



STUDENT'S INSIGHT INTO THE USE OF E-PORTFOLIOS FOR A REFLECTIVE PRACTICE PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

In the digital age, the integration of technology in education has transformed how students submit assignments, with e-portfolios emerging as a dynamic platform. E-portfolios offer students a personalized digital space to document their learning progress, showcase achievements, and engage in reflective practice. This study explores the perceptions of English student teachers regarding the use of e-portfolios in a reflective practice project. Utilizing a qualitative approach, both questionnaires and interview data were collected with 14 students. The findings reveal that students perceive e-portfolios as beneficial for tracking their growth, visualizing progress, and supporting reflective learning. Despite these benefits, challenges such as technical difficulties and time constraints were also noted. The study highlights the significance of e-portfolios as an alternative assessment tool and emphasizes their role in enhancing self-reflection and professional growth. However, addressing technical issues and time management is crucial for maximizing the potential of e-portfolios in education.

Keywords: *E-portfolios, reflective practice, student perceptions, alternative assessment, digital learning, self-reflection, teacher education, educational technology, learning progress.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, submitting assignments is not just as monotonous as it used to be. The students have utilized technological advances such as the use of the E-portfolio website. An e-Portfolio is described as a personalized digital portfolio designed to support lifelong learning endeavors (Amulya et al., 2004). It includes concrete proof of individual accomplishments, presented as artifacts, which are selectively shared with individuals authorized by the owner (Balaban et al., 2011.). E-portfolio serves a platform that fosters personal introspection, encouraging individuals to reflect on their experiences and achievements (Lorenzo et al., 2005). E-portfolios used in documenting their learning progress and evolving into

thoughtful professionals (Oakley et al., 2014). The e-portfolio platform effectively facilitated reflective practice among the student teachers. It successfully enabled them to record their reflective writings, establish personal discussion boards for sharing reflective thoughts, and engage in peer reflection via online discussions (Nambiar & Krishnan, 2017). Using e- portfolios to showcase and share their learning and teaching encounters. (Habeeb & Ebrahim, 2019) to assess the academic accomplishments and competencies acquired through their educational achievement and skills from their educational experiences. (Lestari et al., 2016) Reflective practice is the ability to reflect on one's actions so as to engage in a process of continuous learning. As cited

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by Ghaye (2011) Reflective practice is where the work frequently grounded in practice, transient, and emerges from intricate collaborative efforts, technology has been effectively employed as a tool to amplify reflection. As students in teacher education, reflection centers on improving their learning by drawing insights from their experiences while conducting tutorial teaching in schools (Ting et al., 2013). Schunk (1992) concluded that Students' perceptions encompass their thoughts, beliefs, and emotional responses toward individuals, circumstances, and occurrences within their educational environment. how students learn, stay motivated, and are taught assume that students actively process information, they are not just passive recipients of knowledge. These theories suggest that how students perceive information is crucial. Perceptions are influenced by personal traits and the situation, shaping not only their own actions but also how others respond to them. Recent research shows that understanding student perceptions helps explain how well they achieve beyond just their abilities and the environment they're in like rewards or teaching materials. This highlights the importance of considering how students see and interpret what they learn.

Based on the explanation provided earlier, understanding students' perspectives is important. Previous studies have examined the benefits and challenges of e-portfolios from the viewpoint of students. As evidence by a recent study from the United States, Jaekel (2020) revealed from the article that entitled "Benefits and challenges implementing e-portfolios in a graduate student affairs preparation program" that using e-portfolios had lots of good results for their students. It let them think deeply about their skills and knowledge, connecting what they learn with real-life use.

other different study from Parker (2012) revealed the disadvantages or challenges of the student perception toward e-portfolios is by the lack of time to engage meaningfully with the e-portfolio. Other challenges included unclear requirements, an inappropriate system for the intended goal, and perceptions that the e-portfolio was mere busy work or unsuitable for employment. Specific disadvantages included the time required to complete the portfolio and issues with the accessibility of the e-portfolio system, which hindered usability and interaction with stakeholders. Some students doubted whether all reviewers would use the e-portfolio, expressing concerns about its relevance to potential employers. Students also mentioned difficulties uploading documents and the need for a scanner as drawbacks.

However, there has been limited study regarding students' perceptions of e-portfolios in reflective practice projects. To address this gap, this study delved into students' viewpoints regarding the utilization of e-portfolios for reflective practice projects.

