Group Portfolios as a Gateway to Creativity, Collaboration, and Synergy in an Environment Course

Katherine Nashleanas
University of Nebraska - Lincoln, knashleanas2@unl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ipts

Part of the Curriculum and Instruction Commons, Educational Methods Commons, Higher Education Commons, Instructional Media Design Commons, and the Online and Distance Education Commons

Nashleanas, Katherine, "Group Portfolios as a Gateway to Creativity, Collaboration, and Synergy in an Environment Course" (2018). Innovation in Pedagogy and Technology Symposium. 11.
http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ipts/11
Group Portfolios as a Gateway to Creativity, Collaboration, and Synergy in an Environment Course

INNOVATION IN PEDAGOGY AND TECHNOLOGY SYMPOSIUM 2018
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA, LINCOLN
KATHERINE NASHLEANAS, PH.D.
GEOGRAPHY PROGRAM
Overview

- Project Goals
- The Challenge
- How to Implement
- How to Assess
- Samples of Projects
- Concluding Thoughts
The Set-up

- Traditional Semester Group Project
  - Individual Research paper
  - Section I: Research
  - Section II: Reflection
  - Section III: Evaluation
- Group Poster
- What students learned & evaluation of end result
Group Portfolio Project Goals

✓ Substitute research paper with creative community-oriented project
✓ Emphasize 21st century skills (besides research)
  ✓ Flexible and systemic thinking
  ✓ Negotiation and collaboration skills
  ✓ Management and group skills
✓ Focus on issues concerning sustainability practices
Project Organization

✓ All groups have the same theme: Sustainability
✓ Each group negotiates a single sustainability topic:
Challenges

✔ How to set up projects that encourage creativity
Outside Representatives Invited to Classroom

• City of Lincoln Planning Commission
• Chancellor’s Committee on Sustainability
• UNL Center for Civic Engagement
• UNL Student Green Fund
Challenges

✓ How to set up projects that encourage creativity

✓ How to most effectively use technology as a medium of creativity
  • Each group member designs individual message and medium
    • Video
    • Public Service Announcement
    • Web Page
    • Lesson Plan
    • Community Project

✓ How to evaluate the projects students will produce

✓ How to apply academic rigor to these objectives
Project Assessment

- Project Rubric
- Definition of Terms
- Group Montage
- Individual Project
- Project Paper
- Samples of Projects
## Project Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>9-10</th>
<th>7-8</th>
<th>5-6</th>
<th>3-4</th>
<th>1-2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research</strong></td>
<td>Very thorough research with several quality citations (at least 3) cited in the paper.</td>
<td>Very thorough research with 1-2 quality citations used in the paper.</td>
<td>Good research to support project but resources are weak and are marginally cited in the paper</td>
<td>General summary of research (equivalent of google-search sources) but not cited in the paper.</td>
<td>General summary of research using only information from the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integration</strong></td>
<td>Student draws several clear connections showing course material has served as a foundation for the project in several places and connects it to the formal research the student has done</td>
<td>Student makes reference to the course in several places, but does not link it to the formal research the student has done</td>
<td>Student makes reference to the course in a few places but without much detail or application</td>
<td>Student makes single reference to course material generally in the introduction to the project</td>
<td>Student doesn’t use course material or what he/she has learned in class at all in the paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Systems</strong></td>
<td>Student analyzes multiple places where the project comprises several systems</td>
<td>Student references systems in two aspects of the project</td>
<td>Student references systems in one aspect of the project</td>
<td>Student acknowledges the importance of systems but does not clearly connect systems to the project</td>
<td>The concept of systems is not mentioned in the paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clarity</strong></td>
<td>Student states the goal clearly and clearly illustrates the goal in the project</td>
<td>Student states the goal of the project clearly but the project only conforms partially</td>
<td>Goal of the project is stated but only generally but conforms to the project</td>
<td>Goal of the project and the final product have only weak connections to each other</td>
<td>The project doesn’t have a clear goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
<td>Project could be shared with target population with little editing</td>
<td>Project is realistic but needs some additional thought and editing to be given to a target population.</td>
<td>Project is somewhat realistic but needs substantial additional thought and follow-through</td>
<td>Project has good general ideas but needs to be carefully redesigned to make it ready for a target audience</td>
<td>Project was not created with care or with the idea that it is to be shared with a target audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Project Assessment

☑ Project Rubric
• Definition of Terms
• Group Montage
• Individual Project
• Project Paper
• Samples of Projects
Definition of Terms

**Research:** quality of the research – based on scientific knowledge & principles. Student has reviewed How to do University-level Research in Canvas and has followed the instructions found there. Research also can include interviews and surveys.

