



Themed Learning Communities Leverage Eportfolios for Integrative Learning

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Themed Learning Communities at IUPUI

First-Year Seminar + 2 disciplinary courses

25 freshmen co-enroll

Guided by faculty team:

- ❖ Explore a theme,
- ❖ Interdisciplinary connections,
- ❖ Out-of-class activities



Five attributes of a TLC at IUPUI

1. **Interdisciplinary theme** shapes each TLC course's design.
2. **Integration** of course content in each TLC course is intentional; course design encourages **integrative thinking** in students.
3. **Out-of-class activities** enhance academic content, integrative thinking, and interdisciplinary theme.
4. **Active learning** strategies are central to each TLC course.
5. **Faculty collaboration** fosters integrative approach, exploration of theme, co-curricular experiences, and student development.



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Eportfolio Grant Goals

- ❖ Core group of Themed Learning Communities (TLC) faculty
- ❖ Implement integrative eportfolio in TLC
- ❖ Increase integrative thinking
- ❖ Increase adoption of eportfolio to promote integrative thinking in TLCs



1.5 Day Summer Institute

- ❖ What is an eportfolio and why use it
- ❖ Integrative learning
- ❖ Reflection
- ❖ Signature assignments
- ❖ Audience / Peer feedback
- ❖ Taskstream
- ❖ Team project sharing and feedback





Team Projects

- ❖ Start with existing ePDP framework used in FYS
- ❖ “Signature” artifacts from each TLC course
- ❖ Reflection assignments - integrative thinking
- ❖ Start simple

Phase I: Pilot Team Reflection

- ❖ Every team increased TLC quality
- ❖ Every team identified new ideas for next year
- ❖ Team feedback important for idea sharing

Phase II: Pilot Assessment

- ❖ Direct measures of student learning - eportfolios
- ❖ AAC&U Value Rubric Integrative Learning



Integrative Learning

Definition

“Integrative learning is an understanding and a disposition that a student builds *across the curriculum and co-curriculum*, from making simple *connections among ideas and experiences* to *synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond campus.*”

