Chapter 8
Applying E-Portfolio Evaluation Criteria to the Blackboard LMS E-Portfolio

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ABSTRACT

An important part of educational effective practice is performing evaluations to optimise learning. Applying evaluation criteria to virtual and personal learning environments enables educators to assess whether the technologies used are producing the intended effect. As online educational technologies become more sophisticated so does the need to evaluate them. This chapter suggests that traditional educational evaluation frameworks for evaluating e-Learning are insufficient for application to LMS e-portfolios. To address this problem we have developed evaluation criteria designed to assess the usability of LMS e-portfolios used within higher education. One of the main problems with evaluating the usability of LMS e-portfolios is that there is a distinct lack of empirical evidence of evaluation criteria designed and developed for evaluating e-portfolios. This chapter describes the results of applying newly developed LMS e-portfolio evaluation criteria within one UK higher education institution.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The evaluation of tertiary educational learning technologies has been identified as important for the quality assurance of technological domain based services governed by a Higher Educational (HE) institutions Information Communications Technology (ICT) department (Deepwell, 2007). According to Weaver, (2002) there is a need to develop evaluation criteria appropriate for evaluating the effectiveness of Learning Management System (LMS) e-portfolios with respect to factors relating to usability. The development of LMS E-portfolio Evaluation Criteria (LMSEC) was designed to be applied to Blackboard LMS e-portfolio system in order to assess the effectiveness of the University of the West of Scotland (UWS) Personal Development Planning (PDP) LMS e-portfolio system. The main aim of this research was to ascertain if a LMSEC can act as an effective means for assessing the quality of LMS e-portfolios. One of the main problems identified within the area of evaluation is the distinct lack of evaluative criteria for assessing the usability of LMS e-portfolios and empirical evidence to support the effectiveness of a LMSEC (McKenna and Stansfield, 2012). This chapter contributes to the body of empirical evidence within the field of quality assurance and evaluation.

A study was undertaken at the University of the West of Scotland during the period of 2012 which involved administrating an evaluation questionnaire about the usability factors associated with using Blackboard LMS e-portfolio for recording PDP. The objective of this chapter will be to discuss the development of a new LMSEC and the introduction of the LMSEC within one HE institution and presentation of the results of applying the LMSEC to Blackboard LMS e-portfolios. Finally, the results of the LMSEC evaluation questionnaire administered to the students at UWS will be discussed followed by a conclusion and future research directions.

2. DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF LMSEC EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The need to develop a LMSEC (see appendix Table 11) has been discussed previously in detail (McKenna and Stansfield, 2012; McKenna and Baxter, 2014). These studies found there are difficulties associated with applying e-Learning and learning technologies evaluation frameworks which are derived from a lack of suitability of these frameworks for assessing the quality of learning technologies such as LMS e-portfolios.

To develop suitable criteria for an evaluation framework appropriate for evaluating LMS e-portfolios we reviewed e-Learning system criteria at one higher educational institution in the UK, their initiatives for implementing and facilitating
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