

## Personal and Professional Development – Domain 5

An Bord Altranais (ABA, 2005, p.12) requires student nurses to “demonstrate development of skills of analysis, critical thinking, problem-solving and reflective practice.” An electronic portfolio allows the student to demonstrate these required skills and also enables supervisors to monitor and assess the student’s construction and development of their e-portfolio while out on placement (Morgan and Dyer, 2015). An e-portfolio is a platform on which a student can reflect on the skills, attitudes and knowledge they have learned and developed. It also enables the student to demonstrate how these were applied in practice and contributed to their development or achievement of competency in clinical practice (Casey and Egan, 2010; Green, Wyllie and Jackson, 2014; Ely, Kaye and Osborne, 2015). According to Price and Harrington (2013) the benefits of using an e-portfolio are the ability to update or add new entries from any electronic device as the need arises and unlike a hard copy, it is readily available to view when necessary. However these benefits are dependent on the availability of a compatible device, internet access and the student’s information technology (IT) skills. In a study about e-portfolios conducted by Dornan, Carroll and Parboosingh (2012), challenges revealed by participants were the unavailability of computer access and IT literacy. These challenges were also highlighted by students in the University of Huddersfield when an e-portfolio was implemented (Ely, Kaye and Osborne 2015). I concur with these findings as in my experience when constructing this e-portfolio, there were many occasions when internet access was unavailable to me. This proved very challenging for me, especially when my placement required me to move to that area for a period of time. Regular submissions were to be uploaded to the e-portfolio for evaluation and although I had access to a computer, this was futile as all my on-going development of my entries were on my personal laptop and internet access was unavailable for same.

In addition to lack of internet access, another disadvantage I had was poor IT skills. Varying degrees of IT skills among students seems to be a common challenge when attempting to implement an e-portfolio into a curriculum (Moule, Ward and Lockyer 2011; Dornan, Carroll and Parboosingh 2012; Ely, Kaye and Osborne 2015; Morgan and Dyer, 2015). This challenge was also recognised by my institute and IT training and access to on-line support was provided. Although this support enabled me to improve my IT skills and afforded me the ability to complete my portfolio, it proved to be a time-consuming task. Dornan, Carroll and Parboosingh (2012), McMullan (2014) and Morgan and Dyer (2015) maintain that the amount of time required to develop an e-portfolio is a concern. Furthermore, in my experience, sitting in front of a computer screen for hours impacted me negatively. I was easily distracted by incoming messages and found it difficult to maintain my concentration. In agreement, according to T. Butler, professor at University College Cork, the use of IT by students can have many negative effects. He suggests technology devices provide a distraction, impact sleep and lead to lower performance levels (Gartland, 2015). In contrast, Ciocco and Holtzman (2011) suggest that as the majority of today’s students are highly skilled in technology, an e-portfolio is an appropriate tool for assessment. They imply that millennial students prefer to complete assignments using IT.

**In conclusion,** although creating and developing an e-portfolio may be a time-consuming task, it may prove to be a worthwhile experience. Price and Harrington (2013) suggest an e-portfolio can be used by students post-graduation, as several entries may be relevant when applying for employment as a nurse. Similarly e-portfolios can be updated throughout ones career to reflect new skills and knowledge acquired through clinical experience. In order to complete this e-portfolio, I had to identify my own learning needs, thus enabling me to plan goals of learning with my preceptor and supervisor. These goals of learning were continuously evaluated and feedback on my performance was openly accepted by me. While developing my e-portfolio, I was motivated to seek out relevant learning opportunities, thus enabling me to implement the theory I had learned while also gaining new skills. I believe completing this e-portfolio has contributed to my achievement of competency in “Personal and Professional Development” (ABA, 2005).

## References

An Bord Altranais, 2005. *Requirements and Standards for Nurse Registration Education Programmes*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Dublin: An Bord Altranais.

Casey, D. and Egan, D., 2010. The use of professional portfolios and profiles for career enhancement. *British Journal of Community Nursing*, 15(11), pp.547-552.

Ciocco, M. and Holtzman, D., 2011. E-portfolios and the millennial students. *Journal of Continuous Education*, 56(3), pp. 69-71.

Dornan, T., Carroll, C. and Parboosingh J., 2012. An electronic portfolio for reflective continuing professional development. *Medical Education*, 36, pp. 767-769.

Ely, V., Kaye, V. and Osborne, A., 2015. Implementing an e-portfolio for non-medical prescribing modules. *Nurse Prescribing*, 13(5), pp.250-254.

Gartland, F., 2015. Books are better than screens, education conference told. *The Irish Times*, [online] 3 October. Available at: <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/books-are-better-than-screens-education-conference-told-1.2377997> [Accessed 25 November 2015].

Green, J., Wyllie, A. and Jackson, D., 2014. Electronic portfolios in nursing education: a review of the literature. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 14, pp.4-8.

McMullan, M., 2014. The portfolio is your key to self-development. *Nursing Standard*, 29(4), p. 73.

Morgan, P. and Dyer, C., 2015. Implementing an e-assessment of professional practice. *British Journal of Nursing*, 24(21), pp. 1068-1073.

Moule, P., Ward, R. and Lockyer, L., 2011. Issues with e-learning in nursing and health education in the UK: are new technologies being embraced in the teaching and learning environment? *Journal of Nursing Research*, 16(1), pp. 77-90.

Price, B. and Harrington, A., 2013. *Critical Thinking and Writing for Nursing Students*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Learning Matters.