Research questions

1. What benefits do students perceive from using e-portfolios for reflective Practice Project?
2. What challenges or difficulties do students encounter when using e-portfolios for reflective practice project?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

- E-portfolios as student's learning experience

Before digital advancements, educators and professionals used physical portfolios for assessing and showcasing work. Now, e-portfolios have replaced them, serving as digital platforms for students to organize and present their work effectively (Ciesielkiewicz et al., 2019). An e-

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portfolio is a compilation that facilitates and encourages personal growth. Through the e-portfolio, students can track their personal development and observe their progress over time (Baş et al., 2011). The creation and implementation of an e-portfolio are rooted in the idea that reflecting on its development enables students to record and monitor their learning progress, form a cohesive overview of their experiences, and enhance their self-awareness (Syzdykova et al., 2021). E-portfolios serve as genuine assessments that support ongoing learning by displaying and distributing educational materials, recording reflective learning experiences, linking learning across different phases, and facilitating regular feedback to enhance progress (Yang et al., 2016). Its development enables students to reflect on and evaluate their progress across various educational areas, fostering introspection. It also helps the teachers in assessing the thorough acquisition of both general and professional skills (Trotsenko & Tiutiunyk, 2017)

- **Benefits and Challenges**

E-learning has become a significant method for teaching and delivering education, especially in special education. It's crucial to invest in research and development to fully develop and effectively apply this new teaching method. Assessing and monitoring student progress in e-learning environments is essential for maximizing its effectiveness in teacher education (Meyen & Aust, 2003). Access to education relies on technology, particularly the internet,

which enhances learning opportunities and information access. Online learning utilizes internet tools for educational communication and collaboration, involving both synchronous and asynchronous interactions between learners and instructors. However, assessing students and providing effective feedback remains a challenge in online education (Tareen & Haand, 2020). Madaki (2021) concluded that the benefits of online learning assessments from students is include the ability to connect diverse resources in multiple formats. It is highly effective for online course delivery, offering convenience and flexibility with resources accessible anytime and from anywhere. Beside there are also the challenges that can caused the difficulty to using online learning. The main technological challenges stem from inadequate Internet connectivity and electronic devices. the other previous study conducted about the challenges from using online learning assessment as evident by a recent Italy study (Ferri, 2020) found These issues can exacerbate inequalities by limiting access to essential technology because not all learners have the necessary resources, such as fast Internet connections and robust computing devices, to fully benefit from online education.

- **Reflective Teaching**

Reflective teaching has emerged as a significant focus in numerous teacher training programs. It emphasizes a thorough scrutiny of the teaching process, moving beyond the traditional emphasis on technical and practical aspects typically seen in conventional teacher education programs. (Rudney & Guillaume, 1989). Reflection is an activity that observing one's own experiences in order to closely examine them,

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occasionally giving a brief attention and more often delving deeper to explore the nuances (Amulya, 2004). Reflection is looking back to determine what we have successfully achieved or failed to achieve. To feel where we have come from and what actions we need to take, another part of the process, which is often overlooked, is looking forward, which means directing ourselves towards achieving our future goals (Ghaye, 2011). Reflection profound insight emerged regarding an overlooked detail, pinpointing a moment when crucial details were initially missed (Gillie Bolton et al., 2005) in education, reflective emphasized and have evolved into integral elements of professional evaluations (Machost & Stains, 2023) referring to their ability to introspectively evaluate and analyze their own teaching practices. In essence, teachers should engage in reflective teaching (Kurniati et al., 2019)

3. METHODS

In this study, the researcher used qualitative approach, as it effectively facilitates the exploration and collection of rich, detailed data through techniques such as interviews, focusing on understanding the experiences of participants (Creswell, 2013). All interviews were recorded to ensure accurate transcription and capture of responses for thorough analysis. Additionally, questionnaires provide a flexible and effective means of collecting data across various research areas (Kuphanga, 2024) By analyzing the data obtained from interviews and questionnaires administered to English student teachers enrolled in a reflective writing class, this research aims to provide an in-depth examination of their

perceptions regarding the use of e-portfolios in reflective practice projects.

Research Participants

In this research, the participants were fourth-semester English Education students from Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara who utilized the e-portfolio platform in their reflective writing course and completed their reflective practice project using it. The study focused on a population of 14 students from the fourth-semester morning class, and all of these students were selected as the sample for the research.