**-AAC&U Integrative Learning
VALUE Rubric**



Key Concepts

Integrative
Learning

Beyond academic
boundaries

Foundation = Disciplinary
knowledge

Expand beyond

Address real-
world problems

Require multi-faceted
knowledge

Internal changes

Lifelong learner

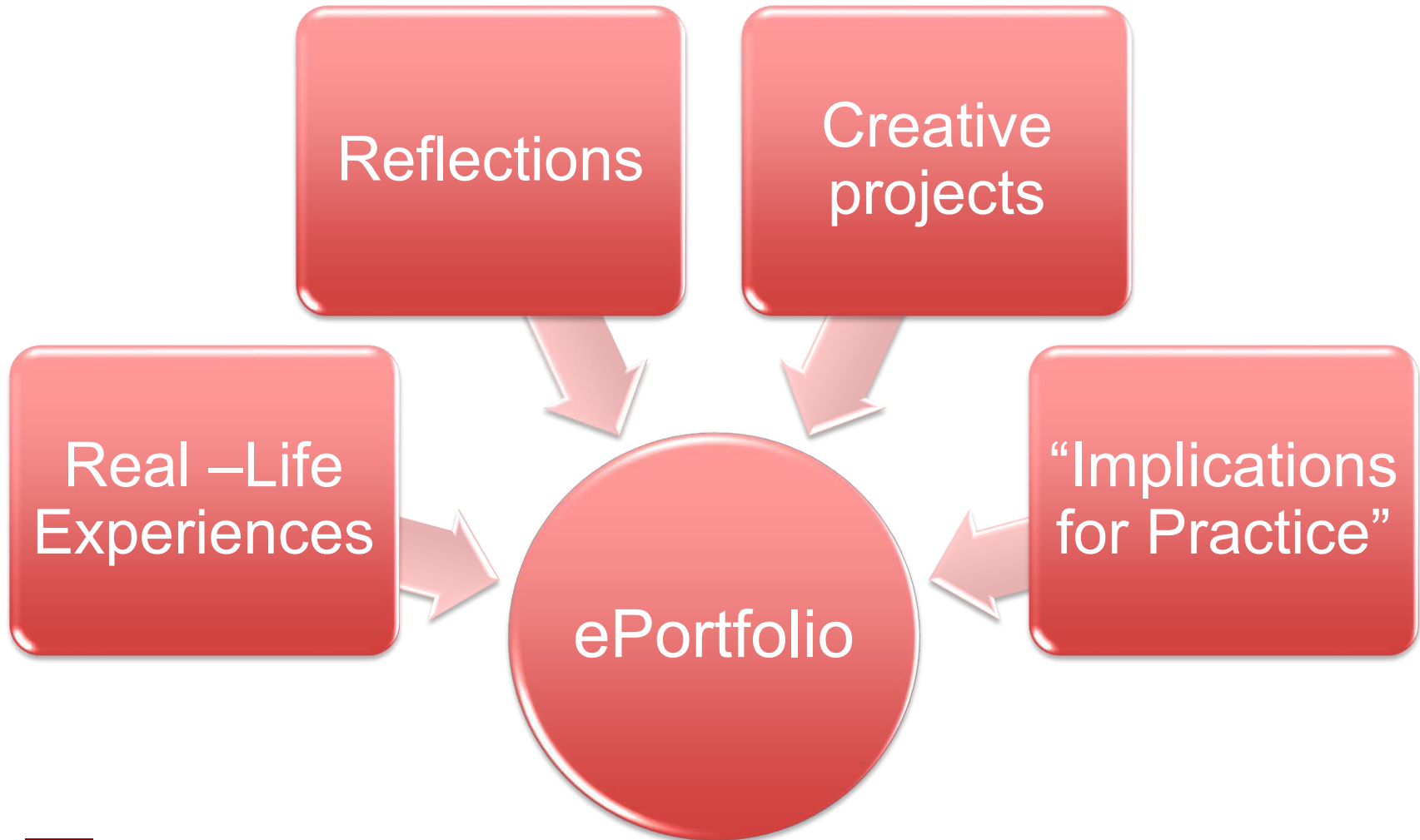
Adaptability



You won't find it in a Test!



Where you *might* find it... when students make connections



Components

Rating Scale

- Benchmark (1)
- Milestones (2, 3)
- Capstone (4)
- Can give a 0 if not at Benchmark

Five Criteria

- Connections to experience
- Connections to discipline
- Transfer
- Integrated communication
- Reflection and self-assessment



Connections to Experience

For composition, every senior had to make a senior memory book to pass the class and graduate. Looking back, I realize now that Ms. Davis really failed in preparing me for college. All I had to do was write a minimum of three paragraphs per topic page in my memory book. She never actually read any of the pages in my memory book; instead, she just walked around the room to check and see if everyone completed the assignment for that day. The rest of the points were given if I made my memory look pretty by adding pictures, glitter, and stickers. Who knew I needed to be good at arts 'n' crafts to get a diploma. I read a book called *The Smartest Kids in the World and How They Got That Way* by Amanda Ripley; after reading this book I was made more aware of the wrong doings that had been brought upon me. For instance, in Ripley's book she describes participation points as a lack of rigor. Students in other countries were graded on their responses being right or wrong and how much supporting evidence was put into answers. In the United States teachers look to see if the assignment is done and award points for incorrect, yet completed work. That system has set students like me up for failure by the time we reach higher education.



Transfer

The smell of cigarettes stained air. It burnt my lungs, like when you breath in on a cold day. It was unpleasant, it made me pinch my face up in disgust while the tattoo artist's needles buzzed on my skin. My side numbed over, like a sheet of ice casting over the ground, the buzzing covered my body. He spoke to me about his tattoos. The meanings, the depth. Majority resembled his anxiety during cancer. Something so destructive turned into a beautiful piece of art that grasped tightly to his skin. He spoke negatively, not about his cancer, but about his doctors and oncologists. He said they treated him like a paycheck, and they amount of anxiety it caused him was brutal. In that instance, I knew my calling. That sentence still rings in my ears and plays repeatedly in my head. I wanted to help people through those times. I wanted to ease the anxiousness that keeps them up at night, thinking about their cancer.



