

“How Implementing ePortfolios in Dance Classrooms can enhance authentic creativity, collaboration and accountability.”

Samantha Jimenez

Publication Rough Draft

February 12, 2024

“I only count to 8. You know...5, 6, 7, 8.”

This is the phrase I will jokingly say to anyone, especially my students, when they ask me a tough question that isn't dance related. Again, of course this is a joke, but when thinking about how I can improve the communication, collaboration and accountability in my dance classes by introducing a new technology skill, that joke actually holds a lot of meaning. When I think about professional development sessions throughout my teaching career, I can always remember a teacher or two that would despise change. It's almost like they didn't even fully allow themselves to hear the idea or questions asked before deciding the idea was horrible.

“I only count to 8.”

Think about how many ideas have been ignored or not used to their full potential solely because they weren't accepted with an open mind, or with a mind focused on pushing our students and colleagues to grow. As you read this, I would like for you to “count past 8” as we explore how using ePortfolios in the dance classroom can enhance creativity, collaboration and accountability.

What is an ePortfolio?

When I began my grad school journey, I immediately began thinking of all the ways that I could bring that same excitement to my classroom. Soon after, I created

an Innovation Proposal and plan to begin using Eportfolios in dance class.

“EPortfolios are a learner’s digital evidence of learning, therefore, ePortfolios are a learner’s digital evidence of meaningful connections.” (Harapunik, 2023) Students can use different platforms like Wix, Bulb and Google Sites to begin their creation. From there, they will link their work to their website throughout the year.

Why ePortfolios in Dance Class?

When people think of dance, they naturally think of...well, dancing. As a teacher, dance, just like other classes, is much more than moves, but it is a learning opportunity to grow as a person before entering the “real world.” A few of areas of growth opportunities are:

Creativity: By using ePortfolios students learn about COVA: choice, ownership, voice and authentic learning, another concept that I learned in grad school and immediately knew my students needed it as well. Authentic, creative, work is the goal I want my students to achieve. They will be as creative as they want to be by using me as only a guide to their learning. The ways that you, as the teacher, can be a guide to your students is by monitoring their progress, creating checkpoints and having open communication throughout their new learning journey.

Accountability: Students will learn how to post their reflections on their efforts in class by blogging on their portfolio. They will also learn the importance of having a growth mindset and seeing a difficult opportunity as just the beginning of what they are on the verge of learning or being able to do.

Collaboration: Students will be able to post their group videos on their Eportfolios, and be able to offer feedforward information to their peers by learning how to critique dances. There are many opportunities to collaborate with their peers as they try to meet deadlines that are set.

Pride & Progress: Documenting their learning throughout the year is a huge plus as a teacher, however, it allows the students to look back on their journey with pride. They can see all of their efforts and reflect on how much they have progressed in their learning.

Why is it important?

The world is digital. “Teenagers spend about 8.5 hours on their technology daily. 46% of today’s teens say they use the internet almost constantly, compared with 24% of teenagers who said the same in 2014 and 2015.” (Rosenburg, 2023) With those numbers nearly doubling in 10 years, how can we possibly still rely on the original ways of learning? We want our students to be successful in school, but most importantly, when they leave us and go on into adulthood. It is evident that they know how to use technology on the surface, but there are so many opportunities, like the ePortfolio, that can catapult them to success. Yes, it will require us to learn something new, and will even feel frustrating and confusing for us, but we must meet our students where they are or we will miss the opportunities to teach and reach them. Be open minded, it’s okay for us to make mistakes too. We have to count past 8.

References:

Harapnuik, D. (2018). COVA. It’s About Learning. Retrieved Oct 16, 2024 from https://www.harapnuik.org/?page_id=6991

Harapunik, D. (2023, September) ePortfolio. It’s About Learning. Retrieved February 12, 2024, from https://www.harapnuik.org/?page_id=5973

Rosenberg, D. (2023, October 24). Teens are spending the equivalent of a 40-hour work week on their devices. Here’s how to help them find the right balance.

Fortune Well.

<https://fortune.com/well/2023/10/24/teens-too-much-screen-time-find-balance/>