Instruments

The researchers employed two instruments to gather insights on students' views of using e-portfolios for reflective practice projects: questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire, distributed via Google Forms, included 14 items designed on a Likert scale with four response options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire data were analyzed descriptively to identify students' perspectives on e-portfolios. Additionally, the researchers conducted interviews with seven questions focusing on students' perceptions of using e-portfolios. The interviews were recorded to facilitate accurate transcription of responses. The insights from both the questionnaires and interviews were integrated for a comprehensive analysis of the findings.

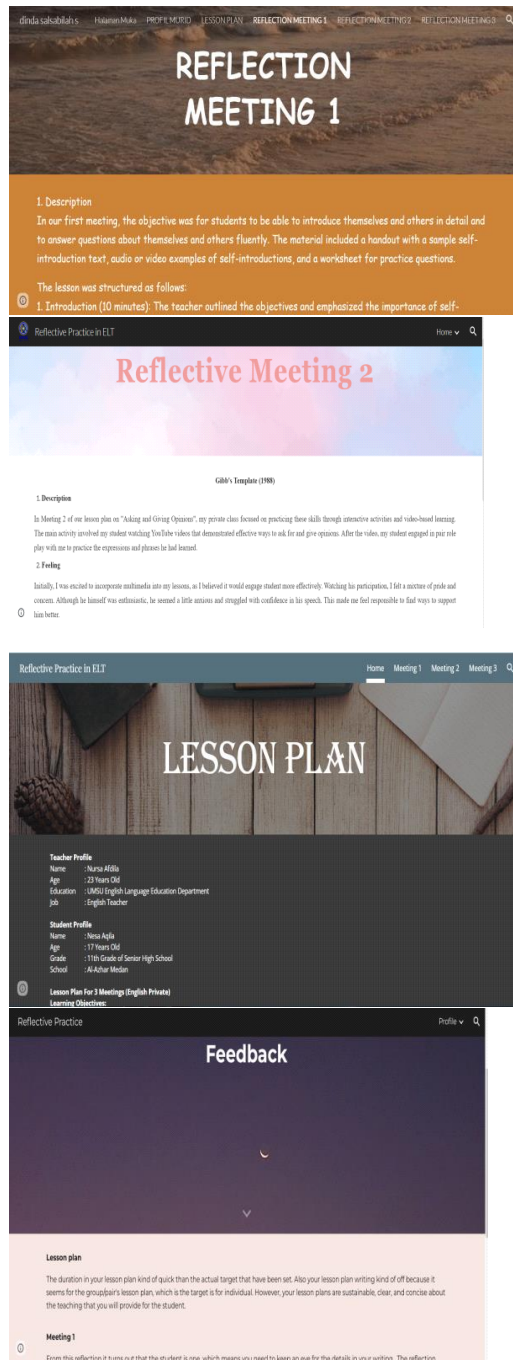
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

These displays highlight how students organized their lesson plans, reflections, and other relevant materials. The features of these e-portfolios align with the perceived benefits and challenges discussed in the findings,

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illustrating the effectiveness of e-portfolios as a tool for reflective practice.

Examples of E-Portfolios:



Figures 1.1-1.4 The Varieties display of E-portfolios Website of Students

The following Figures illustrate the e-portfolio websites utilized during the reflective practice projects, serving as vital platforms for documenting the learning experiences throughout the

course. These e-portfolios showcase lesson plans, reflections, and personal growth, highlighting the journey of becoming effective educators. The e-portfolio entries from Meetings 1 and 2 emphasize the objectives and structure of the reflective meetings, underlining the importance of self-introduction and fostering interaction among peers. Additionally, one of the screenshots displays a meticulously crafted lesson plan, demonstrating the organization and presentation of teaching strategies within the e-portfolio format. Furthermore, another screenshot reveals feedback provided after the meetings, which includes reflections on the learning experiences and suggestions for improvement, capturing the essential insights gained from each teaching session encountered during the reflective process. Collectively, the examples illustrate how e-portfolios facilitate a comprehensive assessment of the learning journey, enabling the tracking of growth and the identification of areas for further development.

1. Findings

To explore the benefits and challenges students perceive from using e-portfolios for reflective practice projects, qualitative data were collected through a combination of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. A total of 14 questionnaire items were distributed via Google Forms, focusing on various aspects of students' experiences with e-portfolios, such as their influence on self-assessment, learning progress, and critical thinking. These questions invited students to reflect on their personal experiences without relying on numerical or quantitative measures.