Reflection / Transfer

The TLC has helped my understanding, my perspective, and my interpretation of cultural differences. From the American Identity essay and the cultural myths, the

Pers understanding of who we are. Our First Year Seminar is what has brought that to

Ident light, for ~~example, we took in activities such as the Social Identity Wheel, the~~

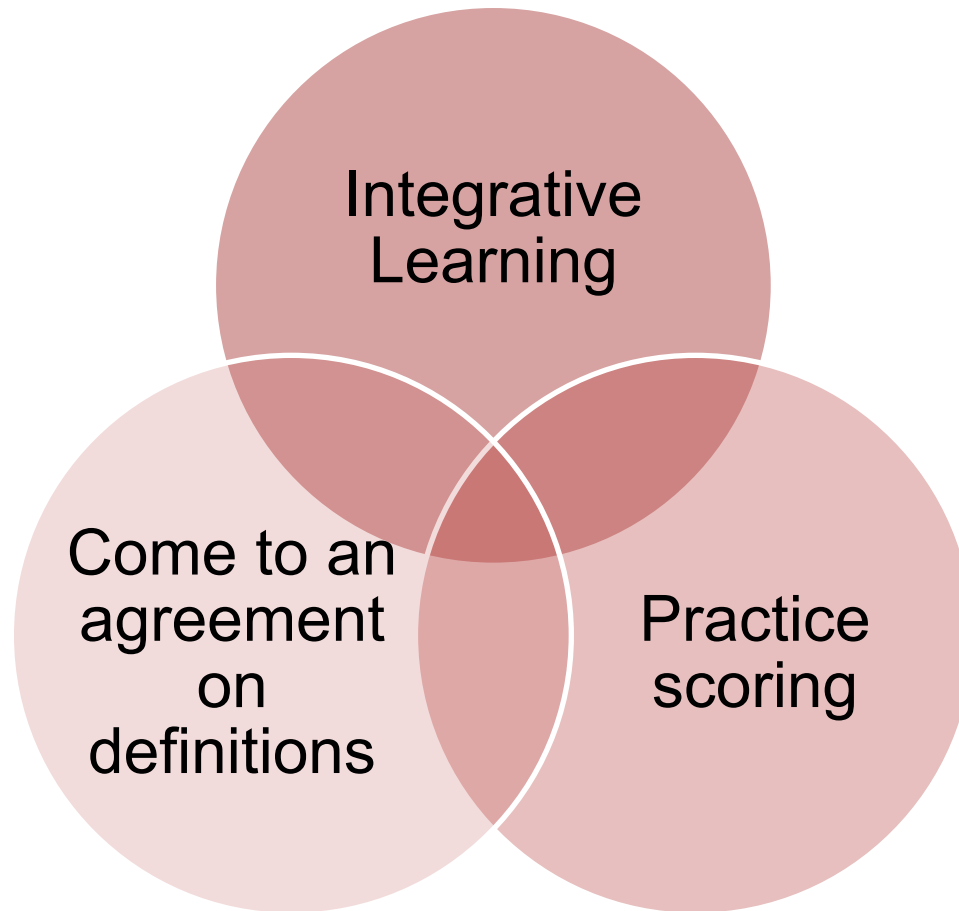
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I want to use my gained knowledge in my future line of work. As an oncology social worker, I want to use my understanding of cultural differences to better see the view of others stories. I want to be empathetic when getting to know people with different influences and stories, I want to really understand them from their stories. Their identity, for the most part, will be found within their stories. I want to be able to see them and possibly relate and identify with their experiences that have shaped their stories. I can use the knowledge on the stories to better interact with people of different cultures, by sharing my own. I can build a connection with them by sharing stories to let them see more of what how I identify to my cultural.



