ABSTRACT

Student portfolios are used by colleges as a way to provide: 1) self-assessment, 2) evaluation of progress/learning, and 3) student/faculty interaction. This poster will show initial development of web-based portfolios for deaf and hard of hearing students (n=17) enrolled in Freshman Seminar.

SUMMARY

While evidence suggests significant benefits, use of student portfolios is rare in the United States (http://www.siue.edu/~eder/assess/portl.html). Storage and evaluation of the needed documentation is often a significant problem. The question is, if an existing web-based course management system can be utilized, would students who are deaf and hard of hearing benefit from a portfolio as a method of 1) self-assessment, 2) evaluation of progress/learning, and 3) student/faculty interaction?

Initially, it was determined that “myCourses.rit.edu” (Prometheus™) would be used as a means to organize individual student’s thought processes. “MyCourses.rit.edu” already existed within the college as a tool for providing lecture notes, homework assignments, and instructional handouts. Deaf and hard of hearing students (n=17) enrolled in Freshman Seminar posted in the “Discussions” of “myCourses” every seven to ten days. The posts, e-mailed questions/responses between instructor and students, and photos of class activities were assembled in a hard-copy “scrapbook” format at the end of the quarter to document student progress. Students completed the NTID Student Rating Survey (SRS) at the conclusion of the course to evaluate the perceived benefit of web-based portfolios. Summary results of questions will be shared along with student “scrapbooks.”

RESULTS

Students were surveyed during the eighth week of the academic quarter using the NTID Student Rating Survey. On a 5-point scale where 1.0 is a “strongly disagree” rating and 5.0 is a “strongly agree” rating, the following results were obtained to this question:

I liked having the on-line course materials that were available in the on-line management programs (outline, discussion posts, grade book).

4.89 (n=9 students, Fall Quarter, 2004)

4.80 (n=5 students, Winter Quarter, 2004)

Numerical data seems to suggest that students felt favorably about the student portfolio. Those students who did participate also posted favorable anecdotal evidence of positive progress. Among sample student posts are the following:

“My biggest academic accomplish was that I learned new ways of doing things for my classes. Also, I learned how to get ideas for projects. My biggest accomplish socially I don’t think I have done it yet because I am a very shy person but I am working on it slowly.”

“My biggest academic accomplishment this quarter is to improve my reading and writing skill. I am glad that I do really well in English class because it is such an important issue this college. I want to be able to enter RIT course because I want to achieve my dream of getting a Bachelor degree. My biggest personal/social accomplishment this quarter is to be aware of the many essential things about college life and gain communication skill. I am glad that Freshman Seminar does teach me everything essential because I will be lost and my personality for sure. It is all I say.”

One of the biggest issues with the portfolio system appears to be that deaf and hard of hearing students with weaker writing and English language skills frequently did not participate in the discussion posts. However, for the majority of students the portfolio system appeared to be a positive experience.

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