Chapter XLIV

Facilitating Reflection Through ePortfolio at Tecnológico de Monterrey

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ABSTRACT

The chapter describes the Tecnológico de Monterrey implementation of an original ePortfolio model at the Mexico City campus. This model is grounded on student reflection in three broad areas of students’ lives designed by Jesus Meza, PhD. The implementation was launched in August 2002, with 60 students studying two different majors. By January 2005, the number of student portfolios had grown to 5,000, covering 18 different majors. According to the mission of the Tecnológico de Monterrey for the year 2015, the authors consider that the ePortfolio model will evolve into a comprehensive communication tool reflecting the personal, academic, and professional achievements of the community at the Tecnológico de Monterrey.

INTRODUCTION

According to the report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the 21st century (1998), the main objective of academic education is to develop the potential of each student so they can be mentally independent and socially compromised, and so they are equipped with the knowledge, capabilities, values, and attitudes that will help them to have a full life and perform a positive role in their communities.

In order to achieve this, our educative institutions face a challenge in the form of changes in our educative models, and also the integration of the holistic concept of education with its
benefits, comprehending the development of the person and the integration of basic elements in the social culture, inside the frame of institutional culture. Other authors, such as Porres (2004), mentions the unquestionable use of new educative models that attend the conformation of new social models that help to solve the 21st-century problems.

According to this, in 1997 the Tecnológico de Monterrey undertook an important change in its educative model (MET) that gave insight to the Proyecto Portafolio Electrónico (Electronic Portfolio Project) released in 2002. This project arises as an initiative of Jesus Meza, PhD, academic member of the Research and Innovation in Education Center (CIIE), who was in charge of the project until the midterm of second stage (January 2004). Meza received other assignments, so the Office for Academic Development (DDA) decided to expand the project and bring together the authors of this chapter. The first assignment was constructing a conceptual frame and assures the continuity of ePortfolios at the Tecnológico de Monterrey.

**CONCEPTUAL FRAME OF THE ePORTFOLIO PROJECT AT THE TECNOLÓGICO DE MONTERREY**

To establish the purpose for the ePortfolio, we adopted the constructivist approach to teaching-learning processes, the postulates of significant learning, and those of knowledge management. These postulates, as we understand them, follow.

**The Constructivist Frame**

There is certain consensus about the role of education to promote the integral development of people and the learning of some cultural contents so that they may become members of the sociocultural reference frame. Yet, some discrepancies occur when one tries to explain what is understood as development and learning, and what the relationships between those processes are. The development can be understood as a process whereby people acquire the social group culture in which they are submerged, through the structures available at each moment. Even though people development has internal dynamics, according to Piaget, this is possible due to the social interactions between the individual and the many agents acting as mediators of culture, parents, and teachers, according to Vigotsky’s postulates.

In this development conception, learning is understood as an individual building process to make a personal and unique interpretation of such culture. From this perspective the learning processes are not a mere association between stimuli and responses, or a knowledge accumulation, but qualitative changes in the existing structures and schemas of increasing complexity. Learning is not just a copy or internal reproduction of reality or external information. This makes the learning process unique and unrepeatable each time. Individual construction is not opposed to social interaction; on the contrary, they complement each other. The same as development, learning is an internal process: nobody can learn for us, but we learn due to the social interaction process with other people acting as mediators of culture’s contents. In the educative environment, students learn culture’s contents established in the real curriculum, thanks to the processes of interaction and communication with their professors and classmates.

**The Postulates of Significant Learning**

The constructivist conception, having as an explicative frame the teaching and learning