Calibration and Scoring

Calibration session



Scoring groups

3 groups

- 5 portfolios per group

Randomly Assigned

- Links kept from researchers

Met to discuss scoring

- No interrater reliability

Scores recorded via Qualtrics

- [Link here](#)



Results

Overall Results

Dimension	Capstone (4)	Milestone (3)	Milestone (2)	Benchmark (1)	Does not meet (0)
Connections to Experience	0 0.0%	1 3.3%	8 26.7%	17 56.7%	4 13.3%
Connections to Discipline	0 0.0%	1 3.3%	6 20.0%	14 46.7%	9 30.0%
Transfer	0 0.0%	2 6.7%	4 13.3%	16 53.3%	8 26.7%
Integrated Communication	0 0.0%	2 6.7%	13 43.3%	12 40.0%	3 10.0%
Reflection and Self-Assessment	1 3.3%	5 16.7%	12 40.0%	10 33.3%	2 6.7%



TLC #1

- The majority of students at least met the benchmark on every dimension except Transfer. Four of the six portfolios we rated did not do enough to meet the benchmark on that dimension.
- While many students were able to meet the benchmarks, Reflection and Self-Assessment was the only dimension where the majority of students exceeded the benchmark.



TLC #2 (lots of comments)

- Connections to Discipline seemed to be both the greatest area of strength and the greatest opportunity for improvement. Some students did a great job making clear connections between disciplines, while other students only focused on one discipline or discussed both disciplines without connecting them.
- The reviewers seemed to be confused in some instances over whether the connections to discipline were prompted or made independently.
- All students were at or above benchmark level on Connections to Experience, Transfer, Integrated Communication, and Reflection and Self-Assessment.



TLC #3 (very few comments)

- None of the dimensions were particularly weak, but Connections to Discipline was probably the weakest. It may be more difficult in an interdisciplinary course for students to make connections using course content.
- All but one student exceeded the benchmark in Reflection and Self-Assessment.



TLC #4

- None of the dimensions were particularly weak, but Connections to Discipline was probably the weakest. It may be more difficult in an interdisciplinary course for students to make connections using course content.
- All but one student exceeded the benchmark in Reflection and Self-Assessment.



TLC #5

- The overall scores on this portfolio were held down by one student who seemed to have submitted an incomplete portfolio. However, both Connections to Discipline and Transfer presented opportunities for improvement as well.
- The few comments from Connections to Discipline suggest that students may discuss more than one field or discipline but don't do enough to really connect ideas across disciplines.
- Digital story particularly effective



Faculty follow-up - Changes

“We decided to not include the eportfolio this semester. We are going to try using the digital story and linkedin as a reflection and outward facing tool. “

“I have rewritten many of my reflection prompts to be more specific in asking for students to make integrative connections, I have used the VALUE rubric as a guide for doing this. ...”

“...I'm giving suggested topics/artifacts that students might use in each section instead of requiring certain things so that students can be a bit more creative and make it more their own. “

“Students ...will discuss all portions of the TaskStream ePDP, but will focus on Career Goals and Community Connections (service).”

Our TLC has worked on improved integration.



Faculty follow-up - Impact

“We have a new team member, and so having the eportfolios from last year made it easy to see where we need to work on making better connections. ...”

“I think we have a better plan for working together this semester and have tried to develop projects more closely aligned with each course. ...”

“Always positive interaction, with input from the Advisor, Peer Mentor, and linked course instructors .”

“We have increased our weekly communication in an effort to improve integration.”



