

Teachers' attitude towards online portfolio as a tool for professional development in the Hohoe municipality, Ghana

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Abstract

Given the contemporary educational environment of curriculum reform, one wonders what practices might be simultaneously advantageous in terms of both institutionalized curriculum design and fair teacher effectiveness. This article addresses the findings of a study on teachers' perceptions of online portfolios as professional development tools. In response to closed-ended Likert 4-point scale questionnaires, teachers in the Hohoe municipality were adamant that portfolio creation helped them advance their teaching pedagogy.

Keywords: teachers' portfolio, professional development, active learning, teaching effectiveness

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I. INTRODUCTION

Portfolios, when utilized in a good way, can help educators supervise and strengthen their own achievement, support administrators or interpersonal assessors in obtaining a broader and much more exact picture of teaching effectiveness, and, essentially, prove helpful in detailed training delivery and training opportunities. For the same reasons why portfolios appeal to adults, they have been used frequently with schoolchildren. They provide a more individualized, constructivist method for tracking, evaluating, and directing one's own learning. They serve as a tool for connecting and critically analyzing both your instructional methods and the products that emerge from your efforts. They provide a way to make the instructional connections between lesson plans, assessments, and student work evident. In 2022, James and Christopher (James & Christopher, 2022). Although portfolios can be used for many different things and by educators at any stage of their career (such as pre-service, novice, master, and nationally recognized), this article focuses on how they can be utilized by working instructors for the main objectives of assessment and professional growth.

Professional development goes hand in hand with teacher portfolio development. The professional development framework was developed by the Ministry of Education and the National Teaching Council (NTC) in September, 2020 to assist teachers in using professional development as well as other avenues to improve their portfolios. Through a rigorous, continuous procedure termed as professional development, a teacher typically enhances and broadens his or her professional knowledge, beliefs, and skills (PD). The Teachers' Professional Development Framework (PD Framework), developed by Ghana's National Teaching Council (NTC), codifies a teacher's commitment to being a technically prepared and competent professional. The Framework serves as a

roadmap for instructors, educational directors, service providers for teacher development, and other partners in order to provide excellent training courses to in-service instructors. The framework has established a number of duties that are divided into mandatory, ranked-based, and recommended activities. (NTC, 2020).

The intricacy of the activities and the instructor's degree of involvement are used to categorize the latter. This is done to guarantee accuracy and consistency in the computation and assignment of credit points. Activities from both mandatory and ranked-based trainings must be made available to teachers at certain ranks. A needed PD point at that rank in a three-year PD cycle must also be met by choosing one of the suggested training categories. The employer may provide the instructor with training at the school level via Professional (NTC, 2020).

The framework includes formulas for PD point computation at each rank. PD activities are documented as backup recordings in teachers' logbooks, which are then transferred to the instructor's online account. For PD providers to select from and award points to instructors who are eligible to take part in the program, names of approved events are listed in the portal. In addition to earning professional development points, instructors are required to produce their own portfolios for evaluation. The grade obtained from the authentic assessment, which combines these two elements, establishes the instructor's standing in the profession. The Ghanaian Teacher Regulatory Act prohibits teachers from practicing as teachers or renewing their licenses if they pass the Portfolio Assessment or another test but fall short of the PD point requirements. Instructors who accept postings in regions that the recruiter and the National Teaching Council (NTC) describe as disadvantaged communities are given extra opportunities to participate in demand-derived professional development (PD) programs, even without payment by the employee other than for commuting and necessities. (NTC, 2020).

1.1.1 Problem Statement

As was mentioned in the background, Ghana's government updated its educational program in September 2020. The goal of the new curriculum was to fill in any holes left by the previous one while also fostering cooperation, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, leadership, interpersonal uplift, cultural awareness, collaboration, and the attainment of skills in digital literacy (NaCCA, 2020).

Teachers have three years to develop their online portfolio in order to earn promotion points. Every academic year, the portfolio is made available for teachers to upload their students' academic work, which is subsequently rated and given PD points. Teachers are required to submit proofs of their professional development, which may include the use of technology, records of training they have attended, recommendations for training, a report on core competencies and write-up on collaboration, problem identification strategies, and intervention processes (action research), and evidence of their participation in school-based activities, such as mentors' comments, head teachers' recommendations, evidence of in-service training workshops, and minutes of meetings. Educators are expected to engage in reflective practices such as summative assessment, identifying areas for improvement, providing samples of learners' work that you have marked and graded, and aligning assessment with indicators once more.

