

“Self-reflection through Teaching Portfolios”

Student Name:
Student Number:

Professor:
Course Code:
Date:

Abstract

The focus of this paper is to establish the need for professional development to be accentuated through self-reflection. The goal is then to determine the various forms of reflective practice available, and how teaching portfolios are the best source for self-reflection. The paper will initially begin with an introduction, followed by an analysis of the distinct approaches available under reflective practice. In turn, the various uses and types of teaching portfolios will be discussed and why they are important for self-reflection. Finally, recommendations will consist of approaches on how to implement teaching portfolios for self-reflection.

Introduction

There has been a “longstanding recognition in the field of language education that teachers must continually reshape their knowledge of teaching and learning” (Farrell, 2008, p. 1). Teachers can further their professional development as language teachers after they have completed their required formal training. The focus on traditional professional development programs makes teachers learn about their own profession through outside experts, instead of studying their own unique experiences (Farrell, 2007). One of the primary issues of traditional professional development for second language teachers is the fact that it has consisted of “district or administration mandated courses and one-stop workshops” that are delivered by outside experts (Farrell, 2007, p. 175). Such a top-down approach is not effective because its real impact is limited as teachers often find the ideas presented are “conceptually and practically far removed from the reality of their particular classrooms” (Farrell, 2007, p. 175). However, a bottom-up approach to professional development is more suitable through reflective practice, which recognizes teachers as legitimate producers of knowledge who are able to reflect on their own teaching practices over a period of time (Farrell, 2007). An emerging type of reflective practice is a teaching portfolio, which is a means for teachers to document and reflect on all aspects of their work (Antonek, McCormick & Donato, 1997). Teaching portfolios as reflective practice allow teachers to self-reflect upon their work and on themselves as they are able to document their practices (Antonek et al., 1997). As a result, it can be seen that teaching portfolios serve as an important route to self-reflection for teachers.

References

- Anderson, R., & DeMeulle, L. (1998). Portfolio use in twenty-four teacher education programs. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 25, 23-31.
- Antonek, J., McCormick, E., & Donato, R. (1997). The student teacher portfolio as autobiography: Developing a professional identity. *The Modern Language Journal*, 81(1), 15-27.
- Barr, S., & Clark, M. (2011). In pursuit of excellence in teaching: An ESL educator's narrative. *J Educ Change*, 13, 41-66.
- Barrett, H. C. (2000). Creating your own electronic portfolio: using off-the-shelf software to showcase your own or student work. *Learning and Leading Technology*, 27(7), 14-21.
- Brown, J. & Wolfe-Quintero, K. (1997). Teacher portfolios for evaluation: A great idea? Or a waste of time? *The Language Teacher*, 21(1), 28-30.
- Bullock, A., & Hawk, P. (2001). *Developing a teaching portfolio: A guide for preservice and practicing teachers*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Burns, A., & Richards, J. (2009). *Cambridge guide to second language teacher education*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Campbell, D. M., Cignetti, P. B., Melenyzer, B. J., & Nettles, D. H. (2011). *How to develop a professional portfolio: A manual for teachers* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Coombe, C. & Barlow, L. (2004). The reflective portfolio: Two case studies from the UAE. *English Language Teaching Forum*, 42(1), 18-23.
- Constantino, P. M. & De Lorenzo, M. N. (2009). *Developing a professional teaching portfolio: A guide for success* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Erlandson, P., & Beach, D. (2008). The ambivalence of reflection – rereading Schön. *Reflective Practice*, 9(4), 409-421.
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2002). Reflecting on teacher professional development with teaching portfolios. *Guidelines*, 24(1), 4-8.
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2007). *Reflective language teaching: From research to practice*. London, England: Continuum.

- Farrell, T. S. C. (2008). Reflective practice in the professional development of teachers of adult English language learners. *CAELA Network Brief*, 1, 1-4.
- Green, J. E. & Smyser, S. O. (1996). *The teacher portfolio: A strategy for professional development and evaluation*. Lancaster, PA: Technomic Publishing.
- Head, K., & Taylor, P. (1997). *Readings in teacher development*. Oxford, England: Heinemann.
- Mann, S. (2005). The language teacher's development. *Language Teaching*, 38, 103-118.
- Nunan, D. (2007). Review: Thomas Farrell: *Reflective language teaching: From research to practice*. *Continuum*, 1, 1-3.
- Orem, R. A. (2001). Journal writing in adult ESL: Improving practice through reflective writing. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 90, 69-77.
- Richards, J. C. (1996). Towards reflective teaching. *The Teacher Trainer*, 1, 1-5.
- Richards, J. C., & Farrell, T. S. (2005). *Professional development for language teachers*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge Language Education.
- Richards, J. C., & Farrell, T. S. (2011). *Teaching practice: A reflective approach*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J., & Lockhart, C. (1996). *Reflective teaching in second language classrooms*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Stone, B. A. (1998). Problems, pitfalls, and benefits of portfolios. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 25, 105-114.
- Washington State University, Office of the Provost (1996). *The Teaching Portfolio at Washington State University*. <http://www.wsu.edu/provost/teaching.htm>
- Wheeler, P. H. (1993). Using portfolios to assess teacher performance. *EREAPA Associates*, 93(7), 1-16.
- Wolf, K. (1996). Developing an effective teaching portfolio. *Educational Leadership*, 53(6), 34-37.
- Zeichner, K. M., & Liston, D. P. (1996). *Reflective teaching: An introduction*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum Associates.