

International Peer Program's E-portfolio Project

Experiencing Elgg

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About International Peer Program

- Facilitates transition of new international students to university.
- New students connect with continuing students.
- Mutual learning, academic support, and cultural exchange.
- Group activities and volunteering.
- Intercultural communication and leadership.
- Greater sense of belonging to UBC.

Participants: Undergraduates (524)

- 14 groups headed by 2-3 group leaders each (40 students in a group)
- 33 group leaders
- 123 senior peers (continuing students)
- 368 international peers (degree-seeking, exchange and visiting)

**GROUP LEADERS SELECTED AS A PILOT
GROUP FOR USING ELGG**

The Goals

1. Self reflection, transformation, and growth as global citizens.
2. Connect Peer Program experiences with other leadership experiences, with their cultural backgrounds, and educational goals.

Expected Outcomes

1. Understanding the impact of Peer Program experiences on personal lives and development.
2. Increased understanding and appreciation of different perspectives and cultural contexts through viewing each others' e-portfolios.
3. More engaged and reflective life-long learners.

Expected Benefits

Easy access to students' work (Peer Program members, staff, faculty, family, friends, and prospective employers)

Opportunity to belong to the community indefinitely

Opportunity to have a website

Leaving a legacy for future IPP leaders

Getting Set and Ready

OLT presentation on November 3

Assignment 1: "Describe your goals as an IPP leader and how they are related to your educational and career goals."

Email to all non-attendees how to sign up

Email to all (purposes, benefits and suggestions)

Q & A sheet: Using Elgg features

Bi-weekly reminders (identifying champions)

Uploading all e-portfolio materials to community files

Working session

Go Elgg!

Students respond to reflection questions:

1. How have I developed as a leader?
2. What am I learning about my culture and other cultures?
3. What am I learning about event planning?
4. How has my understanding of volunteerism changed? How else have I changed?
6. What will I continue to do or do differently next month?

Go Go Elgg!

- Create new reflection questions; fellow leaders respond.
- Create new themes that stood out for you during IPP.
- Post reflections on your group events and/or IPP events.
- Share your experience of monitoring peer relationships.
- Post best photos of your group events.
- Post your Resume into "files".
- Respond to posts of fellow group leaders.

Immediate Benefits

Sharing growth

More interaction among leaders- otherwise impossible

In-depth exploration of topics

Learned more about group leaders

More feedback from staff

Rich information for students' references

Surprise: Students' goals lined up more with IPP goals

We Learned about Students so much more

- Deep thinkers
- Philosophers
- Great sense of humor
- High level of maturity
- Amazing writers
- Many speak French

Favourite Topics

- **Peer-Senior Peer Relationships**

-Why don't peers take a more proactive way in relationships with senior peers?

- **Sharing successes and frustrations**

One thing I enjoy is planning activities with my co-leaders, the sad part: you don't interact with peers as much as senior peers.

Favourite Topics

- **Leadership**

Organizational skills come handy but what's more important is to have passion about what you're doing, why and for whom.

- **Volunteerism**

Volunteerism involves more than You or I putting in time and effort. There is a strong group dynamics involved.

Favourite Topics

Cultural integration and exploration

New Year resolutions

On-line reflection

Group events

Warm and fuzzies for fellow leaders

Looking forward to Term 2

Advice

Challenges Related to Process and IPP

- **Started in the middle of Term 1**
- **Already used on-line community "Memlink"**
- **Most communication happens via email**
- **Group leaders have a lot of responsibilities**

Challenges Related to Elgg

- **"Community members" and "friends"**
- **No email notifications**
- **Responses are hidden**
- **Need more structure (events, concepts, ideas)**

Reasons for Non-Participation

- **Not visually attractive**
- **Not self explanatory**
- **Don't feel comfortable sharing on-line**
- **Concerns about privacy**
- **Concerns about time investment**
- **Not a priority**

"I have many things on my plate right now, and it's not essential for me to create an e-portfolio."

Ideas for Next Year

- **One electronic community (forum and/or e-portfolios)**
- **Introduce E-portfolio concept during initial training and orientation**
- **All IPP members to develop e-portfolios**
- **More Training**
- **Monthly working sessions**