Teachers are required to post a 45-week lesson plan for the entire year in the section on creating lesson plans. Evidence of involvement in extracurricular activities, teaching philosophies of teachers, learning schemes, evidence of work, a summarized weekly monitoring tool for three years, and examples of learners' exercises you have marked and graded are all included in the online portfolio creation. It is possible to scan and/or integrate these supporting documents and photos into the file. Using a smartphone camera and a program like CamScanner, which instantly turns images taken during lesson delivery into a PDF file, is an alternative to scanning. The entire document may be saved as a portable document format before being uploaded for evaluation. In light of this background, it was necessary to undertake this research to assess teachers' attitudes towards an online portfolio as a tool for professional development in the Hohoe municipality. Purpose of the study was to evaluate teachers' attitude towards online portfolio as a tool for professional development in the Hohoe municipality. For teacher to undertake professional development courses, one teacher one laptop policy was introduced by the government of Ghana. This initiative was also to provide laptops for teacher to build their online portfolio. (GES,2020).

1.1.2 Purpose of the study

To evaluate the teachers' attitude towards online portfolio as a tool for professional development in the Hohoe municipality, Ghana

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.2 Teacher Portfolio

Teacher portfolios (TP) can add a rich qualitative component to teacher quality that other metrics are unable to. They are a potent tool for professional development. At least 13 states currently necessitate or encourage the utilization of portfolio to evaluate educators' competence (Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, 2015). A teacher's portfolio (TP) is a concise summary of their skills and successes in the classroom. Other titles for it include a learning portfolio, an educator's portfolio, or an academic portfolio. It contains materials that collectively illustrate the variety and standard of educational performances, and academia often uses it to record activity, productivity, and academic successes. Its highly curated content enables doctors to demonstrate their teaching accomplishments for outside criticism and offer evidence of their effectiveness. A separate but related aim is served by including classroom training in a résumé, which is only a description of professional responsibilities. Contrary to learning portfolios, which likewise prioritize reflective practice whilst preserving new learning experiences, this is not the same thing. (Navdeep,2015)

A teaching portfolio tells a tale concerning you and your professional identity. A portfolio should be a tool that highlights your abilities and knowledge and offers proof of your effective instructional strategies. It is a productive tool for teachers to consider, describe, and record their teaching philosophies, objectives, and successes. Longer teaching periods than those permitted during supervised classroom observations can be tracked and documented in teaching portfolios. This moveable residence of artifacts encourages students to establish a link between both the educational process and the end outcome (Davies & Candace, 2021). Proponents have proposed three key functions for portfolios in demonstrating and advancing teacher knowledge. A portfolio could serve as a conceptual act, a tool for reflection, or a credential.

A portfolio, according to Shulman (1998), is first and foremost a theoretical act since it presents a certain teaching paradigm. A portfolio creator defines themselves in terms of what constitutes successful teaching by choosing the artifacts that best represent who they are as a teacher. One method of conceptualizing one's practice is to demonstrate one's teaching self in the portfolio. The assertion is supported by the portfolio author's knowledge and actions in the setting of education, which are displayed in the portfolio artifacts. In this way, the portfolio, which is just a small component of the teaching body of knowledge, can also be seen as a repository for teacher knowledge, in my opinion.

Early proponents of teacher portfolio development noticed that creating a portfolio was a very effective learning opportunity for the instructors involved (Shulman, 1998). As a result, portfolios started to gain acceptance and support as instruments for professional development and critical reflection about one's classroom instruction. Last but not least, teaching portfolios might be used for evaluation. The idea of the portfolio as a certificate allows teachers to show that they have met professionalism requirements.