Reviewer / Faculty Experience



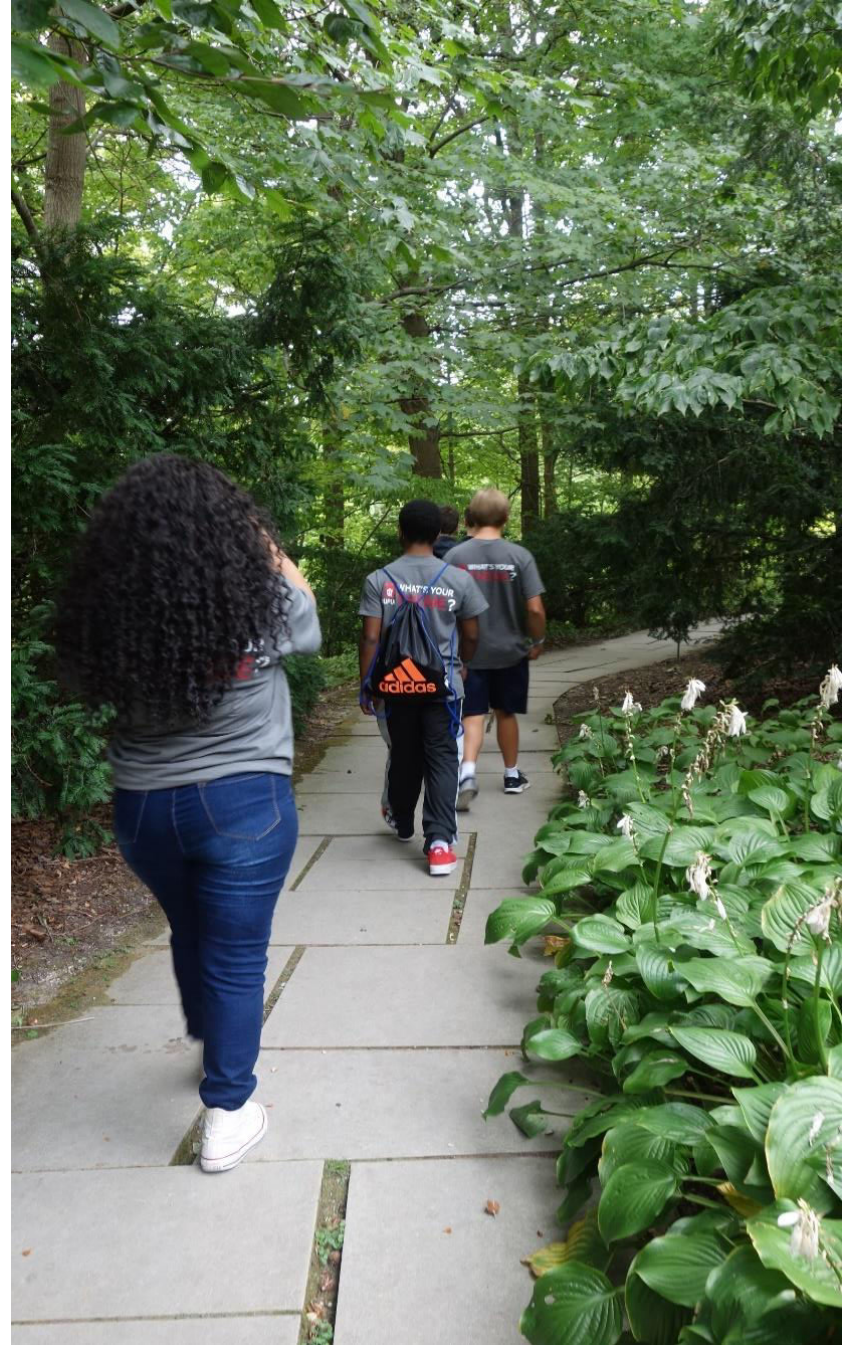
Next Steps

- ❖ Faculty development - Pedagogy and technology
- ❖ Build eportfolio into fabric of course
- ❖ Embed eportfolio throughout the curriculum/program



Tips

- Provide support through professional development
- Use incentives when possible, accountability
- Recruit reviewers with influence
- Develop a common understanding of the rubric
- Simplify if possible
- Have one faculty member who knows pedagogy and technology
- Professional development
- Close the loop



Q&A



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FULFILLING *the* PROMISE