

Portfolio: A Professional Development and Learning Tool for Teachers

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Abstract

Professional development of teachers is considered a source to enhance teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. To meet this purpose teacher education institutions use a variety of ways for teachers' development programs. Mostly these ways and strategies are used in short and long programs where teachers are provided opportunities to learn knowledge and skills outside classroom and schools. The purpose of these courses is to enhance the teachers' capacity and improve students' learning outcomes. However, most of these learning and strategies are limited to the training centers and teachers face challenges while implementing the learning in their respective schools. Teachers generally consider the professional development centers and training centers as the only source of professional learning. They ignore the importance of workplace learning and experiential learning (Kolb, 1981) which is possible through reflection on their own practices. This study focused on the role of portfolios for professional learning of the course participants in a module of master programme in a private university. The study was conducted using the qualitative mode of research and was carried out at private sector university of Pakistan with six course participants from different contexts and three faculty members. Interviews and portfolios of six course participants were the major source of data. As a result of qualitative data analysis, the study has generated some findings related to the role of portfolios as a professional development/learning tool for teachers. One of the significant roles was documentation of teachers' learning over a period of time, which is generally not documented by the teachers. The process leads the teachers to continuous reflection on their beliefs and practices. This continuous reflection provides opportunities for teachers to learn from their own experiences and construct their knowledge and understanding.

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