1.2.1 Importance of teacher portfolios

Portfolios can be used to evaluate student improvement in grade levels and subjects that are not evaluated using work that is already being done in the classroom, but strong supports must be in place to guarantee that assessments of student development are uniform among students and teachers. Portfolios offer a method for assessing progress that could be more suitable than standardized tests for some courses. In either electronic or conventional teacher portfolios, content can be recorded in a variety of media, including music recordings, artwork, and videotaped assignments or performances. The criteria for scoring should take into account both coursework specimens were collected at the beginning and end of the instructional loop as proof of growth and documentation of the teacher's significant contribution to school success, such as lesson plans and other records (English and Lachlan-Haché, 2015).

Portfolios are great instruments for career advancement because they encourage metacognitive strategies. Schools should take care not to replicate similar professional development programs that also include evidence-based learning and introspective analysis of four types of objectives county, facility, educator, and student. Midterm information is reviewed in a formative manner as part of the procedure. The subsequent subsections, listed by target level, must provide proof and introspection. District objectives include ensuring that the academic, emotional, physiological, and interpersonal requirements of children are met, as well as a rigorous curriculum that is standards-aligned and uses technology. Setting goals: establishing practice alignment, which includes creating an implementation plan and outlining how it will affect students' academic performance Learning objectives: pre-

and post-work that addresses an individualized learning challenge for a given student or set of pupils. (School in Nazareth Area District, 2015)

Portfolios have been described as an "open-ended strategy that encourages [educators] to reexamine their personal expertise and explain it in crucial ways" (Freidus, 1998). Particularly with regard to portfolios, public school teachers are encouraged to think about and record the following: the educational requirements to be prioritized; the degree to which student performance or evaluation techniques meet the required standards; goals for individual students; the kind of work that is affiliated with low-, average-, and high-performing trainees; public feedback to students and faculty; and the teaching methods to be used.

Educators have more influence over their evaluations thanks to portfolios, but communities should put measures in place to make sure the data is accurate and representative of the teachers' entire body of work. Portfolios give teachers power in two ways: first, they frequently include some form of self-evaluation, such as self-scoring of student growth and self-reflection; and second, they frequently grant the teacher some latitude over the types of documents to collate, such as a student assignment to draw from and which specific students' work to include, since they are frequently unrealistic to contain all pupils' work. A startling disparity was found between systematic monitoring and program proof of practice based on criteria that were further constrained.

1.2.2 Professional Development.

According to Scheerens (2010), professional development for teachers is centered on a study of the available literature that emphasizes the value of continuing learning for educational quality and is performance-oriented. Blocher, Armfield, Sujo-Montes, Tucker, and Willis (2011) assert that professional development has a favorable influence on teachers' use of technology and that research has revealed that instructors' professional development has a great effect on technology integration. Although not focused on technological use, but rather on instructors' self-efficacy, professional development has a considerable impact on teachers' assessments of the advantages of adopting technology as well as their self-confidence. Alma Hour (2010) stressed the significance of teachers' expertise and suggested that these skills be improved in order to successfully integrate ICT into the curriculum. This claim is categorically supported by a recent empirical study by Hismanoglu (2012), who discovered that future instructors who had completed five ICT-related courses had more favorable perceptions compared to those who had not.

One requirement for ensuring effective ICT transition is teachers' professional development (Vanderlinde & van Braak, 2010). According to Albirini (2006), professional development from the perspective of ICT integration doesn't simply involve taking refresher training and remaining up-to-date on technology; it also involves experimenting with technology before employing it in actual classroom settings. According to some theories, self-experimentation is more important than conventional education. Instructors would need to devote sufficient time to this to learn about technology (Burden et al., 2012). According to research, instructors need professional development in order to properly integrate technology into classroom activities and make sure that tablets are utilized in appropriate pedagogical ways (Ferguson & Oigara, 2017). (Geer, White, Zeegers, Au & Barnes, 2017).