**Integration:** How well project is integrated with what has been learned in class, draw on knowledge gained in class to help frame project, but don’t stop there; use what you have learned in class and apply it to another area or topic. How well project extends beyond what is covered in class and texts (depth of the topic)

**Systems:** How well project illustrates idea of systems or demonstrates systemic thinking

**Clarity:** How clearly the project communicates the goals the individual has stated in the project proposal

**Action:** How realistic the project is and how well the project is linked to some form of action or community effort.
Project Assessment

✔ Project Rubric
✔ Definition of Terms
  • Individual Project
  • Group Montage
  • Project Paper
Project Assessment

✓ Project Rubric
✓ Definition of Terms
✓ Individual Project
  • Group Montage
  • Project Paper
Project Assessment

✔ Project Rubric
✔ Definition of Terms
✔ Individual Project
✔ Group Montage
✔ Project Paper
Project Assessment

- Project Rubric
- Definition of Terms
- Individual Project
- Group Montage
- Project Paper
- Samples of Projects
Samples of Projects

Event: Scavenger Hunt

• Students are to go to their floor and take a photo of their recycling bin in the waste room
• Return and show us the photo to receive a prize

Individual Goal:
• Promote awareness of recycling areas within residence halls

Alexa Fernández: Website -
https://alexafdez300.wixsite.com/geog181
Concluding Thoughts

✔ Meeting my goal

✔ Incorporating 21st Century skills:
  ✔ Flexible and systemic thinking
  ✔ Negotiation and collaboration skills
  ✔ Management and group skills
Student Comments

• I am not a coffee drinker, so naturally, I don’t really contribute much to this paper cup epidemic, however, this project did teach me a lot about how small things in the world can really add up and have a huge impact.

• This entire experience has been eye-opening and reading through my sources and typing the paper has taught me more than I ever thought I would about water bottle companies. The making of the posters was a fun way to visualize my project and make these facts easily accessible to the class.
Student Comments

- I always knew that my culture in the US was wasteful. There are signs everywhere telling people to reuse and recycle. How driving cars is bad for the atmosphere, and especially how the glaciers are melting. I brushed it aside thinking it’s another problem politicians like to talk about, like women’s rights and foreign policy. It never seemed to me like I could ever do anything to help or stop it, like I was one drop in a flood of people. This project taught me that there are a number of things that I can do to help our environment a great amount. I learned that the Earth is a big and complicated system, how harmful plastic and Styrofoam is, and that we are the god species. All of which have changed how I do things day to day.
Student Comments

• Although it many not seem like a big impact on people, sometimes it is better to leave the thought of it in their minds, that way they can take the initiative, even if it just means throwing an empty plastic bottle into the recycling bin instead of throwing it away into the trash can. The web page was created in order to make this happen. Consciousness. Awareness. The realization that waste and recycling are not just words, they are actually actions that are bring taken, decisions to be made about where the waste goes in order to help conserve the environment. One action can lead to a dreadful outcome, whether it is a direct or indirect consequence. By helping others realize how much material is being thrown out instead of being recycled when they could be, this project can make a change....
Student Comments

- The creativity portion of this project taught me that sometimes things may be frustrating or confusing without set guidelines but working together and utilizing your individual strengths and ideas can create a creative project. I also learned that it might take a few failed attempts and dead-end ideas before a possibly functional creation emerges, and that is okay. Creativity can be inspired by many things: other group members, a lecture, or as for me, a random piece of research that I stumbled upon without meaning to. Creativity can produce great ideas by thinking outside of the box and getting inspiration from outside sources.
Student Comments

• I learned a lot about waste management through my research, the film we watched in class, the lifestyle challenge, and all our other classroom lessons. The research and film opened my eyes as to how much I’ve been contributing to these staggering statistics when it comes to the average waste production and how we still have more work to do when it comes to recycling and composting .... Improving these aspects, as well as continuing to implement the lifestyle challenges will help me to reduce my waste production and conserve some energy. It will also hopefully encourage me and others to strive to further reduce our environmental impact after seeing how easy some of these relatively large changes can seem.

• Throughout this project, I was able to learn what I could do as an individual to play a role.
Concluding Thoughts

✓ Meeting my goal

✓ Incorporating 21st Century skills:
  ✓ Flexible and systemic thinking
  ✓ Negotiation and collaboration skills
  ✓ Management and group skills

✓ Comparing research paper with group portfolios

✓ Future directions
Thank you.

“No single raindrop believes it is responsible for the flood”