The Power of Du Portfolio to Showcase Self-Regulated Learning

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Nilson (2013) described self-regulated learning (SRL) as "one's relationship with oneself, and one's ability to exert the effort, self-control, and critical self-assessment necessary to achieve the best possible results" (p. xxvii). Critical elements of SRL that instructors can develop in students are teaching students how to set learning goals, asking students to assess their progress towards those goals, supporting students as they process and store knowledge, assisting them in evaluating their own thinking and judgments, and aiding students with self-discipline strategies that enable success.

One tool instructors can use to facilitate student self-regulation and development is an electronic portfolio which allows students to demonstrate self-regulatory skills.

According to Abrami et al. (2008), electronic portfolios are digital containers which can store visual and auditory content such as text, images, video and sound. More than a mere repository, portfolios can serve as a way for students to select and organize content to suit a variety of pedagogical needs, while showcasing their progression of achievement, their abilities to reflect and discern, and to set goals.

Electronic portfolios are a vehicle for supporting students' work and the cataloging of learning materials, while offering a tangible display of student self-regulation. Creating and building a portfolio can also engage students in complex and meaningful work as they synthesize, distill, and judge what is suitable for presentation in a portfolio. Portfolios allow students a space where they can reflect on their learning processes and possible alternative strategies.

The University of Denver's electronic portfolio is a web-based application that supports the academic community with a searchable database of electronic portfolios for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and communities. Portfolios can be made private or available to DU community members, select groups, or the public at large.

Getting started with DU Portfolio

1. Go to https://portfolio.du.edu/ to open DU portfolio.
2. Login to Portfolio using your DU ID and its associated password.
3. Add content by clicking the *Add Item* button that appears in your portfolio header. Next, select the type of content you want to add (files, text, photo album, etc).
   > Note: DU Portfolio is a collection of pages containing categories that hold items (file, text, events, photo albums, and folders). When adding an item, you will be prompted to select a category to place that item in. You can name pages and categories whatever you choose.
4. Add a profile photo or banner to your portfolio page by selecting the appropriate button in your header.

DU Portfolio: Supporting Self-regulated Learning Activities

Self-regulated learning element	Suggested student portfolio activity
Goal setting, planning; self-assessment; judgment; decision making Goal setting & planning help students self-regulate their learning prior to engaging in learning activities; helps them establish strategies for achieving goals & determining how much time/ resources will be needed for achievement.	Setting up the portfolio; creating a timeline of when and what to post; the act of selecting what work to post. Identifying *why* they chose to post some things but not others. Writing self-reviews/critiques/analysis of their work for posting in the portfolio.
Discernment	Choosing among the security levels in DU Portfolio – Private; University; Public. Or create a Community Portfolio around a structured, relevant topic. For example, student organizations, or faculty supervised student-group projects.
Showcasing improvement	Writing a comparative analysis around a succession of portfolio works that required demonstration of the same skills (critical thinking, persuasion, judgment, reasoning, writing etc.).
Reflecting	Posting journal entries to the portfolio that exhibit critical analysis, contemplative thinking. Ask students to share personal thoughts / responses to their academic work. Journaling about the learning process while building out their portfolio (what was easy about it, what was challenging, what did they learn about their own character, what work made them proud?)
Demonstrating achievement/mastery	Selecting artifacts for inclusion in the portfolio that demonstrate mastery of a skill or ability, and then explaining how each chosen piece establishes/demonstrates the competency or mastery. Asking students to consider how this skill or new knowledge could benefit them, their potential future career, benefit them as a citizen, and/or a contributing member of society.
Organizing /Visualizing/Appraisal	Making determinations about the portfolio's visual design and layout, images, placement of text etc. Explaining the organization of the portfolio chronologically or conceptually such that the arrangement displays engagement with learning and is visually appealing.

Abrami, P., Wade, A., Pillay, V., Aslan, O., Bures, E., & Bentley, C. (2008). Encouraging self-regulated learning through electronic portfolios. *Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology 34*(3). Retrieved from
http://cjlt.csj.ualberta.ca/index.php/cjlt/article/view/507/238

Nilson, L. (2013). *Creating self-regulated learners*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.