

Promoting Self-Awareness and Career Development with e-Portfolios and LEGO® Serious Play®

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Abstract

Seminars, called *zemi* in Japanese, form an important part of the educational system at most universities in Japan. These courses generally involve a group of ten to twenty students studying and researching a specific area of their major, under the guidance of a professor for two consecutive years. The professor offers career guidance, lectures on their research interest, and supervises students' graduation projects, typically in the form of dissertations. Although dissertation topics vary from student to student, they commonly follow a theme that is closely related to the research interests of their professor. For the few students aiming to pursue graduate studies, learning about this theme, conducting research, and writing a dissertation are all invaluable learning experiences for their studies ahead. However, for students who will start their careers, writing a dissertation on a topic far-removed from their chosen vocation will not offer similar benefits. In hopes of constructing a meaningful experience for career-bound students, the author incorporated the option of creating interactive e-portfolios into the seminar class. In this presentation, the author will introduce the digital publishing software that was used to create these interactive e-portfolios and outline the potential and significance of e-portfolios to promote self-awareness and foster career development in Japanese universities. The presenter will also illustrate how e-portfolios can be used with the LEGO® Serious Play® methodology to construct a professional development plan that includes a visual SWOT analysis of personal strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats in the student's job of interest.

Keywords: seminar; interactive; reflective learning; career; Japan