

Bowling Green University

A summer 2005 quantitative study revealed that, after controlling for background factors, undergraduate students with eportfolios had significantly higher grade point averages, credit hours earned, and retention rates than a matched set of students without eportfolios. Significant positive relationships existed between grade point average and number of showcase portfolio artifacts, total number of files uploaded, and number of resumes uploaded; and also between credit hours earned and total number of files uploaded and number of resumes uploaded.

National Coalition for Electronic Portfolio Research
Bowling Green State University Preliminary Finding
March 21, 2006

Use of electronic portfolios by BGSU students was launched in the 2003-04 academic year on a voluntary basis. Early adopters included first-year student programs and the college student personnel master's degree program. In all, 436 students created accounts.

By the end of fall semester 2005, some 5,800 students plus about 250 faculty and staff members established electronic portfolios. Programs that have introduced electronic portfolios include music education, Springboard (a first-year experience program), and pilot sections of courses in middle childhood teacher education, general studies writing, and introductory psychology. In each case, faculty members have identified interest in enhancing and documenting student learning as the major factor in deciding to adopt electronic portfolios.

Student interest is high because electronic portfolios make the results of learning more tangible. One student commented, "Last year I thought I had really done an excellent job [on a practice teaching session] so I made the video clip of it public in my portfolio. Now I like to go back to look at it, especially when I have had a 'bad' day, because I can see clearly how much better I am now, even when things don't go well." For faculty, this kind of comment indicates a level of student engagement in learning and performance that would be difficult to demonstrate without the use of this technology.

Findings from a quantitative study conducted in summer 2005 revealed that, after controlling for background factors, undergraduate students with electronic portfolios had significantly higher grade point averages, credit hours earned, and retention rates than a matched set of students without electronic portfolios. Also for undergraduates, there were significant positive relationships between grade point average and number of showcase portfolio artifacts, total number of files uploaded, and number of resumes uploaded. There were also significant positive relationships between credit hours earned and total number of files uploaded and number of resumes uploaded. The study will be repeated in the summer of 2006.

Up to this point, access to the private control sections of the electronic portfolio system has required a separate login, but testing is now being completed and within weeks the system will be accessible via direct links within the University's portal, just one click away from the course management system and other online services. We expect that this increased convenience will generate much higher use of electronic portfolios and that the number of account owners will grow rapidly above its current count of 7,700.