In addition to the questionnaires, 7 in-depth interview questions were posed to further probe the participants' reflective processes and explore their

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subjective experiences. The interview questions aimed to uncover nuanced perspectives regarding how e-portfolios influenced their engagement, motivation, and the challenges they faced during their reflective practice projects.

The combination of questionnaires and interviews provided a rich source of qualitative data, allowing for an in-depth understanding of students' views on the use of e-portfolios. The analysis was focused on identifying key themes that emerged from their responses, including the perceived benefits, practical challenges, and suggestions for improving the e-portfolio experience.

1: What benefits do students perceive from using e-portfolios for the Reflective Practice Project?

The data represented in the bar chart indicates that students perceive several benefits from using e-portfolios for reflective practice. A significant majority of respondents reported positive experiences, particularly regarding their ability to visualize progress and engage in self-reflection.

For instance, a high percentage of students expressed that e-portfolios serve as an effective alternative assessment tool, allowing them to track their academic journey comprehensively. Many students indicated that e-portfolios enhance their understanding of their skills and knowledge over time, which aligns with the positive feedback captured in the bar chart.

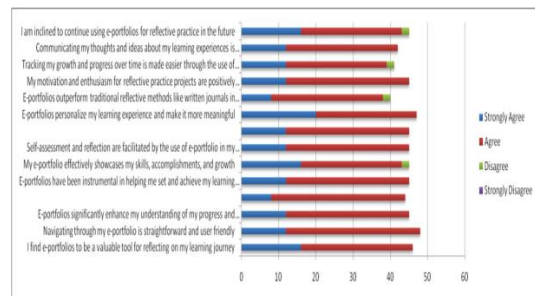


Figure 2.1 the recap of students answers of 14 questionnaires from google form.

As shown in Figure 1, the majority of students responded positively to the use of e-portfolios for reflective practice. For most questions, over 60% of students selected 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree,' with particularly high agreement on the statements 'I find e-portfolios to be a valuable tool for reflecting on my learning journey' and 'My e-portfolio effectively showcases my skills, accomplishments, and growth.' This indicates that students generally perceive e-portfolios as a helpful tool in enhancing their reflective learning.

Overall, the chart reflects a strong consensus in favor of the benefits of e-portfolios, particularly in aiding self-reflection and showcasing student progress, while some technical challenges were highlighted by a few students.

Benefits of E-Portfolio:

- *Alternative Assessment Tool*

Alternative Assessment Tool: E-portfolios serve as a good alternative to traditional assessment methods typically used in e-learning environments. They allow for a more comprehensive evaluation of a student's skills and knowledge over time.

Student 1: *"In my opinion, the use of the e-portfolio website is refreshing because*

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it's different from other assignment submission websites; as we can see students usually only use e-Learning. So, e-portfolios are something new that I've learned about, and I also just found out that there is an e-portfolio that can be used by both teachers and students."

- *Visualizing Progress:*

E-portfolios allow students to track their academic journey by collecting various types of work (assignments, projects, etc.) in one organized platform. This not only showcases their achievements but also helps them see their skill development and knowledge acquisition over time. For example, students mentioned that e-portfolios helped them visualize improvements in their skills through different media, such as documents, images, and videos.

Student 1: *"In my opinion, I find e-Portfolio easy to implement, especially for subjects like Reflective Practice. It can be used to organize each learning session clearly, with separate sections for different meetings. It also allows the creation of student and teacher profiles.."*

Student 4: *"I believe that utilizing an e-portfolio enables me to compile completed assignments into a single platform. It also aids me in visualizing progress over time, showcasing advancements in skills and knowledge through documents, images, videos, and more"*

Student 8: *"Using an electronic portfolio has helped me showcase my progress and achievements in a more visual and structured way. It makes it easier for others to see the reflective practice projects that I have carried out."*

- *Access and Flexibility:*

Students appreciate that e-portfolios can be accessed anytime and anywhere, making it easier to manage their work. This flexibility is particularly beneficial for students who may have irregular schedules or those who prefer to study in different environments. The ability to upload and manage content without strict deadlines enhances the learning experience.

Student 2: *"The concrete benefits that I feel are the ability to access information anytime and anywhere as well as the ability to make more innovative and varied assessments."*

Student 4: *"I think the benefit is that all files are neatly organized and the e-portfolio can be accessed anytime and anywhere."*

Student 5: *"I can analyze my portfolio based on the notes I have included in my e-portfolio website. This gives me the overview of my teaching journey."*

- *Self-Reflection and Growth:*

E-portfolios encourage deeper self-reflection by providing a structured way for students to evaluate their learning experiences. Many students reported that e-portfolios help them identify strengths and weaknesses, evaluate past experiences, and understand areas for improvement. This reflective practice promotes a deeper understanding of the material learned. The ability to document and receive feedback on their work can significantly boost students' motivation. Seeing their accomplishments visually represented encourages them to strive for better performance. Students indicated that positive feedback and documented progress inspire them to continue improving and take on new challenges.

