

Using E-portfolios in VET Student Teacher's Professional Development & Demonstrating of Competences



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Introduction

E-portfolio, as "a collection of digital artefacts articulating experiences, achievements and learning" is used as an assessment and a learning tool in VET teacher education. Based on a teacher professional standard, it supports the ownership over the knowledge and skills acquired, confirms the relevance of emerging teaching practices and enhances self-confidence as a teacher.

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European perspective

The topic is relevant in European perspective because E-portfolio is a tool which enables life-long learning (Korhonen et al., 2019), highlighting learner's autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2020), usefulness and relevance of the learning content (Chittum, 2018). Understanding student teachers' perspectives can lead to more effective integration of E-portfolios into the teacher education curriculum (Korhonen et al., 2020; Lin, 2008; Oakley et al., 2014).



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Theoretical overview

The main benefits of implementing E-portfolios include synthesising and organising what is learned (Bataineh et al., 2007; Lin, 2008), the possibility to document one's progress (e.g., Schneider, 2020), to develop reflective, critical and analytical thinking skills (e.g., Lin, 2008; Schneider, 2020), digital competencies (e.g., Lin, 2008; Kabilan & Khan, 2012), increase student teachers' professional confidence (e.g., Kabilan & Khan, 2012; Lewis & Gebric, 2012) and, through the validation of competencies, competitiveness in the recruitment process (e.g., Schneider, 2020).

However, some teacher students remain passive in creating an E-portfolio and perceive the role of it merely as a repository (Lewis & Gebric, 2012). Creating a portfolio can be challenging for the learner. Problems reported by student teachers include the time and workload involved in creating an E-portfolio (Kabilan & Khan, 2012), unclear or restrictive instructions (Borko et al., 1997), lack of feedback (Ok & Erdogan, 2010) and lack of clarity about the purpose of E-portfolio (Lin, 2008).

Aim & research questions

The aim of the paper is to identify VET teacher students' experiences in the creating of E-portfolios and in demonstrating competences:

- 1) What role does the E-portfolio play in framing the studies?
- 2) What supports VET student teachers in creating E-portfolios?
- 3) What challenges VET student teachers experienced in demonstrating competences in the E-portfolio?

Research desing

The qualitative study: five focus group interviews with 19 VET teacher students from one Estonian university

15 female and 4 male VET student teachers, working as a teachers while studying

The interviews covered two main themes: teacher students' experiences in the process of creating an E-portfolio; teacher students' opinions on the role of the portfolio in supporting the learning process.

Findings

The E-portfolio was described as a way of setting learning goals, linking theory and practice and self-reflection. The creation of an E-portfolio made both learning and non-learning visible in students' experiences. The inclusion of learning tasks in the portfolio made students take feedback from peers and lecturers more seriously.

The role of the E-portfolio was perceived as more of a presentation and assessment function, whereas only some valued its learning function.

Key conclusions

The results confirmed the importance of integrating the E-portfolio into the curriculum as a whole. This implies a need to enhance the cooperation between the faculty in integrating the courses and the E-portfolio tasks.

It is important to rethink the E-portfolio guidelines with a clear timeline and the supervision activities at the beginning of the process and then gradually giving responsibility to the students. This helps students overcome the uncertainties in their first steps of creating portfolio and support them in coping with the open nature of the E-portfolio and its diverse purposes.

References

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