Additionally, UNESCO wishes to provide a pull of fundamental expertise that instructors may utilize to integrate and enhance learners' learning while also enabling multiple goals for the use of ICT to be harmonized. On the one hand, UNESCO hopes that this initiative will raise the caliber of the educational system, which will therefore help the social and economic development of the nation. On the other hand, it aims to enhance the educational expertise and behavior of optimal instructors (UNESCO, 2008)

III. METHODOLOGY

1.3 The study adopted a questionnaire from Oppong (2020). which was then distributed online on various teachers' WhatsApp platforms, and at the end of the survey, 155 respondents had taken part in the studies. The questionnaire's items were all closed-ended questions. Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS 26.0) was used to analyze each response to each question in the questionnaire. Research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, which fall under descriptive statistics. A personalized description of the "whom," "when," and "where" of occurrences or experiences is provided by facts through qualitative descriptive research (Kim et al., 2017, p. 23). The different theories that apply hermeneutic and empirical methods and project - based learning theory are most consistent conceptually with this investigation style (Lincoln, 2017).

IV. DISCUSSIONS

1.4 Teachers' attitude towards online portfolio.

Table1, Teachers' attitude towards online portfolio.

Teachers' attitude towards online portfolio.	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I have created an account on the NTC portal for my portfolio building.	155	4.00	.000
I find teachers' portfolio very useful.	155	3.75	.735
I have built my portfolio for 2021/2022 academic year.	155	2.66	1.330
Teachers' portfolio building is very important for professional development.	155	2.61	1.326
NTC should use CPD points to promote teacher to their next rank.	155	1.19	.719
I have secured CPD point on my teachers' portfolio.	155	1.94	1.313

1.4.1 Teachers' attitude towards professional development.

Table 2, Teachers' attitude towards professional development.

Teachers' attitude towards professional development.	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I have received a laptop from the one teacher on laptop policy to enable me undertake PD courses online.	155	4.00	.000
I took part in the professional development course organized by KAtchnology after receiving laptops from the one teacher on laptop programme.	155	2.80	.929
Ghana Education Service organizes continuous professional development for teacher termly	155	3.03	1.407
I am aware that National Teaching Council has an online continuous profession development portal	155	4.00	.000
I have taken some online professional development courses and I have been awarded points	155	2.99	.789
My school organize PLC every week	155	4.00	.000

1.4.2 Teachers' attitude towards online portfolio.

Table 1, shows findings on teachers' attitude towards online portfolio. When respondents were asked whether they have created an account on the NTC portal for my portfolio building they all agreed with a mean of 4.0 and a standard deviation of .000. Again, when they were asked where they find the teachers' portfolio very useful, the accepted (M= 3.75, SD=.735), whether they have built their 2021/2022 academic year portfolio (M=2.66, SD=1.330), whether teachers' portfolio building is very important for professional development (M=2.61, SD=1.326), most respondents disagreed to the fact that NTC should use CPD points to promote teacher to their next rank with a mean value of 1.19 and a standard deviation of .719. Finally, majority of the respondents disagreed that they have secured CPD point on my teachers' portfolio (M=1.94, SD=1.313)

1.4.3 Teachers' attitude towards professional development.

Table 2, show finding on teachers' attitude towards professional development. Respondents agreed when questioned whether they have received a laptop from the one teacher on laptop policy to enable me undertake PD courses online (M=4.0, SD=.000). Moreover, when respondents were asked whether they took part in the professional development course organized by KAtchnology after receiving laptops from the one teacher on laptop programme a Mean value of 2.80 and a standard deviation of .929 was realized.

Respondents also agreed that Ghana Education Service organizes continuous professional development for teacher termly (M=3.03, SD=1.407). On the other hand, respondents agreed that they are aware that National Teaching Council has an online continuous profession development portal with 4.00 and .000 for mean and standard deviation respectively. When respondents were asked if they have taken some online professional development courses and I have been awarded points (M=2.99, SD= .789).

Lastly, all respondents agreed that their respective schools organize profession development communities every week (M=4.00, SD=.000)

V. CONCLUSION

1.5 From Table 2, about 65 percent of teacher are not ok with the fact that GES and NTC are using points gather during portfolio budling and professional development to promote teacher to their next rank.

Again, Table 1 shows that most teacher in the Hohoe municipality have embrace the Ministry of educations initiative to use portfolio building to promote professional development.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

1.6 Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendation were given.

- 1) The National Teaching Council should organize more training for teachers on the process of portfolio building as well as on the content of the portfolio.
- 2) More awareness should be created so that teacher understand the motive behind using portfolio building and professional development point gained by teacher to promote them.

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