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Student 2: *“My experience using the e-portfolio website has been incredibly beneficial for my reflective writing and teaching journey. It encourages me to think deeply about my learning experiences that help my personal development.”*

Student 6: *“In my opinion, an electronic portfolio plays a significant role in reflection and self-understanding. It encourages me to regularly reflect on what I have learned, allowing me to quickly assess my mistakes and identify areas for improvement.”*

Student 8: *“it helps me reflect on my teaching experiences by providing a platform to evaluate and organize my teaching outcomes. This significantly enhances my self-understanding, as I can view my progress and evaluations from various perspectives.”*

Research Question 2: What challenges or difficulties do students encounter when using e-portfolios for the Reflective Practice Project?

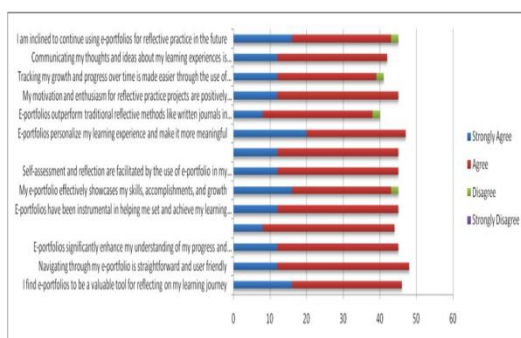


Figure 2.2 the recap of students answers of 14 questionnaires from google form.

while a majority of students found navigating their e-portfolios straightforward and user-friendly, a small proportion (as indicated by the green "Disagree" and purple "Strongly Disagree" sections) struggled with the platform's usability. This suggests that, for some students, technical challenges

remain a barrier to effectively engaging with e-portfolios.

Additionally, while many students agree that e-portfolios enhance self-assessment and reflection, there are still some who expressed difficulties in this area, as reflected by the presence of disagreement in the corresponding question. This could indicate that not all students find the reflective process through e-portfolios intuitive or beneficial.

Another challenge noted relates to motivation and engagement. Although most students reported positive influences from e-portfolios on their enthusiasm for reflective practice, a small portion of students disagreed. This suggests that certain students may find it challenging to maintain motivation when using e-portfolios, potentially due to the technical difficulties or the additional time required for reflection compared to traditional methods.

Lastly, a few students found it difficult to communicate their thoughts and ideas through e-portfolios, as indicated by the small percentages of disagreement on this item. This may point to challenges in how e-portfolios are structured or how students are trained to use them for effective communication.

Overall, the data suggests that while e-portfolios offer significant benefits for most students, some face challenges related to platform usability, reflection facilitation, and maintaining motivation, which could hinder their full engagement with reflective practice projects.

In contrast to the benefits observed, the interviews revealed that students also faced several challenges when using e-portfolios. The analysis of

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interview responses highlighted issues such as technical difficulties and time constraints. Students reported experiencing glitches and slow internet connections, which sometimes disrupted their work and caused frustration. Additionally, many noted that managing an e-portfolio required significant time and effort, making it challenging to balance with other academic responsibilities.

Despite the challenges, the positive perceptions reflected in the bar chart suggest that students still recognize the potential of e-portfolios to enhance their reflective practice. This duality in their experiences emphasizes the importance of addressing the identified challenges while leveraging the benefits to improve the e-portfolio experience.

The analysis of the interviews reveals students' experiences with using e-portfolios as a learning assessment tool in the reflective practice project. The e-portfolios include lesson plans created by student teachers on the e-portfolio platform, where they also reflect on their teaching by taking notes or writing in various template forms provided. Overall, students perceive the e-portfolio work as both useful and valuable for their learning and reflection. However, they encountered several challenges while using the e-portfolio website in various situations. These obstacles ranged from technical difficulties, such as navigating the platform or uploading content, to issues with understanding how to effectively use the templates and tools provided. Despite these hurdles, students still recognized the potential benefits of the e-portfolio in enhancing their reflective practice.

