Haven’t we moved beyond the prac folder?: Digital documentation in accreditation and training

Dr Kate Highfield, Dr Katey De Gioia, Dr Rod Lane
Moving…
But what about REFLECTION?
Background:

- Drawing on Schön’s notion of the “reflective practitioner” where the pre-service teacher considers their actions in such a way that theory and practice ‘talk to one another’ (1995).

- Small pilot (157 students surveyed in 2014)

- An adaptation of Bronfenbrenner’s (1979; 1993), ecological model of human development
• Microsystem: Conditions in this environment relating to the teacher specifically (such as their access to technology, physical capacity and personal technology skills) also support or constrain the potential for pedagogic development to occur.

• Mesosystem: The early childhood context links the pre-service teacher to their immediate environment of the early childhood setting and the potential for learning through reflection and engagement in digital documentation.

• Exosystem: This system includes the university organisation, expectations and supports.

• Macrosystem: This system identifies the broader characteristics of the early childhood sector within Australia, including regulatory and accrediting bodies.

• Chronosystem: Time and its progression impacts on all areas of this model.
Aims

To examine:

1) The technology use patterns of pre-service teachers and, in particular, their use of mobile and tablet devices, with integrated cloud storage systems to document, evaluate and reflect on teaching and learning; and

1) Pre-service teachers’ experience with and concerns about the use of a sustainable, portable, digital teaching portfolio incorporating multi-modal evidence mapped to teacher accreditation standards.
Methodology

• Using “explanatory sequential” design (Creswell, 2009).

   • 213 pre-service teacher education students responded;
     • 127 (10%) respondents were pre-service primary and secondary teachers, and
     • 88 (7.5%) respondents were currently enrolled in early childhood education degrees
   • With some students trialling the use of cloud storage systems on placements
Results

Students access and use a wide range of devices:

• Laptops were the most frequently used device (32.2%)
• School/Centre owned computers or devices (30%).
• Only 3.4% (n= 14) of the total cohort identified that they did not use technologies in placement at all.
Results

How did you use Technology on placement? (816 individual responses to this question, 7 main categories).

• classroom management,
• planning lessons and units of work,
• developing resources to print (for example, worksheets), developing interactive resources for use in teaching (for example, SMART notebook or PowerPoint files),
• documenting or assessing children's/students’ learning,
• developing content knowledge,
• collecting evidence of teaching for example, for accreditation, to meet unit requirements or for
• assessment and administration (for example, marking attendance).
Results

How did you use Technology on placement? (816 individual responses to this question, with 422 from early childhood teachers).

- “preparing lessons and units of work” (18.8%),
- “developing resources to print” (16.4%) and
- “developing interactive resources for use in teaching” (14.6%)
- “documenting or assessing children’s/ students’ learning” (12.4%)
- “collecting evidence of your teaching” (12.2)
- “administration” (6.5%)
- “classroom management” (4.9%)
Results

How did you use Technology to document student learning on placement? (163 individual responses to this question).

- Using photos (50%)
- Digital copies of student work and typing observations (30%)
- 2% (4 students) used audio recordings
- 1 student outlined using video

This is particularly noteworthy – given the affordances of the technology
Exploring these further….

“I think it depends on the context. One of my previous places technology was a huge part of documentation, but in another centre they wanted to have a physical documentation – it depends on the context and it depends on the policy and what the centre allows, e.g. they might not let you take photos on your iPad.”

“I guess I’m just not sure what will be expected of us when we start teaching… it’s tricky if you teach in a school the accreditation process is clear – but it doesn’t seem so clear for early childhood teachers.”
Exploring these further....

The teacher was crucial

“My supervising teacher was reluctant to use technology in her classroom, which made it difficult to build units or lesson sequences based on technology.”

BUT the teacher did not have to be an expert

“Neither of us was certain about technology, but trying it made the experience a little more inclusive, we were learning together.”
Some questions to ponder as we move forward....

1. Given the fast pace of technology, how can we as a field engage with change in a way that is thoughtful and ethical.

2. How can we harness technology to promote reflection on practice

3. How can university and training organisations best support effective pre-service teacher education given the variation in contexts
Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.

(Maya Angelou)