TUM

04. Time-saving strategies for the ePortfolio

Where can you save time?

Artifacts

1. Show examples

For many students new to the ePortfolio, it may be unclear what an artifact is or what counts as an artifact. Show students (anonymous) examples of strong and/or weak artifacts from the beginning to help them understand what's expected and what they should aim to achieve.

You'll avoid fielding repeated questions over the semester, saving you time (and from grading common errors) in the long run. You might even consider going one step further and evaluate examples with your students.

Reflective practice

3. Less is more

It's a fine balance to provide students with enough input and guidance without overwhelming them with too many reflection questions. Consider refining your list of questions by reflecting on the following: What connections would you like students to make between course content, artifacts, and/or their learning process? What evidence should they use (e.g., references to course content or specific skills) to show their learning progress? How might they apply this learning in future?

Building a focused set of fewer questions can make giving feedback or grading more efficient and lead to deeper reflection. You might also consider including a word/page limit to encourage them to write more concisely.

Reflective practice

2. Provide structure

Reflection doesn't come naturally to many students. Like with anything new, it requires guidance and practice. One way to give your students an effective framework to structure their reflective work is the **STAR method**.

Students can use this framework to reflect on a specific situation or learning experience and integrate course content as evidence to demonstrate what they've learned. It helps keep their responses and your feedback focused. This framework also allows you to design a clear rubric for the summative assessment of their reflective work.

STAR Method	
Situation	What's a (challenging) situation that you were involved in where the outcome was positive (or negative)?
Task	What was your role in the situation? What were you tasked to do?
Action	What did you do to overcome this new or challenging situation? Why?
Results	What were the effects of your actions? What did you learn? What would you do differently in the future?

Feedback
4. Use alternative feedback methods

Providing regular (formative) feedback throughout the semester is an essential part of the ePortfolio, but it doesn't need to come exclusively from you. Take a look at the different types of feedback in the box to the right for inspiration.

No matter the mode of feedback you choose to adopt, consider highlighting aggregate responses and offering overall guidance or addressing common mistakes throughout the semester rather than only providing individual feedback.

Assessment
5. Use a rubric

Showing students your grading criteria before they get started on the ePortfolio clarifies your assessment expectations from the beginning and gives students a clear roadmap of what they should aim to achieve.

A rubric can help you grade more efficiently, objectively, and fairly, increasing reliability among multiple graders. Although it does require a high time investment initially to develop, a clearly defined rubric will save you time in the long run.

Support for students
6. Create a list of FAQs

Students are likely to be unfamiliar with the ePortfolio as a form of assessment, may be skeptical of its value, and wonder whether it'll be worth the time investment. Address potential concerns and challenges with a collection of typical questions, including solutions on how they may be overcome or how you (or teaching assistants) will support them. It's important to communicate how, why, and where the ePortfolio process and product will be relevant to their learning.

Types of feedback

self-assessment
Guided by structured questions or clearly defined criteria, students reflect on and evaluate their own learning or performance.

interactive cover sheet
It's a single page where students identify specific areas of their work that they'd like feedback on. They can also comment on potential areas of improvement, their strengths, or ask questions.

peer review
Using structured questions or a rubric with clearly defined tasks for the reviewer, students evaluate their peers' work and provide constructive feedback on how they can improve it.

audio/video
It's a file of your voice giving feedback to students.

It's a video file of you providing feedback to students as a screencast, a "talking head," or a mix of both.

digital rubric
It's a scoring guide tool built into Moodle that can be used to facilitate criterion-based assessment and calculate students' aggregated grade.

Interested in more feedback strategies?

See our guide on enhancing learning through formative assessment and feedback. Or get in touch with us at info@prolehre.tum.de! We're happy to provide you with individual support.