Challenges Encountered:

- **Technical Issues:**

Students often encounter technical issues such as website errors, slow internet connections, or difficulties in using certain features of the e-portfolio platform. These challenges can disrupt the learning process and create frustration, especially when students are under time constraints to submit their work.

Student 1: *“The challenges I’ve encountered while using the e-portfolio website mainly involve occasional errors. For example, during the reflective course, it sometimes experiences glitches in its website. Additionally, I’ve noticed that the boxes can get stuck, and sometimes the content from Meeting 2 gets copied and pasted into Meeting 3, which is quite frustrating.”*

Student 5: *“The challenges I’ve faced include the e-portfolio website sometimes making me feel a bit technologically challenged due to its limited features and functions, as well as an unstable internet connection.”*

Student 7: *“I found it difficult to use this e-portfolio website in mobile phone, so I always use desktop. So I always need a laptop to write my reflective teaching.”*

- **Time Constraints:**

Many students reported that managing an e-portfolio requires additional time and effort. This includes uploading materials, organizing content, and ensuring everything is relevant and well-presented. The time commitment can be challenging for students balancing multiple responsibilities.

“Student 2: *“Limited time for compiling teaching notes into the e-portfolio.”*”

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Student 4: *“The obstacles I face include needing extra time to upload my work, and sometimes I encounter issues with internet access or the devices I use.”*

This study sought to explore students' perceptions of using e-portfolios for reflective practice projects, specifically examining the benefits and challenges they encountered. The findings reveal a dual perspective: while students recognize significant advantages in utilizing e-portfolios, they also face notable challenges. The positive perception of e-portfolios as articulated by students aligns with existing literature highlighting their role in supporting reflective practice. As noted by (Amulya, 2004) e-portfolios serve as personalized digital spaces that foster lifelong learning, which resonates with students' experiences in documenting their progress and achievements. The findings corroborate previous studies ((Oakley et al., 2014); (Nambiar & Krishnan, 2017) that emphasize how e-portfolios facilitate self-reflection and engagement with learning.

Students reported that e-portfolios provided a structured way to visualize their academic journey, helping them to track their skills and achievements over time. This aligns with the assertion from (Baş et al., 2011) that e-portfolios enhance self-awareness by enabling students to monitor their growth. Furthermore, students appreciated the access and flexibility offered by e-portfolios, allowing them to manage their work from anywhere, which reflects the convenience and adaptability discussed by (Madaki et al., 2021) in online learning contexts.

Conversely, the challenges identified in this study echo the concerns raised in previous research. Technical

difficulties, such as website glitches and the complexity of navigating the e-portfolio platform, were prevalent among students. These issues are consistent with (Parker et al., 2012), who highlighted that lack of time and unclear requirements can hinder meaningful engagement with e-portfolios. Students in this study expressed frustration with navigating the technology, indicating a need for more user-friendly platforms and clearer guidance on how to effectively utilize e-portfolios.

Additionally, the time constraints mentioned by students, which limited their ability to engage deeply with their e-portfolios, align with findings from (Jaekel et al., 2020) that emphasize the challenge of balancing portfolio management with academic responsibilities. This suggests that while e-portfolios have the potential to enhance reflective practice, their effective implementation requires careful consideration of students' time commitments and the integration of e-portfolio tasks into the curriculum.

The findings underscore the need for educational institutions to provide robust training and support for students in using e-portfolios. By offering workshops or tutorials focused on platform navigation and efficient portfolio management, institutions can alleviate some of the technical challenges identified. Moreover, integrating structured time for students to work on their e-portfolios within the academic schedule could enhance their engagement and reduce the perceived burden of time constraints.

2. Discussions

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5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study shows that e-portfolios have both advantages and challenges for student teacher in reflective practice projects. E-portfolios provide a clear and personal way for student teachers to track their teaching progress, reflect on their experiences, and engage more with their studies. However, students also face technical issues and struggles with time management. This

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means that while e-portfolios can greatly improve reflective practices, it's important to make sure they are user-friendly and that there is better support for students.

Future research could explore more aspects of e-portfolios beyond student teacher views, particularly focusing on how e-portfolios facilitate collaboration between student teachers and educators. This research could delve into effective strategies for integrating e-portfolios into collaborative teaching practices, examining how e-portfolios enhance communication and knowledge-sharing between student teachers and their educator. Additionally, exploring the role of e-portfolios in promoting reflective teaching practices and professional development among educators would contribute to understanding their broader impact in college settings. These studies would offer insights into optimizing e-portfolio use to support both student teacher and educator development in higher education contexts.

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