Introducing ePortfolios to Prevent Plagiarism

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Abstract
There are many effective tools available to make learning interesting in an English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom. One such tool is the use of an electronic portfolio, also known as a digital portfolio or an ePortfolio. This paper demonstrates how ePortfolios support formative assessment in a language classroom. An electronic portfolio could serve as a pedagogical tool to prevent plagiarism, as it is one of the authentic ways to assess the students' performance during the course. Introducing ePortfolios at tertiary level can bring about the much-needed change in teaching, learning and assessment methods contributing to students' academic success. The aim of the study was to enhance student learning by introducing ePortfolios to English for Special Purposes (ESP) learners at undergraduate level. The study explores the piloting of ePortfolio in ESP module for undergraduate students at a private college in Oman as part of the formative assessment in an attempt to prevent plagiarism and also to motivate the learners to showcase their coursework in a digital format. A qualitative and quantitative survey was conducted to evaluate the efficacy of the practice and the results of the study indicate that the learners seem to have recognized the learning potential of ePortfolios, as their response to the above mentioned assessment method was quite positive. The findings of this study serve as a determining factor in deciding whether ePortfolios could effectively be used as a formative assessment tool for academic courses in the specific learning environment.
Keywords: academic ePortfolios, english for special purposes, ePortfolios, formative assessment, higher education, plagiarism