessed eligibility in two stages and extracted data using Covidence Software. Where doubts arose, the authors came together to reach an agreement at the full text review stage.

The review included 23 papers based on empirical findings and discussions. Five thematic groupings around student wellbeing were identified among the included papers: motivational outcomes, self-perception outcomes, identity outcomes, social outcomes, and self-efficacy outcomes. E-portfolio practice, when designed to allow creativity and communication, seems to contribute positively to student wellbeing in higher education. When it is regarded as summative assessment, on the other hand, it might affect student wellbeing negatively as a stressor. Most of the students have a positive perception of e-portfolios on their personal development, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and motivation. There is also a minority of students reported to see no value in e-portfolio practice and perceive them as a waste of their time.

Future research should investigate how and what kind of e-portfolio learning design can help with building resilience and wellbeing among higher education students. More empirical research is needed to develop an instrument to measure the impact of e-portfolio practice on student psychological wellbeing as well as retention and success.

Keywords: e-portfolio, student wellbeing, higher education

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